

I Corinthians Introduction

Goal of This Class:

To learn and memorize the contents of each chapter in Corinthians so you will be able to utilize the information from this book in the future for whatever doctrinal or personal dilemmas you have. I want you to be able to recite the contents of each chapter from memory.

If you learn this book, you will know what to do any many difficult situations.

This is something I want to teach on an individual level because it is information that NEEDS to be known, but the whole church needs to know it, so you better learn it in this group setting. Our church is depending on it.

What Is I Corinthians Like?

The NT Utility Belt: An Epistle full of stuff

- Paul knew the church very well
- The church had many issues
- Paul systematically deals with each of their issues providing criticism, exhortation, answers, and instruction.

The result is you have a book full of information about all kinds of issues. Very useful. If you memorize what's in each chapter, you will be able to utilize all this good information in the future.

Very Organized Content:

Let's have an overview of the organization and contents of this book so we will know what to expect. This is what we will need to memorize.

Chapters 1-4: Pride

- Biggest problem: pride
- Biggest issue: division
- Source of pride: their "wisdom"

The first four chapters attack the biggest problem, their pride. He brings up their biggest issue in chapter one, division, and shows that pride is the source of that problem. He attacks their pride by exposing their wisdom to be false.

Paul continues to bring up the problem of pride and issues of division throughout the entire book.

Chapters 5-10: Moral issues

- Now Paul systematically brings up different moral issues that they are struggling with and gives them criticism and instruction to help them
- He tries to show that pride and division are the source of these problems
 - 5: How to handle unrepentant sin in the church
 - 6: Lawsuits/ Sexual immorality

- 7: Marriage instruction
- 8-10: Meats Sacrificed to idols

They also have a specific issue regarding whether or not they can eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol. He spends three chapters dealing with this issue.

- 8: Don't abuse your rights and be a stumbling block
- 9: Paul gives up his rights to not be a hindrance
- 10: Flee idolatry

Chapters 11-14: Worship issues

- Now Paul systematically deals with different issues regarding worship. They are doing some things well, and other things terribly
- He teaches about how to do things for worship, and what attitudes they should have while they worship

- 11: Head coverings/ The Lord's Supper

- 12-14: Spiritual gifts

Paul spends three chapters dealing with their attitudes and use of spiritual gifts. They have become proud and arrogant because of their spiritual gifts. He tries to humble them and teach them how to properly use their spiritual gifts in worship.

- 12: Spiritual gifts & unity
- 13: Love is more important than spiritual gifts
- 14: Proper use of spiritual gifts in worship

Chapter 15: The resurrection of the saints

Here Paul addresses a false teaching that Christians don't resurrect

Chapter 16: The offering/ Closing comments

Here Paul tells them what to do regarding collecting money for needy saints. Then He says various comments and goodbyes.

What Are the Corinthians Like?

We can read the account of Paul preaching the gospel in Corinth in Acts 18:1-18. From that account we learn several things:

- There are Jews in the city that converted (18:8)
- Many Jews rejected the gospel (18:6)
- Many gentiles became Christians (18:10)
- God protected them from Jewish persecution (18:9-17)
- Paul stayed with them a long time (18:9-11, 17)

The church will have Jews, but be predominantly gentile, and they won't have to worry about Jewish persecution. Paul stayed there a long time, founded the congregation, and was very important in all their spiritual growth.

The City of Corinth:

- Exceedingly pagan and immoral. It was a seaport town and ended up being a collection of all kinds of evil practice.
- Very close to Athens, so highly valued philosophy and oratory (Acts 18:19-21)

Because of this, the Corinthian church was very immoral and proud:

The Corinthians were immoral:

- Lawsuits, prostitution, tolerated incest, went to idol temples

The Corinthians were proud:

- Rather than value God's wisdom and godly character, they valued earthly wisdom and earthly strength.
- There were teachers who prided themselves in their ability to speak and their cleverness, and began to elevate themselves over the church and the gospel
- There were Christians who joined in and elevated these individuals for their earthly wisdom and strength.
- The church in general was full of people who were interested in serving themselves over God and each other.

Through the whole letter Paul tries to show them their most dire problems: their pride, the division caused by pride, and that pride coming from their confidence of being wise. Paul constantly reminds them that they are proud, divided, and not wise.

Pride: 1:29-31, 3:21, 4:6-7, 18-19, 5:2, 6, 8:1, 15-16, 12:21, 13:4

Division: 1:10-17, 3:3-4, 11:18-19, 12:12, 12:22-26

You are unwise: 1:26, 3:1-3, 18, 4:7, 6:5, 8:2, 10:12, 15, 15:36

What Was Paul Like?

- Paul was the first to bring the gospel to this city
- He was the "founder" of the church and each of their faith (I Cor 3:6)
- He stayed there a long time (Acts 18:9-11, 18)
- He was their spiritual father (I Cor 4:15)

He knows them very well. He is very responsible for them. He knows about their big issues, and he works very hard to help them change.

This letter is a very personal rebuke from a father concerned over the spiritual state of his children. He constantly rebukes, praises, criticizes, encourages. He continually reminds them of his love and concern for them.

1:1-9

- 1: From...
 - Paul called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God
 - Paul will be dealing with arrogant people that boast in themselves (I Cor 3:18, 4:6-7, 18-19)
 - Paul will be criticizing and rebuking these people (I Cor 4:14, 21, 6:5, 11:17)
 - Some of the Corinthians will want to ignore and reject Paul's teaching. To do so, they deny his apostleship (II Cor 11:5, I Cor 9:2)

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- But affirms and defends his apostleship to retain the authority of his teaching over the Corinthians (I Cor 9:1-2, 15:9, 14:37-38)
- Sosthenes
 - We read about a man named Sosthenes in Acts 18:17. He was the ruler of the synagogue that replaced Crispus who had converted to Christ. How great it would be if that Sosthenes had converted to Christ and become a traveling companion of Paul's. However, there is no evidence that is the case.
- 2: To...
 - The church of God at Corinth
 - The recipients of this letter are the members of God's church residing and worshipping in the city of Corinth
 - Those who have been sanctified, saints by calling
 - This is a redundant statement emphasizing the sanctification of these believers
 - Paul will spend a great deal of this book reminding the Corinthians that they've been sanctified (set apart for God), so they need to live as sanctified people (set their lifestyles apart for God's good pleasure).
 - Here are some other passages that emphasize sanctification: 1:30, 6:11
 - With all who in every place call on the name of the Lord
 - Paul reminds them that they are saints because they've called upon the name of the Lord. They are saints with every other believer that called upon the name of the Lord as well.
 - As Paul says, Jesus is the Corinthian's Lord, and every other believer's Lord as well.
 - The Corinthians are proud and want to go beyond what is written. Some feel as if they don't have to conform to the teachings of all the churches (I Cor 4:6-7)
 - Paul reminds them that Christianity isn't their own private club. All the churches of Christ conform to the same doctrine and practice.
 - Here are some verses that emphasize that point: I Cor 3:17, 11:16, 14:33, 37-38, 16:1
- 3: Typical greeting and blessing
 - Paul desires grace for them in Christ.
 - This is a typical salutation of Paul's letters.
- 4: Paul's prayer of thanksgiving
 - Paul is thankful for the grace of God given to them in Christ
 - The Corinthians were tempted to be proud of their own accomplishments.
 - Paul reminds them that grace comes from God through Christ.
 - Paul is also expressing his goodwill and appreciation of the Corinthians. This is necessary because Paul has to say many words of criticism.
 - He aims to speak kindly and lovingly while sufficiently admonishing them to repent (I Cor 4:14-17, 6:5, 11:2, 17, 16:24)
- 5-7: Paul gives God glory for how he has blessed the Corinthians
 - He has enriched you in all speech and knowledge
 - We will see that the Corinthians prided themselves in their own wisdom and oratory skills (I Cor 3:18, 21, 4:6-7).
 - Paul is trying to remind them that God is the one who has blessed them with any wisdom that they might have, therefore, they shouldn't boast.
 - You are not lacking in any gift
 - They will also be arrogant about the spiritual gifts that they possessed (I Cor 12:21).
 - Paul is reminding them, as he does in 12:11, that their gifts come from God. There is nothing to be arrogant about.
 - Eagerly waiting the revelation of the Lord

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- I think this is referring to the revelation of Jesus as in what He reveals. This is in correspondence to the the “perfect” (complete) revelation that they are waiting for in I Cor 13:10.
 - They are not lacking in spiritual gifts until Jesus’ revelation comes.
 - Jesus is the one that will reveal this message to them. It is not going to come from their own wisdom (I Cor 2:7-13).
 - They can’t boast as if they are responsible for coming up with this wisdom (I Cor 4:6-7).
- 8-9: The coming of Jesus
 - Now it is talking about the actual appearing of Jesus Christ on the last day.
 - Jesus’ goal is for them to be blameless on that day.
 - God is faithful enough to accomplish that. Even with these immature Corinthians.

Chapters 1-4: Pride

I Corinthians 1:10-31: Division

The Big Picture:

- God is seeking glory.
- God is not interested in man glorifying himself or each other
- God wants to be the one to glorify us (Jms 4:10, I Pet 5:6)
- However God saves us, it will be to the purpose the He and He alone gets the glory (I Cor 1:29,31)

Therefore, if we see any trends of tendencies of man receiving glory from his fellowman, then we know that there are major problems in our thinking and actions.

Meanwhile in Athens...

Athens was a city near by where its citizens prided themselves in their wisdom and being able to produce new and different ideas. They also prided themselves in their ability to present these ideas with elegance and sophistication. It was essentially a competition to be the most intellectually impressive over the other. Anything that didn't conform to their concept of wisdom was rejected as foolishness (Acts 17:17-21).

The Corinthian church

This attitude was also present in the Corinthians. Fresh out of the world, they still prided themselves in their own wisdom. They wanted to be impressive with their ability to come up with ideas and present them elegantly (I Cor 4:7).

Essentially this is all centered around pride in our own abilities and ideas. This is centered around glorifying man for what man can accomplish.

- Does this idea fit in the world? Is the world interested in glorifying man for his abilities and wisdom?
Yes
- Does this idea fit in the church? Is God interested in glorifying man for his ability and wisdom?
NO!!! God is interested in glorifying man for his submission to God's wisdom and ability.

Paul will address this problem that exists in the Corinthian church:

- In chapter one he brings up division which is the number one problem caused by their pride
- Then he spends four chapters attacking the source of all their issues; pride
- The first two chapters he addresses their "wisdom"
- The second chapter he addresses their teachers (ability)

I Cor 1:10-13

- 10: Their need for unity
 - Unity = agree, no division
 - Unity = same mind, same judgment

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- To be united we have to have the same wisdom, thinking, and teaching
- To be united we can't have division based on judgment (judgment meaning we judge some members to be "better" than others, "more valuable" than others. This judgment would be made based on their human abilities).
- 11: Proof that they weren't united
 - Chloe's people made it clear to Paul many of the problems they were facing. This gives Paul the ability to deal with those problems
- 12: How the Corinthians we divided
 - They were divided based on people (how they judged these individuals human abilities).
 - Paul, Apollos, and Cephas wouldn't have been making these divisions, but others would've taken pride in their human abilities and made judgments of one to be better than the other, and be divided by that.

How can we be united? Focus on God our standard and source of unity:

How does God unite us? He makes us equal:

- Ability? We are all equally condemned, we are all equally saved, we are all equally unable to do anything about it. What can man do for you? Nothing
 - EX: Choosing a prison inmate to be your babysitter: Imagine you had to pick your babysitter from a high security prison. Who would you choose? What value would it be to judge their character and ability? They're all terrible candidates.
- Wisdom? All our "wisdom" is opinion and equal. No human thought has authority over another human thought.
 - EX: No referee in a pick up game: When people get together to play pick up basketball, there is no referee to make calls. If one person says it went out of bounds, and someone else says no, there is no authority to settle the dispute. Maybe they might agree, but often they don't. There needs to be a higher standard to establish right and wrong.

Based on human ability and wisdom, there never can, and there never will be unity, because it's all equal, and equally useless. Only going to a higher standard of ability and wisdom will unite all humans together. That's why the church has one Head.

If we don't focus on God who has wisdom and power to save, we look to humans and make judgments of who is the wisest, and who can save me. This is the source of division.

- 13: Showing that there is no reason to be divided on human ability
 - There is no reason to be divided on human wisdom and human ability, because humans can do NOTHING for you.
 - Did Paul do anything for you worthy of following him? Did he die for you?
 - Can Paul do anything for you worthy of you following him? Can he save you?
 - If Paul isn't worth following, nobody is. That's the point.

EX: A powerful general conquers large portions of land. Eventually the land is too large for him to rule over, so he picks four of his most qualified commanders based on their abilities to rule over his kingdom now divided into four portions. Is this the story of Jesus Christ? Is He really unable to rule over His kingdom alone? Is there really somebody else that based on their abilities and wisdom is worthy of ruling His kingdom? I don't think so.

There can be no division based on our own thinking, and our own judgments of other people's worth.

[Incidentally, the fact that Paul says being baptized in his name would make you "his", further implies that the actual practice to be in Jesus was baptism in His name]

1:14-17

- 14: Paul is grateful that he didn't baptize many
- 15: The reason he is grateful he didn't baptize many:
 - He didn't want people to feel like they were special followers of Paul.
 - Paul knew that the authority of his teaching from the Holy Spirit and his excellent conduct would tempt people to want to identify themselves with Paul. To compensate for this he:
 1. Didn't baptize many
 2. Didn't try to impress people with his teaching ABILITY (I Cor 2:1-5)
- 16: Paul remembers some more people that he baptized
 - The fact that he forgets shows he isn't focused on that. Just like he doesn't want people to think they belong to him, He shouldn't feel like these people belong to him.
 - Baptizing people gives the illusion of doing something. Someone is being saved with their baptism. That then puts unmerited attention to the person baptizing as if they were actually doing something. It's not who is baptizing that matters, but in Whose name they are being baptized.
- 17: Paul diverts the attention from human accomplishment and ability to the cross of Christ
 - Keeping track of baptisms puts emphasis on our ability and accomplishments, rather than what God has accomplished by His ability
 - Preaching the gospel in cleverness puts emphasis on our ability to teach, rather than emphasis on God who gave us the wisdom that we teach

The Corinthian culture was people coming up with their own great ideas and presenting them well. Whomever seemed the greatest by human standards was worthy of following and being identified with. This is what the Corinthian church was doing with Paul, Apollos and Cephas. This is what Paul was trying to avoid from the beginning.

If Paul was able to convert the Corinthians to Christ by his own wisdom or ability, then they wouldn't really be converted to Christ, therefore the cross would be of no use for them. This is similar to what Paul said in I Cor 2:5. They would continue to depend on Paul, and not Christ.

I Corinthians 1:18-2:5: Earthly Wisdom Doesn't Save

Introduction:

- God is seeking to be glorified
- God is not interested in man glorifying himself or each other
- However God saves us, it will be to the purpose that He and He alone is glorified

Earthly Wisdom: the assumption that humans are self-sufficient. The assumption that we either have no problems or are able to solve all of our problems through our own wisdom and ability. We don't need God. Given enough time we can save ourselves.

Godly Wisdom: the assumption that humans are God-dependent. The assumption that we have problems and are not able to solve those problems apart from God's wisdom and ability. We need God. We cannot save ourselves.

If we follow these two different concepts of wisdom, we will arrive at two very different locations. God isn't interested in us being able save ourselves with our own ability and therefore deserving the credit. He wants the credit. Therefore:

1. The assumption that we are wise enough to save ourselves (earthly wisdom) will not lead us to true salvation
2. The assumption that we need help from God will lead us to His salvation

1:18-21

- 18: Two very different reactions to God's wisdom
 - God's wisdom is revealed in the cross
 - All mankind is lost because they did not submit to the commands of the creator, and therefore need to be saved by receiving forgiveness from an incarnate God that died and resurrected
 - Those who have earthly wisdom will not have need for salvation, and not see the wisdom in this plan. They will reject it, therefore they are perishing
 - Those who have godly wisdom will be needing salvation, and be able to see the wisdom in the cross
- 19-20: God has always had the plan to thwart human wisdom
 - Man's desire to trust in himself and his own abilities will just lead him to foolishness and destruction.
 - It never compares to what God is accomplishing through His wisdom
- 21: God is pleased that only those who trust in Him will accept the cross.
 - God isn't interested in saving those trying to save themselves
 - God isn't interested in saving those who don't "need" salvation
 - He is pleased that He devised a plan of salvation that would automatically exclude this person. The person who is seeking his own glory
 - God was pleased that He devised a plan that would only save those ready to glorify the God that saved them

Consider how similar this is to what Jesus says in Luke 10:21-22. Jesus rejoices that God has crafted His plan in such a way that the "wise" and "intelligent" (of the world) reject the gospel, but only the children (the humble) will accept the gospel. Only those who accept the foolishness of the humble Messiah Jesus will come to know God.

Earthly wisdom that seeks to glorify self will never come to know the salvation of God to receive glory from Him.

1:22-25

- 22: What the world wants:
 - Jews: sign (power of ability)
 - Greeks: wisdom
- 23: What God gave them instead: an incarnate resurrected God that was rejected and killed on a cross
 - Jews: this is not the power to boast about! They wanted a king! They are looking for someone to glorify himself! Yet Jesus did not seek His own glory, therefore He did not conform to the earthly wisdom, and was rejected
 - Greeks: this isn't real wisdom! This is craziness. Let's look at what a "wise" philosopher thought of God's wisdom:

"The assertion that some God or son of God has come down to the earth as judge of mankind is most shameful, and no lengthy argument is required to refute it. What is the purpose of such a descent on the part of God? Was it in order to learn what was going on among common men? Does not he know everything? If then he does know, why does he not correct men, and why can he not do this by divine power, without sending some one, specially endowed for the purpose . . ." (IV, 2f)

"Is it that God wants to give us knowledge of himself for our salvation, in order that those who accept it may become good and be saved, but that those who do not accept it may be proved to be wicked and punished? But is it only now after such a long age that God has remembered to judge the life of men? Did he not care before ...? God is good and beautiful and happy, and exists in the most beautiful state. If then he comes down to men, he must undergo change, a change from good to bad, from beautiful to shameful, from happiness to misfortune, and from what is best to what is most wicked. Who would choose a change like this? God could not be capable of undergoing this change" (IV 7,14)

- Celcus (170 AD)

- They couldn't accept a wisdom of a humbled God. They only knew wisdom that glorifies self.
- 24: There are those called that accept this wisdom of God
 - These are those seeking to glorify God, and can humbly except this humble message
 - They will spend enough time to understand this wisdom to see that it really is power.
- 25: Though the world deems God's wisdom to be foolish, His foolishness overcomes their "wisdom"
 - What the world mistakes as the foolishness of God, is really His wisdom.
 - It wasn't foolishness for Christ to die, it was His wisdom to raise us up
 - What the world mistakes as His weakness is really His power
 - It wasn't weakness that brought Him to the cross. It was His power that kept Him on the cross

1:26-29

- 26: Paul relates this message to the Corinthians
 - How can you boast in your human wisdom? You aren't wise according to human standards!
 - How can you boast in human power? You aren't powerful according to human standards

EX: Imagine 5'3" white Tim trying to be cool with the gangsta's. They would reject me. Since the gangsta's reject me, I come to the church full of weak humble losers. Then I try to act gangsta over this weak humble croud of losers.

How could the Corinthians boast in their wisdom or ability? Their wisdom and ability didn't save them. Their wisdom and ability didn't lead them to Christ. Only the humble losers can come to Christ. Here is what the same philosopher said about Christians:

"There is a new race of men born yesterday, with neither homeland nor traditions, allied against all religions and civil institutions, pursued by justice, universally notorious for their infamy, but glorying in common execration: these are Christians. Their injunctions are like this. 'Let no one educated, no one wise, no one sensible draw near. For these abilities are thought by us to be evils. But as for anyone ignorant, anyone stupid, anyone uneducated, anyone who is a child, let him come boldly. By the fact that they themselves admit that these people are worthy of their God, they show that they want and are able to convince only the foolish, dishonorable and stupid, and only slaves, women and little children'" (III, 44)

- Celcus (170 AD)

- 27-28: God is using the nothing to shame those trying to glorify themselves as if they were something
 - You better realize that you are nothing and let God use you to shame the proud instead of vice versa
- 29: God's purpose behind the nature of His plan and wisdom:
 - That NO MAN MAY BOAST BEFORE GOD
 - God was pleased to make a plan of salvation that gave no one the ability to boast of the wisdom to think it up or their ability to fulfill it.
 - Man wants credit, therefore they reject the plan that robs them of it

1:30-31

- 30: The credit goes to God
- By God's doing you are in Christ
- Christ is the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of God
- If you are wise, righteous, sanctified, and redeemed it was not your doing, but God's doing through His plan in Christ
- 31: We can only glorify God
 - God's plan excludes any glory or credit to any man, because God is the one that saved us, by a plan that didn't involve any human wisdom or human ability

2:1-5

- 1: Paul didn't come with superiority of speech (satisfying for earthly standards) or wisdom (conforming to previously described human wisdom), but with the message of God.
- 3: Paul further describes his conduct to be weak, full of fear and trembling. This manner of conduct and demeanor would not be satisfying for earthly standards of presentation and oratory.
- 4: Paul repeats what he said in verse 1. He didn't have powerful earthly speech or wisdom, but instead he had the Spirit of God.
 - Paul is repeating what he said in the beginning of this section (I Cor 1:17). Right before he explains that human wisdom doesn't save, he described his conduct as being deficient of such human wisdom.
 - He has proven that human wisdom doesn't save, and now he goes into more detail to remind them that his conduct was lacking in human wisdom

- If the message is foolish, the preaching is foolish
- If the message doesn't conform to human wisdom, the delivery won't conform to human wisdom
- 2: Paul only wanted to interaction with them that centered around Christ, and His most "foolish" quality, His crucifixion.
 - Of Paul's teaching, as he said, he didn't bring in persuasive human wisdom. He talked about the single thing that human wisdom is most likely to reject: the cross. If you've accepted the Christ that Paul teaches, you've accepted God's foolishness fully.
- 5: Paul explains that he conducted himself thus, that their confidence wouldn't be on human wisdom or human ability, but on God's foolishness, the cross, and God's ability, His power (vs 4,5).
 - If we ever depart from God's teaching, people will come to depend on human wisdom
 - If we ever glorify human ability, people will come to depend on humans
 - Human wisdom and ability is not enough to sustain anyone (1:13).
 - We must preach a gospel in such a way that ensures people have come to depend on God, and we need to accept the gospel in such a way that ensures we have come to depend upon God.

I Corinthians 2:6-16: God's Wisdom Is Greater Than Earthly Wisdom

Introduction:

We are still in the middle of the discussion started in 1:10 that will continue through chapter 4. Two terms that continue to be mentioned in the first two chapters are earthly wisdom and godly wisdom. Remember:

Earthly Wisdom: the assumption that humans are self-sufficient. The assumption that we either have no problems or are able to solve all of our problems through our own wisdom and ability. We don't need God. Given enough time we can save ourselves.

Godly Wisdom: the assumption that humans are God-dependent. The assumption that we have problems and are not able to solve those problems apart from God's wisdom and ability. We need God. We cannot save ourselves.

Nearby, Athens was full of people that prided themselves in the ability to come up with their own wisdom, and present it in powerful ways. The Corinthians had adopted this mentality, and were proud of their own human wisdom and ability to present it.

Pride was their biggest problem, and division was the worst symptom of that problem. Paul addresses this major problem in chapters 1-4 by attacking their pride:

- Chapter 1: He condemns the symptom of their division, and attacks their wisdom by reminding them that earthly wisdom doesn't save

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- Chapter 2: He attacks their wisdom by proving to them that God's wisdom is greater than earthly wisdom.
- Chapters 3 & 4: He attacks their "ability" by belittling their teachers.

Chapter 2 is in two major sections:

- 6-9: God's wisdom is greater than earthly wisdom
- 10-16: We can only know God's wisdom because His Spirit told us

This is meant to keep them from trying to establish their own wisdom, and to humble them by reminding them any wisdom they have has been given directly from God.

2:6-9

- 6: Paul teaches a wisdom that the mature accept, but a wisdom that is contrary to earthly wisdom.
 - Chapter 1 was discussing human wisdom. When he referred to God's wisdom, he described it as how it is seen through human wisdom: "foolishness". Now Paul is departing from earthly wisdom and investigating "God's foolishness" for what it really is: wisdom
 - God's wisdom is in fact wisdom. Does intellect and reason have its place in Christianity? Yes. Just because the world thinks it's all stupidity and foolishness, doesn't mean that's what it is.
 - How can a wisdom that is contrary to modern wisdom really be wise?

The world starts with the assumption that earthly wisdom can solve all problems. The mature start with the assumption that we need God's help. This starting point is vastly different and will greatly affect our judgment and evaluation of God's wisdom. Still both evaluations will require reason and intellect.

EX: Imagine a "soul food" chef and a nutritionist are evaluating the same recipe. They will have vastly different evaluations of the quality of that recipe because they are beginning from extremely different starting points. The "soul food" chef sees taste as being the prime objective. The nutritionist sees health as being the prime objective. So their evaluations will be very different, yet, both will involve reason and intellect.

- We don't blindly accept meaningless words and blatant contradictions. We accept an exceedingly elaborate and complicated plan deep with meaning and purpose.
 - Since our assumption is a need for God, our purpose is to please Him, and we see the wisdom of how the gospel accomplishes that.
 - Since the world discounts the existence of God and has no concern for serving Him, anything in the gospel is seen as pointless and stupid.
 - This is why the mature accept it as wisdom, and the rulers of the world reject it.
- 7: This is a description of what God's wisdom really is:
 - mystery: unknown information that hasn't been revealed yet
 - hidden: something that is covered and kept away
 - The point is ONLY God knows this wisdom. No human does.
 - Those who see God as the solution (godly wisdom) trust in Him during the unknown, and accept His wisdom once it's been revealed
 - Those who see themselves as the solution (earthly wisdom) trust in themselves and reject God's wisdom once it is revealed.
 - Even though this wisdom has been kept a mystery, it was planned out before time.

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- It's not as if God is just making this up as He goes. This has always been His purpose
- The rulers are passing away (6). They are a speck in the earth's timeline. How much should we trust and value their wisdom and insight?
- God's plan has been from before existence. We can trust this wisdom.
- 8: When the mystery of God is being revealed, the rulers don't understand and reject it
 - They prove they didn't understand God's wisdom because they killed the Christ
 - This shows their ignorance in two ways:
 1. The obvious rejection of the Jesus being the humble Christ and Savior
 2. Their attempt to reject God's plan ultimately proved to be an unintentional cooperation with and fulfillment of God's wise master plan.
 - God's wisdom is more greatly seen by His ability to use people that are bent on rejecting Him.

EX: I want to knit a blanket. I have an elaborate schematic with many colors and patterns, but the people who will knit the blanket together hate me and want to purposefully mess it up. Knowing that, I change the schematic anticipating their deliberate rebellion in such a way that their attempt to knit a terrible blanket still comes out exactly the way that I want.

Consider Pharaoh, the Pharisees, and even Satan. They all tried to fight against God's plan, but ended up fulfilling it exactly. That's wisdom.

- 9: Nobody could've ever known God's plan before He revealed it
 - This isn't talking about what He has in store for us in heaven, this is talking about no one knew what a beautiful plan of salvation He had prepared for those who love Him. Abraham and David could've never seen this amazing ending to the salvation that was promised through their blood line.
 - God's wisdom/ plan:
 1. Doesn't conform to human expectations
 2. Is fulfilled in a way people never would've expected (often it's just the opposite of our expectations)
 3. Once it has been revealed, it's obvious how much more incredible it is than anything man would've ever come up with

God does this again and again all through His story. The story of Joseph in Genesis. The story of God's salvation from Egyptian slavery. Even more insignificant stories like the fall of Jericho and the victory of Gideon. We can see a pattern of how God loves to work contrary to any of our assumptions and expectations. Doing this proves that it is truly His wisdom (not man's) at work.

- Is it bad that we could've never seem these things coming? No.
- It is bad when we reject it after it's been revealed.

2:10-13:

- 10: God reveals the mystery through the Spirit of God
 - It is impossible for us to know the mysteries of God as long as they are hidden. God's Spirit has revealed them to us because the Spirit knows everything about God.

First Paul established that God's wisdom is greater than earthly wisdom. Now God is explaining how we can come to know and understand God's wisdom.

I Corinthians Notes

- 11: An explanation of how the Spirit of God can give reveal Gods' wisdom to us:
 - The mind of man: who knows? Only the man's own spirit. Others can know his mind if he tells them
 - The mind of God: who knows? Only God's Spirit. Others can only know God's mind if God tells them

How do we know anything about God? Only if He tells us! So many people make judgments about God based on their feelings, intuitions and judgments. You can make no assessment of God apart from what He explicitly tells us. Man is unable to accurately discern the mind of a woman, how can we expect to know God's mind without His revelation?

- 12: We haven't received the world's spirit
 - If we are listening to the Spirit of God, should our thinking be similar to the worlds? If the world's thinking is so different that they reject Jesus, then just about every other conclusion the world comes to should be different than ours.
 - What do you think about marriage?
 - What do you think about raising children?
 - What do you think about planning your future?
 - What do you think about handling money?
 - Every single judgment we make, should be completely determined by what God's Spirit has said, not what the world thinks.

Can we be proud of the wisdom that we have? No. It came from the mind of God. You have no ownership over it. You have no authoritative claim. You are simply blessed to live by it. The Corinthians need to realize, regarding wisdom, they have no reason to boast.

- 13: The Spirit tells us the mind of God through words and spiritual teaching
 - The only way we can know the mind of God is if He tells us. The only way He tells us is through communication by the words of the apostles and prophets inspired by the Holy Spirit.
 - The conclusion here is that scripture is the exclusive source for knowing what is in the mind of Christ.
 - If you don't know the words of scripture, you don't know the mind of God.
 - People will go on so much about what they think and believe about God basing this understanding from within, rather than gathering these conclusions from specific scriptures.
 - It's one thing to know what God told us to do, it's another thing to know how His mind works. God has revealed so much to us that we can even know the latter.

2:14-16

- 14: the natural man rejects the spiritual teachings of God
 - Here we are introduced to two more terms:
 1. The natural man focuses on: the physical - the body - the now
 2. The spiritual man focuses on: the spiritual - the spirit - the eternity
 - When each person is confronted with the teaching of the Spirit, they appraise (evaluate, examine, investigate and judge the value of) the spiritual teaching.
 - When the natural man evaluates spiritual teaching, he rejects it because he doesn't understand it or see the value of it.
 - This is because his focus is solely on the physical, and the spiritual teaching is focused on the spiritual. But without a focus on spiritual things, how can he be qualified to evaluate it? He can't.

EX: Imagine I'm chosen to be the judge of a prize pigs. I know nothing about pigs. I can't tell what makes one pig better than the other. If you ask me, they're all ugly dirty dumb animals. What is my evaluation worth though? Nothing, because I have no idea what I'm talking about.

- 15: The spiritual man can evaluate all things
 - A spiritual man understands physical and spiritual things, therefore he can evaluate all things. He can see the value of spiritual exercise and the value of prayer.
 - The spiritual man is evaluated by no one. He shouldn't care about other people's judgments. They don't know anything
 - Often we are so focused on what the earthly wise think and believe, because the world tells us to care, but the fact is, if they aren't spiritual they aren't qualified to pass any judgment. Who cares what the conclusions natural men come to?
- 16: We have God's wise mind
 - The world can stick to their stupidity and ignorance. No one is wise enough to tell my God what to do or how to do it. He has shared that wisdom with me.

I Corinthians 3:1-23: Teachers Are God's Workers

Introduction:

We are still in the middle of the discussion that started in 1:10 and will continue through chapter 4. We now have learned four terms that will be relevant in this class. Let's refresh our memories:

Earthly Wisdom: the assumption that humans are self-sufficient. The assumption that we either have no problems or are able to solve all of our problems through our own wisdom and ability. We don't need God. Given enough time we can save ourselves.

Godly Wisdom: the assumption that humans are God-dependent. The assumption that we have problems and are not able to solve those problems apart from God's wisdom and ability. We need God. We cannot save ourselves.

Natural Man: The natural man focuses on: the physical - the body - the now. This person is unable to assess the value of spiritual teaching because he doesn't consider the value of spiritual things.

The Spiritual Man: The spiritual man focuses on: the spiritual - the spirit - the eternity. He is able to assess the value of spiritual teaching because he can consider the value of spiritual things.

Unfortunately, the Corinthians were living according to earthly wisdom. They were proud of their own earthly wisdom and power. They were proud of teachers that could come up with their own ideas and powerfully present them. Teachers prided themselves. Others prided the teachers. They were divided into groups based on their physical judgments of earthly wisdom and power.

Pride was their biggest problem, and division was the worst symptom of that problem. Paul addresses the problem of their pride in the first four chapters.

- Chapter 1: He acknowledges and condemns their division.
- Then he attempts to correct their division by attacking the source, their pride.
- They were proud of their earthly wisdom, and their earthly power.
- First he attacks their earthly wisdom by proving that it doesn't save.
- Then in chapter 2 he proves that God's wisdom is actually superior to their earthly wisdom, but only the spiritual man can accept the God's wisdom.

Now in chapter 3 he will:

- Accuse them of living according to earthly wisdom and rejecting God's wisdom
- He cites their division as testimony and proof of his accusation.
- After finally establishing that they are in fact immature fools, he moves on to humble them in regard to their earthly power as well.

3:1-5:

- 1: Paul says that they used to be fleshly and not spiritual
 - Here he is saying they used to be fools.
 - This is ok though, because without God's wisdom we are all fools. They were brand new babies in Christ that needed to grow.
- 2: Paul says that they haven't grown
 - It was ok that they used to be fools and needed the most basic teaching.
 - The problem is that they are still fools, and still need the most basic teaching.
 - Instead of being the spiritual man that has accepted God's wisdom, they are fleshly (the natural man) and are still living according to earthly wisdom.
- 3: Their division proves they are immature fools living according to earthly wisdom
 - He says that their jealousy and strife prove that they are still earthly. These two attitudes both come from pride
 - Jealousy: because they are proud, they want to be glorified. They want to be glorified by their wisdom and power. When someone else is glorified, they get Jealous. "I should receive that honor because I'm great".
 - Strife: because they are proud, they have the right to hurt those that they are jealous of. Jealous is an emotion. Strife is acting upon that emotion to bring "justice".

If you are jealous of someone, you should always first assume that you have an attitude problem. Jealousy is rarely justified. Your jealousy is often based on your pride and entitlement. If you are are jealous, never trust your emotions because jealousy leads to strife; doing bad things to get justice. If you are jealous, solve the real problem: your pride. If you frequently experience jealousy, that means you are prideful, and haven't accept the wisdom of God.

How does jealousy arrive in the church?

- Men: want power, authority, and control. They try to earn this power, authority, and control by their own wisdom and power. I'm the best teacher. I'm older. I'm wiser. When other people start taking the power, or refuse them the power, they start causing trouble and strife to get what they deserve.
- Women: want attention. They want people to pay attention to them, be impressed with them, take care of them. When nobody pays attention to their good deeds they get jealous. When someone else is getting attention, they get jealous. If they get ignored when they are sick or sad, they get jealous. They begin causing trouble and strife to get this attention.

- 4: They were divided based on their judgments of which teacher had earthly power
 - Because they are natural and physical, they are still making physical judgments based on earthly wisdom and power, rather than spiritual judgments based on spiritual wisdom and power.
 - One says, “this teacher has great wisdom and power”. Another says, “that teacher has great wisdom and power”.
 - Consider a judgment some Corinthians made based on the “power” of Paul: “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech is of no account.”
 - That is a physical judgment. Not a spiritual judgment. These physical judgments divided them (I Cor 1:10).

In chapter 2 Paul stated that the natural man can't assess spiritual things because he can't see the value in spiritual things. Here Paul proves that they aren't spiritual because they are still making judgments based on physical things such as a teachers ability and power. They thought they were wise. Paul tells them what they really are: proud immature fools.

Now that Paul has humbled them by attacking their wisdom, he now begins to humble them by attacking their “power”. Their “power” is their teachers and trust in the earthly power of the teachers. To do this, Paul is going to show them what teachers really are.

The present culture was that of “superstar” philosophers. There were the “Seven Sages” that met at Delphi (very close to Corinth) to share their “great wisdom”. These philosophers would be revered and respected celebrities living the high profile life. One of the sages was from Corinth. People would choose which teacher they thought was the best, and become a part of his school. These schools would be in constant competition with one another to establish who's wisdom was truly the highest.

This is what appealed to the Corinthians christians. They wanted to be the superstar philosophers living the respected and wealthy life. Like we saw in chapter 1, they would have the church divided up into schools of certain teachers, and compete for disciples and respect. Paul is going to tear this worldly system apart. He's previously shown to them they are actually immature fools, certainly not qualified to be a “sage”. Now he's going to destroy their ideas of what a Bible teacher is like. They aren't the respected high profile celebrities. In chapter 3 they are just workers and builders. In chapter 4, they servants of Christ that live an abused and rejected life. This is quite different than what the Corinthians hoped and expected.

Paul is going to use himself and Apollos as examples to teach his principles. Paul was the teacher that started the work. Apollos was another capable teacher that arrived later to help nurture the work. What Paul says of himself and Apollos are going to be applied to any other teachers.

3:5-9

- 5: Paul and Apollos are servants
 - What are teachers? Just servants. Not superstars.
 - The opportunities were given by God.
- 6-7: God causes the growth
 - Paul planted: he taught the gospel there first.
 - Apollos watered: he added more teaching to the young church
 - God caused the growth.
 - Workers aren't anything. God is everything.

I Corinthians Notes

- Whats really important here? A guy putting something in the ground? Or the God that can make a seed turn into a plant?
- Workers are just manual labor. Who's name is on a Trump Tower? Not the construction worker.
- Stop focusing on teacher. Start focusing on God.
- 8: Working together
 - The Corinthian teachers were competing with each other for glory and respect.
 - Paul and Apollos are on the same team working together. There is no competition.
 - God will grant every worker their proper reward. We aren't all fighting to claim a single reward.
- 9: You are God's building; field
 - Now Paul changes the metaphor to make a new point.
 - So far, he's just been focusing on the teachers. Now he will change the metaphor to include the church, and teach about the true nature of teachers in their relationship to Christians and the church.
 - The building is the church at Corinth.

3:10-17:

- 10: Paul, a wise builder, laid the foundation
 - God's grace enabled Paul to be a wise builder. The Spirit told Paul exactly how to build. That's where wisdom comes from (1 Cor 2).
 - Paul's building is the conversion of people to the gospel. He came to Corinth and taught the first Christians.
 - Now another is in Corinth building (adding more converts) to the foundation that Paul already laid.
 - Paul warns that builder that he needs to be wise also. You need to keep building properly. This is a warning to teachers.
- 11: The only foundation is Christ
 - There's only one way to build, and that is on the teaching of Jesus.
 - If you are building on a different foundation (teaching or wisdom), you are building a completely different building and not adding people to the church.
- 12: Different materials in the building
 - As people build, different materials are used. Six different materials are listed that fall under two categories:
 - Wood, hay, straw: able to be burned
 - Gold, silver, precious stones: not able to be burned
 - The different materials represent different degrees of character and integrity that Christians have. Some Christians have strong stable character and faith. Other Christians come to the faith with a shallow and weak character.
- 13: The work will be tested by fire
 - Eventually, all the builder's work will be tested by fire.
 - The Christians will be challenged by various trials.
 - Weak Christians that are hay and straw will be burned away (fall away from the Jesus).
 - Strong Christians that are gold and silver will endure the trial by fire (stay faithful to Jesus).
 - This is the only way a builder can see the integrity of his work.
- 14-15: The reward

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- If the Christian stays faithful through trials, the teacher receives his reward: the satisfaction of his efforts not being in vain.
- If the Christian abandons the faith, the teacher suffers loss: the disappointment of his work being in vain.
 - The teacher won't be held accountable if the Christian abandons the faith. The teacher will still be saved (if he endures the fire).
- 16-17: Don't destroy the temple
 - This metaphor compares the church to a building. The building here is called the temple. God dwells in the temple.
 - He threatens to destroy us if we do anything to the church.

Applications for this passage:

Why did Paul give this metaphor? Why was this helpful for the Corinthian church to hear? He is trying to humble them by describing the true nature of teachers. This metaphor is meant to humble their teachers and lead others to stop glorifying those teachers.

- Teachers need to be careful of how they build (vs 10):
 - The teachers were proud and confident. They needed to be aware that they can be building poorly or wrong.
 - They were valuing their teachers based on their oratorical skills. The value of a teacher's work is in his ability to build and shape character.
 - It is hard to build in such a way. Different teaching can lead people to be different kinds of materials:
 - "Health & wealth" gospel: just makes people shallow and superficial (straw)
 - "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (2:2): can make the disciple stronger and more stable (gold)
- The value of any worker's results is up to the character of the individual Christian (13):
 - A teacher might think he's done a great job, but in the end, when the Christian is tested, there is nothing that teacher can do. He will have to see if his "work" remains.
 - If the strength were in the teacher, then any person he taught would be stay faithful to the Lord without fail, but even Paul couldn't have this confidence in his own teaching ability (Gal 4:11).
 - Realizing how powerless he is, the teacher should be humbled.
- It doesn't matter who taught you. What matters is depth of your own personal faith and integrity.
 - When we are taught, we need to make sure we stay faithful so that we weren't taught in vain (I Cor 15:2, II Cor 6:1).
 - They were so focused on the greatness of their teacher. This metaphor proves that no teacher is strong enough to sustain you through the fire. It's up to each Corinthian to stay faithful. They need to quit boasting and having confidence in the teachers, and start entrusting themselves to God.
- This passage tells the real threat of falling away.
 - Here we clearly have Christians that are being burned away by challenges this world has to offer.
 - We need to be humble, and walk in fear. Our proud confidence will usher in our fall.
- God will destroy those who destroy His church.
 - They had proud fools causing division and strife. This kind of behavior is discouraging and hurtful. It was contributing to the the fire that was testing the Christians.
 - If any person is a fire that burns away a Christian, God will have a frightening recompense for that individual.

All these applications are meant to humble the Corinthian teachers and disciples so that they would stop trusting in themselves, and start trusting in God. Once they stop regarding their teachers as superstars, they'll start realizing they need to focus on their own faith and integrity and get back to being a team.

3:18-20:

- 18: If you think you're wise, you're a fool
 - Paul brings in the same warning. You guys think you're wise. You're really fools. If you don't abandon your earthly wisdom and pride, you'll stay a fool.
- 19-20: God will destroy the earthly wisdom
 - If you stay with your earthly wisdom and pride, you will be on the said that God destroys.

3:21-23:

- 21: Don't boast in men
 - Paul keeps making the same point. Teachers can't save them. Only God can. Stop having confidence in men.
 - Then he says, "all things belong to you."
- 22-23: All things belong to you
 - All these teachers and all things belong to them
 - They thought they were benefiting from their factions. They thought it was good to be divided up by the teacher they thought was the best.
 - Paul reminds them, "if we're all on the same team, then ALL the teachers are yours. Why cut yourself off from all the good things God has to offer you?"
 - You belong to Christ
 - But in the end, we are owned by God, so again, there's nothing to boast about.

I Corinthians 4:1-21: Teachers Are Christ's Servants

Introduction:

We are coming to the end of the discussion that started in 1:10 and ends at the close of chapter 4. Pride was their biggest problem, and division was the worst symptom of that problem. Paul addresses the problem of their pride in these first four chapters.

Why were the Corinthians proud? Unfortunately, the Corinthians were still living according to earthly wisdom. They were proud of their own earthly wisdom and power. They were proud of teachers that could come up with their own ideas and powerfully present them. Teachers prided themselves. Others

I Corinthians Notes

prided the teachers. They were divided into groups based on their physical judgments of the teacher's earthly wisdom and power.

First Paul addresses their division, and then begins to fix their division at the source: their pride. In the first two chapters Paul addresses their pride by attacking their "wisdom". He does this by:

- 1: Showing that earthly wisdom doesn't save
- 2: God's wisdom is greater than earthly wisdom

In chapter 3, he says that their division is the proof that they are in fact fools living according to earthly wisdom. Hopefully this will deflate their pride in their so-called "wisdom".

After destroying their wisdom, Paul begins to attack their "power". Their power was their teachers. The power refers to the earthly ability their teachers had to present ideas in a powerful, eloquent, and sophisticated way. This kind of oratory was something highly regarded at the present time.

The present culture was that of "superstar" philosophers. These philosophers would be revered and respected celebrities living the high profile life. Philosophers would come up with their own ideas and compete with other philosophers to determine who's wisdom was superior. Others would judge who they thought to be the best philosopher and take pride in that teacher. Corinth was in the middle of this culture, and the Corinthian Christians were emulating this behavior in the church.

Corinthian Christians wanted to be the superstar philosophers living the respected and wealthy life. I Corinthians 1:12;3:4, 21-13 make it clear that the Christians were judging which teacher was the most powerful and taking pride in that teacher.

Paul is now rectifying that behavior in chapters 3 & 4.

- 3: Teachers are God's workers. They need to carefully stick to God's blueprints (the cross), and even when they do, they have no guarantee that their work will last
- 4: Teachers are Christ's servants. Instead of living a high profile celebrity life, they live an abused and rejected life.

Since the Corinthian teachers (as we will see) were living this high profile life, this chapter should come across as condemnation. The teachers need to quit regarding themselves as celebrities worthy of glory. The other Christians need to quit glorifying these teachers as celebrities. The teachers needed to regard themselves as servants. The Corinthians needed to regard their teachers as celebrities.

[If there are two chapters that I've inappropriately labeled 3 & 4. However, I have reasons why I have thus designated them. I have not labeled them according to their content, but rather the intention that Paul has. Paul wants the Corinthians to stop glorifying their teachers (3:21). To do this he gives a proper perspective of the nature of teachers. In chapter 3 he describes teachers as being workers, and then using metaphors for that image. In chapter 4 he says they are stewards and servants. I see this as being a description that is even lower than workers. Then he describes the apostles to be the lowest of all men. Since Paul's point is to stop the Corinthians from glorifying their teachers by painting the picture of their debased form, I have named these chapters according to that purpose.]

4:1-5

- 1: Teachers are regarded as servants and stewards
 - "Regard us": Paul wants to change their thinking. They are regarding (thinking) of their teachers in the wrong way. Here he is offering the proper way they should think about Paul, Apollos, and any other teacher.

I Corinthians Notes

- Servants: people that serve a master (a humble and lowly role)
 - This should already deflate the pride of the Corinthian teachers to learn they are just servants.
- Stewards: people that serve their master by being responsible over a particular object and/ or a particular task.
 - The object: the mysteries of God. They were responsible for the knowledge of God's mysteries.
 - The Task: they were responsible for sharing the mysteries of God (preaching the gospel).

The purpose of this verse is to encourage people to stop regarding teachers as glorified philosophers. Teachers are just servants and stewards. Consider the angels in Heb 1:14. People might regard angels as powerful superior beings. In some senses they are. However, this verse makes it clear that they are simply God's servants for our benefit. We can be given power, and have an important job, but we'll always be nothing more than God's servants.

- 2: Trustworthiness is the most highly regarded characteristic of a steward
 - If you were to evaluate the value of your servant, trustworthiness would be the key quality. How much can the master trust and depend on the steward to take care of the object and complete the task.
 - Who is the only person worthy of making this judgment? The master.
 - Everyone else's judgment is irrelevant. That's the point he makes in the next two verses.
- 3-4: Only the master's judgment matters.
 - Paul says it's no big deal if and how they judge him. He's not too concerned with their judgment.
 - Paul says that even if there was a human court set up and designated to evaluate Paul's worth as a teacher, he still wouldn't be concerned.
 - Why is he not concerned with their judgment? Because their judgment has no value.

What kind of judgment are we talking about? "Judge" is one of the most complicated words in the Bible because it's used in many different ways and is used (seemingly) contradictory. For instance, I Cor 5:12 makes it clear that Christians should judge each other. How do we explain this? In chapter 5 Paul is talking about judging other Christians obvious sins to be sinful. In chapter 4 Paul is talking about their human judgments based on physical things. This kind of judgment is attempting to determine the value of another Christian. They might say, "Yes, Paul is a wise and powerful teacher". Or they might say, "Paul is a foolish weak teacher". Paul says these judgements don't mean anything

- Why don't these judgements matter?
 - Paul doesn't even bother to judge himself. He says he considers himself innocent, but in the end, his own self appraisal has no value.
 - His own claim to innocence isn't what makes innocent. Only God's claim that He is innocent can prove that He is innocent.
 - Only the master's judgment matters.
 - It doesn't matter how the Corinthians regarded themselves or each other. It only matters how God judges them.
- 5: Stop making useless judgments
 - We need to stop making judgments because our judgments are:
 1. Meaningless
 2. Inaccurate

There are times we need to judge when it comes to absolute knowledge of someone's sins. Other times, when it comes to evaluating someone's worth, we need to realize we aren't in the role of judge. Our judgment accomplished nothing, either in justifying or condemning someone. Our judgment is inaccurate because we don't know the hearts of mind of people. Be slow to judge. Especially when it's not a matter of sin, and when no good can be accomplished by your judgments.

- Only God is in the role of judge
 - He has the authority to judge, being able to justify or condemn
 - He has the ability to judge, perfect knowledge

Let's be more patient to wait on God's perfect judgment for every individual, and stop playing this game of trying to determine and proclaim other people's value.

4:6-7:

- 6: Don't go beyond what is written and be arrogant against one another
 - "These things I applied to myself and Apollos"
 - Paul is the teacher that first brought the gospel. Apollos is another teacher that later further edified them.
 - He applies these ideas to himself, so he can more easily apply them to the Corinthians as well.
 - He calls himself a servant before he calls the Corinthians servants.

Let's be quick to help people accept teaching by first applying to ourselves when possible.

- "Don't go beyond what is written"
 - Don't go beyond what is already taught.
 - The Corinthians had earthly wisdom, and thus were busy trying to gain glory by coming up with their own ideas.
 - If you think of an idea yourself, you can be proud of your own wisdom.
 - But if you are thinking it up yourself, then you are going beyond what is written.
 - You aren't supposed to go beyond what is written, so when being a teacher of God, you shouldn't have anything to boast about.

This whole idea of going beyond is what gave them the ability to be arrogant against one another. "My ideas are better than your ideas!" But this arrogance shouldn't exist because there should be no competition between different people's contrived ideas.

Stewards are supposed to be responsible over what they've been entrusted. To be responsible over the mysteries of God, we need to keep it from ever being altered or adjusted. By others or even ourselves.

- 7: You aren't superior because it's not your wisdom
 - Superior?
 - Can a Bible teacher actually be superior?
 - Yes, if they came up with the ideas themselves.
 - But they didn't and shouldn't come up with anything themselves. Still they were proud of themselves as if they did.
 - Everything they had, they received (were taught); yet, they acted as if they came up with it themselves.
 - No Bible teacher has any reason to boast because no Bible teacher ever came up with anything on their own. Everything they know, they learned from someone else

EX: Beatles cover band. The Beatles are so popular, that people make careers playing their music. These cover bands don't write any music. They don't change the music. they try to be as close to the original as possible. The closer to the original the better. The band then only becomes a tribute to bring glory to the Beatles. No one seriously regards the Beatles band for anything more than copying someone else's great music. What reason would the cover band have to boast?

How do teachers boast today?

- Understood it by myself
- Don't rely on other people's lessons or notes
- Explain it better than others
- Understand a new meaning
- Find new ideas and teachings in the Bible
- Try to teach the Bible better than the Bible teaches itself

These are all different ways we might be tempted to take pride in our Bible teaching; however, the truly greatest Bible teacher only explains clearly what the Bible is already saying. No one has any ownership over this wisdom.

4:8-13

8-9: The Corinthian's high profile celebrity life vs. the life of an apostle

- The Corinthians were:
 1. Filled
 2. Rich
 3. Kings
- The apostles were:
 1. Last of all
 2. Condemned to death
 3. Spectacle (public embarrassment) to the world, angels, and men
- 10: The perspective of the apostles through human eyes
 - The Corinthians (according to their earthly wisdom) saw themselves to be:
 1. Wise
 2. Strong
 3. Honored
 - However, according to that earthly wisdom, the apostles are:
 1. Fools
 2. Weak
 3. Dishonored

This passage is meant to be taken as sarcasm. The Corinthians wanted the high profile life of a philosopher and they got it. However, that's not the life of a true Bible teacher. This comparison is meant to help them realize that their lives don't coincide with the apostolic example, and prove to them their understanding and actions are all wrong.

- 12-13: The apostles were treated like scum
 - Paul makes his point even clear by further describing their intense suffering:
 1. Manual labor to support themselves
 2. Reviled
 3. Persecuted
 4. Slandered
 5. The scum of the world. The garbage of the world

Suffering, not recognition, is the true mark of an apostle. The Corinthian teachers certainly didn't bear this mark. Of course, the apostles exhibit Christlike character through all the suffering. The Corinthians didn't even bear Christlike character through their "success".

Here are three quick applications that can be made:

1. Earthly comfort is not the sign of spiritual success.
2. Popularity is not the sign of a good Bible teacher.
3. Christians need to embrace suffering as part of the job description

4:14-21:

- 14: I write this to admonish you
 - Paul is finally ending his four chapter discussion about their pride and division
 - He is trying to admonish them to change.
 - Later he will shame them (6:5).
- 15: I am your father
 - You have many tutors (other teachers that come along to add to their understanding).
 - I am your only father. He taught them the gospel first.
 - This isn't a statement of authority (Mat 23:9).
 - This is a statement of relationship.
 - As a father he has leverage to correct and admonish them.
- 16: I am your example
 - Paul lives his life in such a way he can command people to do as he does
- 17: I'm sending Timothy
 - He is sending Timothy to help them repent before he gets there
- 18-20: I'm going to challenge those who are arrogant
 - Apparently teachers are already trying to turn people against Paul by making accusations that he's not planning to visit and he doesn't really care.
 - Paul challenges those men to back up their words with power. They have been claiming to have power all along. Paul knows better. It's just eloquence veiling foolishness. Paul has the real power straight from the Spirit of God.
- 21: The ultimatum
 - Paul says, "You can repent so I can come to encourage and comfort..."
 - ...Or you can continue in the flesh so I can beat it out of you with the rod."

Chapters 5-10: Moral Issues

I Corinthians 5: How To Handle Unrepentant Sin in the Church

Introduction:

Paul has finally finished his four chapter attack on the biggest problem the Corinthians had: their pride. Although he has stopped addressing that problem directly, throughout the book, we will see that Paul continues to mention their pride as the source of every other problem that they have.

They were proud of their teachers, earthly wisdom, and earthly power. Regardless of what fills us with pride, the result is still the same: proud people. Being proud affects every area of our spirituality and morality. Paul is going to make this clear by continuing to mention their pride as he discusses every other problem and issue they have.

How does pride affect every area of our life?

What's the greatest command? (Mark 12:29-31)

- Love God
- Love your neighbor

What's the opposite? Pride

- Love for self
 - Doesn't Jesus love others as we love ourselves? He's not encouraging selfishness, He's encouraging to love each other as much as we would selfishly desire to love ourselves.
 - Pride in action = love for self = selfishness

When we are proud, we are focused on ourselves, we will be selfish. To be proud and selfish is to open the door to hell for every evil to come and go as they wish. Let's see how the Corinthians' pride manifested selfishness in every aspect of their lives.

5:1-2

- 1: It is reported there is sexual immorality among you
 - The reported sexual immorality is a Christian of the Corinthian church having an adulterous relationship with his father's wife (step-mom).
 - This kind of sin is even considered perverted to the godless (then and today).
 - Apparently this sin was very well known to the congregation if even Paul learned about it.

The nature of this sin is:

- Flagrant: every one knows, yet done anyway
- Purposeful: not a mistake, but a decision to live in sin

I Corinthians Notes

- Unrepentant: no sign of a desire to conform to Christ's standards

What happens when a member of the church is living in this kind of sin?

- 2: They should have removed the man from their midst
 - This chapter is not about sexual immorality. It is about how they should handle this man's unrepentant sin
 - Paul isn't writing to condemn the man's immorality, that is already understood and accepted.
 - Paul is writing to condemn the church for doing nothing about it, and instruct them in what they should be doing.
 - Paul will address sexual immorality later
 - You have become arrogant.
 - How are they arrogant?
 - Are they bragging about this sin? No.
 - Their apathy and thoughtlessness towards this sin is a manifestation of their pride.

EX: I invite my friend over to play video games. He spills soda on the carpet. When my friend asks if we should clean the mess I say, "No. It's ok. It's just Mom's carpet. She'll be fine. I don't feel like cleaning it. She can deal with it herself later. Let's keep playing video games."

- Can you see the pride and arrogance? In like manner, our apathy towards the existence of sin comes from pride that disregards God and a desire to honor Him by keeping His house/ church clean.
- Their pride:
 - Remember, they thought they were so awesome. Then Paul brings up this disgusting and shameful sin and their sinful attitude towards it. What do they have to be proud of?
 - Yet, their pride is what led them to be so apathetic, so it's easy why they would still foolishly remain proud.
- Our pride:
 - Pride says, "love yourself".
 - The selfish thing to do is ignore the sin because that's easier for me.

The proper response

1. Mourn:
 - Instead of being apathetic toward God and His feelings, let's put ourself in God's shoes to understand and experience his feelings.
 - How does sin make God feel? Sad (Gen 6:6).
 - How should sin make us feel? Sad
2. Remove the unrepentant sinner from your midst:
 - A church that apathetically ignores sin is in sin.
 - Removing the sinner is the appropriate response.
 - Paul will explain why and how this is done.

5:3-5

- 3: Paul isn't physically there, but he still expresses his judgment against the man
 - Paul is absent in body, but present in spirit

I Corinthians Notes

- He isn't physically with that church, but because of his relationship and responsibility, he feels morally obligated to not be apathetic towards this sin, but instead to express his judgment against this sin.
- Removing an unrepentant sinner from the midst is something that is a church decision, but is also bigger than just the church itself. Other individuals need to respond to this person's sin properly
- 4: Paul's judgement
 - He's not there, but he still expresses his judgment:
 - "In the name of our Lord Jesus with the power of our Lord Jesus..."
 - Serious business
- 5: Deliver such a one to Satan
 - Such a one:
 - The case of flagrant, purposeful, unrepentant sin
 - Deliver to Satan
 - The world is in two categories: with Jesus or with Satan
 - What category did this man decide he wanted to be in? Satan
 - What category does the rest of the church need to identify him as being in? Satan
 - The church simply (as a last resort), let's this sinner go, while declaring him to be with Satan, so as not to approve his sin as being acceptable
 - It's a church wide declaration of the individual's unacceptable sinful life

FIRST OBLIGATION: For God's sake: disapprove the sin

Our first obligation for delivering such a one to Satan is to God. We don't want to be arrogant with apathy and approving sin. We need to be with God by standing in opposition to sin through our disapproval of sin

* Important note: the church doesn't determine a person's spiritual state. It's not like the person is saved until the church delivers him to Satan. The individual's salvation is determined by his condition before God, not the church. The church simply attempts to express God's judgment of an individual where we are able to make such judgments. A person can be lost while in fellowship with a church. A person can be saved though rejected by a church.

- Destruction of the flesh for the saving of his soul
 - Hopefully, the failure of the individual's physical life in sin will drive the person to spiritually restore his soul
 - The destruction of the flesh is two ways:
 - The self inflicted pain of a sinful life
 - The church inflicted pain by a loss of his spiritual family
 - Here we see that delivering one to Satan is:
 - Done out of love
 - In a hope for the individual to be saved in the end

SECOND OBLIGATION: For the sinner's sake: don't allow sin

The second obligation for delivering one to Satan is for the sinner's own good. If we ignore a person's sin, we allow them to stay in sin. It's as if we're holding their hand as they go to hell. We need to be more forceful. Even inflict authorized discipline if it will snatch them from the fire.

* Important note: the pain of losing a spiritual family is only felt if the individual had a spiritual family to begin with. It's not so painful to lose a relationship with judgmental people that never cared about you in the first place. We need to be such a close family if we ever want to have influence over someone as their defecting to Satan.

5:6-8

- 6: Sin is like leaven
 - Boasting is not good.
 - Paul reminds them again that this sin is because of their pride, and it gives them nothing to be proud of.
 - A little leaven leavens the whole lump
 - Leaven is what you put in dough to make the whole bread rise.
 - Leaven is the biblical symbol for influence. Just a little leaven influences the whole dough.
 - Good influence: Mat 13:33
 - Bad influence: Lk 12:1
 - Now Paul is going to talk about the influential nature of allowed unrepentant sin
- 7-8: The Passover feast
 - The metaphor:
 - The Passover feast was eaten to celebrate their deliverance from Egyptian slavery. The Israelites were commanded to remove all leaven from the entire household, then sacrifice the lamb to eat in the holy feast.
 - The significance:
 - We have been delivered from slavery to sin. Christ is the Passover lamb that was slain. Our christian life is this holy feast. The Corinthians were already celebrating this feast, but they didn't remove all the sin/ leaven from the church. We are supposed to eat this feast, and live this life, with no leaven/ sin; yet, the Corinthian church seemed pretty content to keep this sin in the church.
 - The result of allowing this sin in the church was an influence over the entire church
 1. Condemnation: the entire church is responsible for ignoring this sin. This man's sin condemned the whole church.
 2. Encouragement to sin: ignoring sin:
 - Lowers the standards of morality
 - Lowers expectations for morality
 - Encourages others to sin because it appears as if it doesn't matter, there's no consequence, and it's not really that important.

THIRD OBLIGATION: For the church's sake: don't encourage sin

The third obligation to deliver one to Satan is for the church's benefit. Ignoring sin in some members will encourage sin in other members. The whole church will be condemned for their proud arrogance and apathy towards sin. The church needs to address the sin so that it won't be immoral or condemned.

5:9-13

- 9: Don't associate with immoral people
 - "I had written to you"
 - Apparently Paul wrote a letter to them before I Corinthians. We'll talk about this more later.
 - He had also told them to not associate with immoral people. Now he will clarify what he meant by that
- 10: I wasn't saying, "don't associate with immoral world"
 - We are allowed to associate with the immoral world.
 - Disassociating ourselves from the immoral world would require leaving the world.
 - That is neither possible or practical
 - We can then consider the difference between association with the world and fellowship with the world.
- 11: Don't associate with immoral so-called brothers
 - There is a higher standard we have for fellow christians. Why?
 - The world didn't sign up to follow Christ. They didn't commit or promise.
 - Christians have signed up, agreed, committed, and promised themselves to Christ. Because of this commitment, the church is obligated to hold them to keep it.

EX: A woman knows some random guy committing fornication everywhere. That's bad, but it's not her business. A wife knows that her husband is committing adultery. That's bad, and it is also her business because he made a commitment and promise to her.

- Don't even eat with such a one.
 - Here we get good insight into the nature of this deliverance to Satan.
 - We remove them from the midst of assembly
 - But really we remove them from the midst of the people, of Christians
 - If someone has been delivered to Satan, we need to make it evident to that individual that our relationship with them has been destroyed because they've destroyed their relationship with God.
 - Any act of fellowship that communicates acceptance or tolerance of the person's sin is unacceptable.
 - We can't even have meal with them, lest they consider that they can still have fellowship with God's family though they have no fellowship with God Himself.
- 12: Don't judge outsiders. Judge insiders
 - We don't judge the world.
 - They didn't sign up to follow Christ, we don't condemn them for denying Him. God will condemn them.
 - We don't want God to condemn them, so we try to help them come to Christ. To do that we need to:
 - Help them see they are in sin (let them know they are condemned (different than condemning them (It's still God's business))).
 - Help them see they can be saved.
 - We do judge christians.
 - The church has been authorized to express God's judgment on an individual.
 - This is a responsibility
 - And obligation
 - Remove the person from your midst.
 - How do we judge? We declare them to be with Satan, and we remove them from the church.

- This quote is from Deut 13:5 where God gives the Israelites the authority and obligation to put to death those who commit certain sins.
- God is serious about how the church needs to address sin.

I Corinthians 6:1-8: Law Suits

Introduction:

In chapters 1-4 we learned the the biggest Corinthian problem was pride. This pride led to division in the church, but we also see that it led to a whole lot more problems than just division. Paul is now addressing many other problems they have, while making it clear that pride is what's causing the problems. Pride in fact is the source of virtually every sin we commit. If we remain prideful, it will affect every part of our life. How so?

How does pride affect every area of our life?

What's the greatest command? (Mark 12:29-31)

- Love God
- Love your neighbor

What's the opposite? Pride

- Love for self
 - Pride = selfishness
 - Selfishness leads to a world of iniquity
 - Pride is an attitude that is manifested by selfish actions.

In chapter 5, their pride was manifested by their selfish attitude of ignoring blatant sin in God's church.

In chapter 6, their pride will be manifested by these selfish actions:

1. Lawsuits among the brethren
2. Sexual immorality

6:1-6 (The problem)

- 1: You dare take your neighbor before human courts?
 - Case: what are the cases these people have against their brother?
 - These would be civil cases/ people's court
 - Financial, property, etc...

EX: I allow someone to borrow my car and they wreck it. I'm willing to forgive, but I expect them to cover the financial loss. They claim that it's not their property or their responsibility, and therefore they are unwilling to pay. I will not accept that as an answer, therefore I take them before a human court to the government to force them to pay.

- Neighbor: this is referring to anybody
 - Later we see this is referring to disputes between the church members (6:6-7).
 - But the principles apply to everybody (8).

I Corinthians Notes

- Go before unrighteous judge and not saints?
 - Instead of the Christians solving their own disputes, they need to go before the worldly courts to solve their problems.
 - This shows that the sins of these law suits are two fold:
 1. Not being able to solve their own disputes
 2. Resorting to human courts to solve their disputes
- 2-3: Christians should be equipped to judge these matters
 - Saints will judge others
 1. Saints judge the world
 2. Saints judge angels
 - How will we judge?
 - Noah condemned the world by his righteous example (Heb 11:7)
 - His being righteous proved that everyone else could've/ should've done the same, but they didn't
 - The same refers to us. We are to be this higher standard by which the unrighteous world is judged.
 - If we are this higher standard, why can't we solve our own disputes?
 - Christians are expected to be able to handle these simple matters:
 1. Trivial cases (2)
 2. Matters of this life (3)
- 4-6: Yet they are resorting to human courts to solve their problems
 - No account in the church
 - They are taking people who don't follow Christ submit to His wisdom, and using them as their standard to judge people that follow Christ and submit to His wisdom
 - I say this to your shame
 - It's an embarrassment to them. It's an embarrassment to Christ.
 - No one wise among you? You must go before unbelievers?

EX: This is like a father resorting to his oldest child for solutions to his marital problems. The child isn't equipped with the wisdom. The father is supposed to be.

- As Christians we are equipped with the greatest wisdom available, so why can't we solve our own problems? Why do we need help from earthly courts?

Judge the world:

- Christians are supposed to be better than the world. We have been given the mind of God (and all His wisdom) by the Spirit. We have been touched by the love of God by the cross of Jesus.
 - When a Christian can't get along with another Christian it is the greatest living blasphemy around.
 - It's the claim our God is fake, He's not wise, He never taught us how to love, He never taught us patience.
 - Continued disputes and unresolved conflicts are ABSOLUTELY sinful.
 - Whether or not we take each other to court.

How does all of this manifest their pride?

Paul knows their biggest problem is pride, and he knows that all their sins are coming from this one terrible source.

- Paul used the example of this terrible sin in chapter 5 to humble them.

- Paul is using this example of their lawsuits to humble them.

How does he do this?

You claim to be so wise?

They were proud because they thought they were wise. Paul shows them they are not wise.

- Are you not competent? (2)
- Is there no wise man among you that can decide between his brothers? (5)
- The smallest courts (2)
- Matters of this life (3)

They claim to be so wise, and yet they're not wise enough to handle these simple problems? Wow. They must be fools. Paul continues:

Do you not know?

They claimed to be wise and know so much, yet Paul kept asking them, "do you not know?"

- Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? (2)
- Do you not know that we will judge angels? (3)
- Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of heaven? (9)
- Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? (15)
- Do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? (16)
- Do you not know that your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit? (19)
- Also in I Cor 3:16; 5:6; 9:13, 24 (10 times total in the book!)

This is supposed to be embarrassing. He's implying this is really simple stuff, and he's in shock they don't understand (or at least don't live as if they understand) these most basic and simple truths. Not wise after all, huh?

Ignorant? Or selfish?

Of course the problem wasn't that they were ignorant of these things, or unable to understand these things. The real problem was they were proud, and therefore selfish. Pride that created their selfishness is what made them unable to solve their own disputes and eventually go before human courts.

- Ironically, in 5 they were condemned for not judging somebody.
 - There were sins against God, and they selfishly didn't defend Him
- In chapter 6, these are sins against them.
 - All of a sudden they are ready for justice! Why?
 - They weren't concerned for God
 - They weren't concerned for the sinner
 - They were only concerned for themselves
 - If there was some possibility that they were ignoring the man's sin in chapter 5 just because they wanted to be nice and not hurt his feelings is completely gone because of this chapter. It's clear that they are not nice or concerned about other people's feelings when it comes to sins against themselves. Why? Because they are selfish!
 - It's "My money, my property, my rights! You can't get away with this, you have to pay me, you have to fix it, how dare you!" kind of selfishness.

Can we see how pride led to this sin? Can we see the division within the church?

No Division:

- The Corinthians were so selfish that they didn't care about anybody else.
- This lack of love for others encouraged them to commit great sin and evil against each other.
- They were enemies as described in the first 4 chapters. They weren't family. They weren't even friends.
 - If we aren't genuinely close to one another, we will commit all kinds of evil.
 - We need to stay a united affectionate body of people. A family.

6:7-8 (The solution)

- 7: If you go to court, you've already lost
 - They were so focused on winning their earthly battle for money and property.
 - In the process they lost the real spiritual battle.
 - We go through earthly fights to win, but engaging in that fight means you've automatically lost in God's eyes.
 - Why not just lose?
 - What's the solution? Stop fighting the earthly battle. Surrender that battle. Lose that battle
 - Doing so guarantees our victory before God. We've won over our pride and selfishness. That's the real battle we want to win.

Resolving Disputes:

- Christians need to be able to resolve disputes because of their humility and deference towards one another.
- If a dispute is not resolved, that's the first sin this chapter condemns. Someone in that dispute (if not both) is in sin.
- If you are trying to resolve the dispute, but the other party is being unreasonable and unwilling to defer, simply lose the battle and keep the sin limited to that single party.
 1. Do not become guilty of sin by being unable to resolve the conflict.
 2. Do not become further guilty by taking that person to a human court.

If we take someone to court, does it really resolve the issue?

- Two people disagree because there is selfish desire. Both refuse to relent
- They go to a human court because the government has the authority to force one party to relent.
- There is no resolution.
 - A single party is forced to lose.
 - But there is still no peace between either parties.
- 8: You wrong and defraud even your brethren
 - Unfortunately the Corinthians were failing to live by these principles

Rule or spiritual principle?

- So now we have the rule: "Don't sue your christian brother right." Is this a new rule? Would this rule not have existed if it wasn't stated here?
 - Jesus laid down these principles already
 - Mat 5:40: If someone wants to sue you for your coat, give him your shirt also.
 - There are already principles in place that automatically mean we can't sue our Christian brothers.
 - Is it just for brothers?

- 6:1 condemns taking our neighbor to court
- 6:8 says that they do this “even to their brethren”. The implication is that it’s bad to do it towards their neighbor, and how much worse to their brother.
- Jesus was talking about our neighbors and enemies in Mat 5. It’s not just towards our brothers.
 - It’s not a sin that we can’t resolve disputes with the world if they’ve refused to live according to Christ, but it is a sin to take them to court.

I Corinthians 6:9-20: Sexual Immorality

Introduction:

Pride led to sexual immorality.

They thought they were wise. Followed earthly wisdom. Here was the modern philosophy that was influencing them:

- We are made of two parts: body and mind. Salvation is from the mind. We are saved and made righteous by our mind; therefore, what our body does is irrelevant if you know better. Our body will just be destroyed, so the sins we commit with our body are not so bad. We just need to understand.

Result: justifying their sexual immorality

Their pride in their wisdom made them swallow this.

But really, they wanted to believe it because they wanted to selfishly fulfill their desires.

6:9-11

- 9: The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God
 - Convince someone their sinning? You can’t if they don’t want to believe it.
 - The ultimatum: keep sinning, don’t go to heaven

9-10: List of some unrighteous people

- Sadly, this letter makes it clear that the Corinthians were still practicing these sins. The chapter number is given by each sin.
 - Fornicators (6)
 - Idolaters (10)
 - Adulterers (5)
 - Effeminate: literally “soft to the touch”. Used to describe some linens. It was a figurative euphemism for a catamite (a young boy used as a sexual partner for older men)
 - Homosexuals: literally “male - bed”. The same “bed” that is used in Hebrews 13:14.
 - Thieves (6)
 - Covetous (6)

I Corinthians Notes

- Drunkards (11)
- Revilers
- Swindlers (6)

11: Such were some of you

- God sees them as these sins being their past. How could that be so?
- You were washed
 - What does this refer to?
 - Their baptism into Christ washing away their sins (Acts 22:16)
- You were sanctified
 - Being sanctified means being set apart and made holy.
 - How could these people be holy? They are still so sinful. How does this work?
 - Sanctification is:
 - Something that happens at the moment of our baptism and remains constant regardless of how successfully we live as disciples (1 Cor 1:2)
 - Something that God will continue to work on until He comes (1 Thes 5:23)
 - Something that happened in the past, but is a continual process (Heb 10:14)
- When they were washed of their sins, they were set apart and made holy. That's how God sees them. Yet, He is still working to sanctify them in their conduct. Their conduct should already be changed. This is unacceptable.

When we've been redeemed by the blood of Christ, we belong to God regardless of our behavior. We need to live by faith, and His grace is going to cover our sins until we have sanctified conduct to match our sanctified position before Him. Now should we stop living by faith, we don't have His grace to cover our sins, but if we stay humble and seek to live for Him, He will patiently deal with us until we are fully sanctified. If God could be patient with the Corinthians, He will be patient with you.

Homosexuality:

Some of them were homosexuals, but aren't anymore.

- We need to be willing to work to help and convert people committing that sin.
- How does someone quit being homosexual?
 - How do you quit being an adulterer? Quit committing adultery.
 - How do you quit being a homosexual? Quit committing homosexuality.

6:12-14

- 12: All things are lawful
 - Here Paul is quoting a phrase they use to advocate the body/mind philosophy.
 - In general it's a statement that is meant to justify bad conduct.
 - The same phrase is mentioned in the same verse.
 - And again in 10:13 when they were trying to justify their idolatry.

Here's what the Corinthians were thinking:

"With our minds, we know better, and since we know better, actions with our body are okay and lawful. If we know better, all things are lawful."

Examples of justifying sins because we know better:

- Guys telling inappropriate jokes around other christian guys because we "know that it's not good, but we can joke about it." i.e. homosexual jokes.

I Corinthians Notes

- Participating in inappropriate media because we “know better”. It’s not like I’m actually going to do these things. I’m just listening to this stuff.
- The best example is in I Cor 10:13 when they were participating in idolatry and excusing it because they knew idols were fake. We don’t really believe in this stuff, so I can do it anyways.

EX: Does this work? Actor husband love scene is ok?

- Paul’s response:
 - Not all things are profitable: Even if something is “ok”, it’s still not necessarily something helpful to do.
 - I will not be mastered by anything: Even if something is “ok”, it’s sinful if it has control over us (“addictions”).

However, these things were not even lawful, regardless of what the Corinthians thought. Paul will convince them these actions are sinful.

- 13: The body is not for immorality
 - Food is for the stomach
 - Quote saying body has right to fulfill it’s natural desires.
 - God will do away with both
 - This implies that the physical will be destroyed, so what the body does isn’t important.
 - What really matters is the mind. Have the proper knowledge and understanding, and you’ll be fine regardless of your body’s actions.
 - The body is not for immorality
 - Is the body for sex? Yes
 - In what context? Marriage
 - Sex outside of marriage is immorality
 - Is the body for immorality? No!
 - Any sexual activity outside of marriage is against God’s purpose for us.
 - The body is for the Lord, and Lord for the body
 - Like animals we have natural desires
 - Unlike animals, we have the expectation and ability to submit these desires to God’s moral standards.

We are spirit in our body. The truest expression of who we are is how our spirit controls our body. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. The whole purpose of being a christian is walking by the spirit while living in the flesh.

- 14: God will raise the body
 - They though body didn’t matter. It would die and go away.
 - They didn’t even believe in the resurrection (I Cor 15). That’s another sign of these modern philosophies they accepted.
 - Yet, God will raise our body on the last day and transform it to His glory. The body does matter.
 - We will have a body before the presence of God in heaven. Live accordingly in your physical body before the presence of God on earth.

Paul will now present two very compelling arguments of why it is so wicked to use our body for sexual immorality:

1. Your body is joined to Jesus
2. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit

6:15-17

- 16: Sex is joining yourself to someone
 - If you join yourself to a prostitute, it's not some casual thing, you're joining your body to her as one flesh
 - Paul quotes Gen 2:24 to remind them of God's sever intentions for sexual intimacy.
 - Marriage is such a close bond, it's like being one body. Love your wife as yourself, etc...
 - Sex is literally becoming one flesh to symbolize and celebrate this incredible bond
 - God makes that physical bond pleasurable to reward and motivate the couple to accomplish their real emotional bond to one another.
 - The intimacy of sex is represents the intimacy of marriage

Sex outside of marriage is sex without commitment or intimacy. It's empty, pointless, vain. It's K-Mart brand sex. It's El Mundo brand sex. People that give their bodies to sexual pleasure without commitment unknowingly lose the real pleasure of intimacy that makes sex so valuable and satisfying.

- 15: Joining Jesus to a prostitute
 - Your body has been joined to Christ in marriage.
 - Joining your body to a prostitute is then joining Jesus to a prostitute.
 - It's blasphemous to portray Jesus as fornicating. How much worse to do it yourself with fornication.
- 17: We are one spirit with God
 - We can't sin with our body or our mind.
 - Our body and spirit both are joined to God.

6:18-20

- 18: Flee immorality
 - Sometimes we fight, sometimes temptations we flee from
 - We flee from enemies we can't conquer. The Bible portrays sexual temptation as something we aren't expected to conquer. How do we keep from committing sexual sin?
 - Enter into sexually tempting situations with the expectation that you will have enough will power to remain pure? No!
 - Avoid as much sexual temptation as is possible! As much as is in our power, don't let yourself be tempted.
 - Immorality is a sin against the body
 - They would think that sinning with your body is somehow less sinful.
 - Paul says it's a sin against your own body.
 - You betray your own body by very literally turning your body into the tool for sin. Sex requires every part of your body in a very literal sense
 - You become the gun that Satan uses to murder with.
- 19: Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit
 - The temple is where God figuratively dwells. This represents His close relationship with you.
 - Will you use that close relationship as an excuse to sin?
 - Will you fornicate in God's living room for Him to see?
 - Will you use His house as a convenient place to commit sin?
- 20: Glorify God with your body
 - You are not your own

- No human is free.
 - We are either owned by Satan
 - Or we are owned by Jesus
- We don't have the authority to decide what we can and can't do.
- We have a master who tells us.

- You were bought
 - Why are we owned by Christ? He bought us.
 - We were slaves of Satan until Christ paid the price to own us.
 - So don't serve Satan. Serve Jesus.

- Glorify God with your body
 - This is why Christ bought us.
 - As slaves let's fulfill this function.

I Corinthians 7: Marriage Instruction

Introduction:

Paul had just finished condemning sexual immorality outside of marriage; whether fornication and adultery. He successfully argued it's exceedingly sinful nature by teaching:

1. Your body is joined to Jesus
2. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit

Now, however, Paul is dealing with people that consider sex in marriage to be disadvantageous as well. This will lead Paul to discuss many things concerning marriage.

7:1-6 (To the married concerning marriage)

- 1: It is good for a man not to touch a woman
 - Now concerning the matters about which you wrote
 - Paul is writing these things in response to things they previously written him.
 - 7:1 Starts a new section where Paul addresses the many questions they had written to him in that previous letter:
 - 7:1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote...
 - 7:25 Now concerning virgins...
 - 8:1 Now concerning meats sacrificed to idols...
 - 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts...
 - 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints...

- The first 6 chapters deal with the issues Paul heard about from Chloe's people.
- Chapter 7 and onward deal with the issues that they wrote about in their previous letter.

I Corinthians Notes

- Imagine they only intended to hear about the things they wrote about. I expect it was an unwelcome surprise when Paul began to condemn them for things they would've hoped remained a secret.
- It is good for a man not to touch a woman
 - This is what they wrote to Paul. They said this for one of two reasons:
 1. In response to what Paul had said regarding sexual immorality in a previous letter led them to believe that sex even within marriage was disadvantageous.
 2. They were being influenced by modern schools of philosophy that advocate celibacy is a preferred higher standard of living that exhibits more self control and self denial.
 - The second reasoning is more likely. In regards to their **PRIDE** we might expect some of the Corinthians are pursuing celibacy to be able to have pride in their "higher standard" of living.
 - Of course many other Corinthians, being guided by other schools of philosophy, were quite content to live in adultery and fornication as if it was acceptable.
 - This poor church is in sad condition indeed.

Why Celibacy?

Why would the Corinthians be convinced that celibacy is better?

1. Sex has been perverted: to the point that sex itself seems like the problem. Sex itself is an evil desire.
 - This is why people have taught that marital sex shouldn't be enjoyed. It should only be used as something to make babies.
2. Righteous examples: Jesus lived a celibate life. The apostle Paul, their father, lived a celibate life as well. This would certainly teach that celibacy is preferred to marriage and sexual intercourse.
 - This is why others have forced people, such as ministers, priests, nuns, etc into living a celibate life to enhance their spirituality.

Is this what God wants? He wants us to get the idea that sex is bad therefore people should be forced to live celibate? We shouldn't get married? **1 Tim 4:3** makes it very clear. That isn't the case. God says people who teach against marriage are teaching a doctrine of demons. We will come up with very wrong ideas and conclusions if we don't have a comprehensive understanding of all things taught in the Bible.

- 2: Each man should have his own wife
 - Because of temptations
 - Marriage doesn't solve all of our problems with sexual temptation, but marriage is the one context in which God has authorized us to have sexual relations.
 - He made us to be sexual. We are designed to have desire to have sex.
 - Marriage is the only place we can lawfully satisfy that desire.
 - It has been this way since the beginning (Gen 2:26).
 - In that sense it solves sexual temptation, but it doesn't take away other sexual perversions that we've formed before we come into marriage.
 - Have his own wife
 - It doesn't say to "get a wife". It says to have his wife. Meaning if you are married, have your wife. Act as a husband.
 - Have that sexual relationship with her. That's what we should do.

Sex & marriage

- Sex within marriage is great. Sex outside of marriage is terrible. (Heb 13:4)

I Corinthians Notes

- Marriage is extremely demanding relationship that requires more active love than any other relationship.
- Sex is both:
 1. The reward for committing to love that much
 2. The motivation for the couple to continue to love each other enough
- Lack of marital sex is:
 1. Symptom of a bad marriage
 2. Cause for a bad marriage
- Celibacy in marriage is a completely wrong answer. It has no benefit whatsoever.
- 3-4: Marital sex is a act of service to your spouse
 - Spouse should fulfill his or her duties to his or her spouse
 - Your body belongs to your spouse

Marital sex is for giving not taking

The only appropriate context for sex is marriage. Sex within marriage is an act of service, not selfishness. Sex is not about serving ourselves. Consider the implications this idea has on masturbation.

Marital sex is not about taking:

- Husbands: can't demand sex all the time for the sole purpose of fulfilling the sexual desire you have. Your wife isn't your sex object you can selfishly use for your own purposes whenever you want.
- Wives: can't withhold sex as forms of punishment for something wrong he has done or manipulation to get him to do something else.

Marital sex is about giving:

- Husbands: give to your wife the relationship and investment of time and care she really wants which is what makes the sexual relation more desirable and satisfying to her.
- Wives: acknowledge that your husband is going to have a greater physical desire more often, and be willing to have relations with him to help satisfy that (even when you're not in the mood).
- 5-6: Temporary time away from spouse is acceptable
 - Paul says that it is acceptable to have short time away from your spouse to devote yourself to undistracted spiritual devotion.
 - He says this by concession. This means he didn't come up with this idea because he thinks it's such a great idea. He means that this is the only form of celibacy within marriage that might have some benefit.

7:7-9 (Unmarried)

- 7: Paul wishes more were single like him
 - Paul was single. He sees advantages of being single.
 - Being married during the imminent persecution would be challenging (v 26).
 - Being married carries many earthly responsibilities that can distract you from serving God(32-35).
 - The benefits of celibacy

- There are advantages of being unmarried.
- To be unmarried means you must remain celibate.
- The abstinence alone has no benefit however. If you are married, have your wife.
- Each has his own gift
 - The commitment to remain unmarried is a spiritual gift that not everyone will want to do, can do, or should do (i.e. Paul didn't marry. Peter did).
 - This is what Jesus says in (Mat 19:10-12).
 - Therefore, remaining unmarried has to be a personal choice. It can't be something enforced.
 - Jesus doesn't force it.
 - Paul doesn't force it (35).
 - The Holy Spirit condemns those who force others not to (I Tim 4:1-3).
 - Does the Catholic church fall in line with this doctrine?
- 8: Paul suggests widows and widowers remain unmarried
 - During present situations, Paul sees benefits of widowed individual to remain as they are and not seek a wife.
- 9: Marry instead of sin
 - However, if you're tempted to be sexually active, make sure you do it the right way: in marriage.

7:10-11 (To the married concerning divorce)

- 10: To the married
 - "Not I, the Lord"
 - Paul is teaching about marriage, but He doesn't provide any new information from the Spirit, but instead quotes Jesus' words about divorce.
 - Jesus says, "What God has joined, let no man separate" (Mat 19:4-9).
- 11: What the already divorced should do
 - Be joined to your spouse.
 - Your commit to your spouse stands even if you say you're divorced. Only divorce for adultery will dissolve marriage in God's eyes. So if divorced, be joined to your spouse again.
 - Remain single
 - If you can't be rejoined to your spouse, then stay single

Divorce:

- Divorce is sin, whether or not you remarry.
- If you've divorced your spouse, you need to be rejoined to them.
- Sometimes you can't be rejoined to your spouse.
 - They don't want you back.
 - They've remarried.
 - Etc.
- In that case, stay single
- Is divorce permissible since Jesus says, "remain unmarried"?
- Is sin acceptable because there is a sacrifice? (I Jn 2:1-2).
- Just because there is instruction for when we sin, it doesn't excuse our sin.

7:12-16 (To those married to non-christians)

- 12-13: "I say"
 - "I say, not the Lord"
 - Is this Paul giving his opinion (like in 25)?
 - Jesus already commanded that we can't divorce. Paul is going to reaffirm that. So it's not a matter of opinion because it's conforming to the teaching of Jesus.
 - If we say it is just an opinion, it's not binding, and then we can divorce, but that would be against what Christ has previously said.
 - Many suggest, Paul has quoted what was already taught by Christ, and is now by the inspiration of the Spirit, bringing more teaching regarding being married to non-christians.
 - If your unbelieving spouse wishes to remain married, then remain married.
 - Their unbelief isn't a reason to divorce. This shouldn't be a surprise.
 - Perhaps several christians were converted, but their spouse wasn't. They might consider being married to a non-christian to be sinful. Or having a sexual relationship with their non-christian spouse to be even worse.

14: Unbeliever is sanctified by believing spouse

- Don't think that your previous marriage commitment and sexual relationship with your spouse makes you a worse person.
- It's about you sanctifying them, making them better.
- It's not about their salvation (16). It's about setting them apart to make them better, as opposed to them making you evil. This is particularly regarding the sexual relationship.

We have some relationships that are bigger than our christianity. Not more important, but bigger. You are a child before a christian. Sometimes you are a spouse before you are a christian. Your christianity is about having a relationship with God within those relationships. If you are married to a non-christian, you need to be a christian within that relationship.

- 15: You are not a slave
 - If the non-christian leaves you, let them leave. You are not under bondage.
 - Bondage is a term for slavery. It doesn't refer to marriage.
 - You are married to the person. Not their slave.
 - If they leave you, let them leave. You are not condemned if you don't follow with them to continue to be their spouse.
 - This does NOT permit remarriage. It doesn't even address the question. The divorced individual never has the right to remarry (Mat 5:31-31).
- 16: How do you know whether or not you will save your spouse
 - This is just reasoning to help them accept this point better.
 - Apparently it could be rendered with this connotation as well: "Who knows? Maybe you will save your wife?" That would obviously be referring to verse 14 more than 15.

7:17-24

- Remain as you are
 - We've been called under many different social statuses.
 - Becoming a christian doesn't mean we have to change our social status.
 - God accepts all people as they are.
 - Some were tempted to try to elevate their status by accepting this philosophy of celibacy.

- Paul is simply saying, “No. That’s no helpful. That’s not even necessary. If you’re already married, then be married. If you’re single, you’re welcome to stay single.
- Stay in adulterous marriage?
 - What if before you were a christian, you were married, then divorced, and then remarried. Currently you are living in an adulterous relationship. Are you allowed to stay in that adulterous relationship after you get baptized?
 - Here Paul is talking about social status. It’s not about sin.
 - If you were a prostitute before being a christian, can you remain a prostitute as a christian? No. You need to repent.
 - If you are an adulterer before baptism, can you remain an adulterer after baptism? No. You need to repent.

7:25-31 (To virgins)

- 25: Concerning virgins
 - Paul gives his opinion (which he holds highly) that virgins should remain unmarried.
- 26: The reason is the present persecution
 - How much harder would it be to stand up for Jesus if they were threatening your wife? If they were gonna kill you and leave your three children fatherless?
- 27: Stay as you are
 - If you’re single, stay single.
 - If married, stay married.
- 28: It’s not sin to marry
 - Paul makes it clear it’s not sinful to marry, he just doesn’t recommend it.
- 29-31: This world is passing
 - Soon it’s going to be like all our physical circumstances never were.
 - Are you in a miserable marriage? Well, don’t sin. Remain married. It will all be over soon.
 - Are you miserably single? Well, get over it. It will all be over soon anyway.

Even life long circumstances aren’t that long. Being single? We can handle that. It’s not the end of the world. Most young people are inclined to think it’s the end of the world. They don’t need older people encouraging them to become exasperated as if it is the worst thing possible to remain single. It’s ok.

7:32-35

- 32-34: Free from concern
 - Marriage is a physical thing. There is no marriage in heaven.
 - It’s a beautiful invention from God.
 - It is the most powerful relationship on the planet. It is even sufficient to describe Christ’s relationship with us.
 - It is however a physical relationship that is EXCEEDINGLY demanding.
 - For that reason, Paul remained unmarried
 - He wanted to have undivided devotion to God.

- 35: Not a restraint
 - Paul is making is VERY clear that any time he suggests remaining single, it's not a command from God.
 - Never should man hold another to remain unmarried. It's a doctrine of demons.

7:36-38 (To fathers of virgins)

- As a father, you might see the nobility of protecting your virgin daughter from marriage in a challenging time of persecution.
- Or maybe you feel like you are torturing your daughter by keeping her from marriage.
- Whatever decision you make isn't sinful. Be wise and loving.

7:39-40

39: Marriage is for life

- The law of marriage is binding until death.
- Death however dissolves the marriage, or rather, fulfills the marriage.
- If you've committed till death, once they die, God has held your commitment fulfilled, and then you are free to remarry another.

40: Paul suggests remaining single

I Corinthians 8: Don't Abuse Your Rights and Be a Stumbling Block

Introduction:

Chapter 8 marks the beginning of another complicated three chapter discussion regarding meats sacrificed to idols and whether Christians can eat meat sacrificed to idols or not.

Remember, the biggest problem the Corinthians had was their pride. They were proud of their knowledge and power. That prideful attitude is what led to their selfishness. This chapter we will see their pride and it's manifested selfishness once more.

8:1-3:

- 1: Now concerning meats sacrificed to idols...
 - They had written to Paul asking about meat that has been sacrificed to pagan gods.

Pagan idolatry:

The Roman society was very polytheistic. There were many gods that all served different purposes. Many temples would be set up in honor of these many different gods. Pagans would then spend their life trying to appease all of these different gods by multiple sacrifices. Paganism was just a part of culture. It's not like you just go to pagan church on Sundays. If there was a town meeting, it could very well have some honor for a god. If there was a wedding, it could very well incorporate worship of a god. Paganism was everywhere in everyday. This would provide many challenges for a monotheistic Christian who isn't supposed to worship idols.

The circumstances:

1. Idol Temples: there were temples set up in honor of certain gods (8:10). These temples would be sacrificing animals to these gods, so there would be this food available to eat. It was a combination of a place of worship, a restaurant, and a place for social gatherings like weddings and birthday parties. All the events and food sacrificed would be in honor and worship of the god of that temple
2. Meat in the marketplace: not all the meat sacrificed would be eaten. The temples would then sell the meat to the marketplace (10:25). In the marketplace, it wasn't connected to idol worship. There wouldn't even be any way to tell where it came from. It was just meat for sale
3. Dinner at a pagan's house: Pagan's would also invite their Christian friends over for dinner (10:27). This meat could've been sacrificed to a god previously, but the christian wouldn't necessarily know. This meat would then also be outside the context of idol worship. It's just meat.

The question:

Is it okay for a Christian to eat meat sacrificed to idols?

- It was such a common practice, that the Christians would be tempted to continue their involvement in idolatry.
- However, it's pretty obvious that idol worship is sinful.
 - All the OT passages
 - These NT passages:
 - Acts 15:28
 - Rev 2:14, 20
- The answer is, it is sinful for the Corinthians to be eating meat sacrificed to idols.
- What is complicating the issue for the Corinthians?

The complication:

If it's so obviously wrong to worship idols, how could the Corinthians be justifying their worship of idols?

- Knowledge: the Corinthians Christians learned that there were no other gods and therefore idols are fake.

How does this knowledge complicate the issue?

- Did the Israelites know the gods they worshipped were fake? No they didn't. So any involvement in idolatry was obviously worship.
- Some of the Corinthians however knew that these gods were fake; therefore, the conclusion is:
 - If you know it's fake, you can participate in idolatry without actually worshipping the idol
- The Corinthians were proud because they understood this, therefore they strongly believed they had the right to be involved in these idol sacrifices. They did selfishly participated in these sacrifices without thinking about how it affects their brother or God.

The conclusion:

Is this assumption true? Can you really participate in idolatry without worshipping these false gods? I think the answer to that is yes; however, Paul is going to teach that:

1. Worshipping idols is sin (8)

I Corinthians Notes

2. Participating in idolatry is sin as well (whether you are worshipping or not) (10)

In chapters 8 and 9 Paul deals with their selfish attitude about having the right to partake in idol sacrifices.

- Hence the titles:
 8. Don't abuse your rights and be a stumbling block
 9. Paul gives up his rights to not be a hindrance

In chapter 10 Paul condemns their participation in idol sacrifices

- Hence the title:
 10. Flee Idolatry

1: We all have knowledge

- Here is the Corinthian pride that they have this great knowledge and understanding.
- We are going to see this knowledge is their understanding of monotheism

• 2: Knowledge puffs up; love builds up

- Knowledge makes arrogant
 - Knowledge alone can make one proud and a "know-it-all" (II Tim 3:1-9)
 - This was their problem
- Love edifies
 - Loving is what's going to put this knowledge into proper action
 - They didn't love their brothers, so their pride made them use this knowledge for selfish purposes

• 3: If you love, you are known by God

- Hey Corinthians, how much you know isn't what makes you great
- Being known by God is what matters!
- So don't be arrogant about knowledge. That doesn't help. Start loving so God will know you.

8:4-6

- 4-6: an idol has no real existence. There is one God.
 - Here is the Corinthians knowledge: they know gods are fake, because there is only one God.
 - This is true knowledge of course.
 - However, because they are proud, it makes them use this knowledge selfishly
 - They selfishly use this knowledge to justify participating in idol sacrifices regardless of their brother and God.

8:7-10

- 7: Not all possess this knowledge
 - Not all of the Corinthians were completely strong in their faith of one true God. They still thought polytheistically.
 - Or even if they knew there was only one true God intellectually, deep down they still had respect or fear for these false gods.

EX: Superstition: when people grow up superstitious, they can learn pretty quickly that superstitions are fake, but they still get nervous when a black cat crosses their path. Or they don't do anything dangerous on Fri 13.

I Corinthians Notes

- 7: They are defiled
 - This brother because of his weak understanding and faith will in fact be worshipping the idol if he participates in the idolatry.
 - It is sinful to worship idols, therefore, he is defiling his conscience and sinning.
- 8: Food will not commend or condemn
 - The food isn't what matters. Meat is meat.
 - Some of the Corinthians had enough faith to know that meat sacrificed to an idol is still just meat
- 9: Don't abuse your rights and be a stumbling block
 - However because some Corinthians had this knowledge, they selfishly participated in idol worship which encourages weaker brethren to worship the idols.

The Corinthians were glad they had this knowledge because they thought it gave them the freedom to participate in these sacrifices. They saw it as their right. They didn't care if other people thought it was wrong. They would say, "Hey quit being so stupid and weak in the faith. Why don't you just come along with us?"

- 10: If he sees you eating in the idol temple
 - If he sees your example by participating in the idol worship, he will be influenced to do that, and in his weak faith, will worship the idol and be sinning.
 - So because of your example, you are causing someone to sin

8:11-13

- 11: You destroy the one for whom Christ died
 - Because of their knowledge, they destroy their brother by encouraging them to sin.
 - What selfishness. Is eating meat really worth causing someone to sin?
 - Jesus Christ was willing to give up His life to take away sin.
 - Are you not willing to give up meat so to keep your brother from sin?

We can be so selfish! We selfishly try to justify questionable behavior and we aren't at all thinking about how it affects others. Every decision we make needs to be about helping others stay from sin.

- Guys making out with girls
 - Guys want the right to have intimate pleasure with a girl they're not married to and cause her to commit all kind of sin she never would've done otherwise
 - Can we sacrifice sexual pleasure for the sake of our sisters?
- Girls dressing modestly
 - They have the right to look good and fashionable, and are more interested in that than the affect it has on their brother.
 - Can we sacrifice fashion for the sake of our brothers?
- 12: You are sinning
 - If you cause someone else to sin, you are guilty
 - Your participation in idol sacrifices is sinful because you are guilty or encouraging others to sin
- 13: Paul will give up any right
 - Paul is willing to give up any right completely if it's for the benefit of his brother.
 - We need to have this same kind of attitude to help our brothers.

Two more applications:

How does this principle help today?

- The application for the Corinthians is telling them no to engage in something sinful because it's going to lead others to sin.
- But the principle even includes things that are not necessarily sinful.
- We can do something not necessarily sinful, but will end up in others sinning.
- We don't have the right to do this "acceptable" thing if it causes others to sin.

Drinking: It's no sinful to have some alcohol. It is sinful to be drunk. So a father protects his right to drink just a little bit. With friends at a party. At home during a baseball game. His son might never see him drunk, but what is the father doing for his son? Encouraging the son that drinking is great, drinking is fine. The son with little self control enters high school and does what? Has responsible drinking habits? Absolutely not. The father has led his son into a trap because he wants to preserve his right to drink.

Dancing: Again, dancing isn't necessarily sinful, but it's a very fine line. You might want to protect your right to dance, but be causing others to be sinning in the mean time. You can be doing "harmless" dancing, but still causing a brother to sin (because it takes so very little to incite sexual temptation). You can encourage someone else to sin even if he thinks it's no good. If he caves to the social pressure, he is sinning, and you are the cause.

I Corinthians 9: Paul Gives Up His Rights To Not Be a Hindrance

Introduction:

We are in the middle of the three chapter (8-10) discussion about whether or not christians can eat meat sacrificed to idols or not.

The complication:

They knew idols were fake, therefore they thought they could participate in idol sacrifices without worshipping the gods, and therefore it was acceptable practice for christians.

The conclusion:

1. It's sinful to worship idols (8)
2. It's sinful to participate in idol worship (even if you aren't worshipping) (10)

Remember, the Corinthians worst problem was their pride. Their prideful attitude made them behave selfishly. They were proud in their knowledge that idols were fake. Their pride in this knowledge made them selfishly justify their participation in idolatry regardless of how it affected their brethren. Their participation in idolatry was a **STUMBLING BLOCK** that encouraged their weaker brothers to worship idols and sin.

Before Paul condemns their participation in idol worship as being sinful inherently (10), he first condemns their participation in idol worship is being sinful because it is encouraging their weaker brothers to also sin by worshipping the idols (8).

The exhortation:

Paul tells the Corinthians that if their actions lead others to sin, they are condemned also. They should be willing to give up their “rights” to participate in idol worship so they won’t be a stumbling block to their weaker brothers.

The claim:

Paul concludes chapter 8 with the bold claim that he would be willing to give up eating meat entirely if that was necessary to not be a stumbling block for his brethren. He makes this claim encouraging them to be willing to do the same.

There is no benefit to give up meat entirely so Paul hasn’t really done that. He also doesn’t expect the Corinthians to do that. He’s giving the principle that we should be willing to give up anything if it’s causing our brothers to sin.

This claim is only affective if it’s true (Paul didn’t actually give up meat because it wouldn’t have really helped). So where’s the proof that Paul is willing to do this? If there’s no proof that he’s willing to do this, then this claim has less power and influence over them. “Paul you’re just saying that, but you’re not willing to actually do that.” they could say and thus be free from this exhortation in their minds.

Paul is going to strengthen this claim by proving he really would be willing to give up anything to not be a stumbling block for his brothers. He will prove this by showing what else he’s already given up to not be a hindrance to others. That’s what chapter 9 is about.

9:1-2: Who Paul Is

- 1-2: Am I not Free? Am I not an apostle?
 - Free: Paul was a christian. Certain rights and privileges come with that. For example, he doesn’t have to follow the Law.
 - Apostle: Paul was an apostle. That was a position of authority that included many rights over other people (I Thess 2:6).
 - Paul proves his apostleship:
 - I’ve seen Jesus (resurrected) (Acts 1:22).
 - You are my work of apostleship.
 - They’ve experienced the legitimacy of his teaching and miracles first hand.
 - They should know he’s an apostle even if others are doubtful.

9:3-6: Paul’s Rights

- 3: My defense against those who examine me
 - Paul is criticizing the Corinthians saying they should be willing to give up their “right” to eat meat sacrificed to idols.
 - He claims that he is willing to be a total vegetarian if necessary.
 - People would be examining him to consider if he would really do that or not.
 - Paul’s defense is the proof that he really is willing to give up anything to not be a stumbling block.
- 4-6: What rights has Paul given up?
 1. Eat and drink: normal comfortable living (Mat 11:18-19)
 2. Marriage: be committed to a woman and family and live that fulfilling lifestyle (Peter for example)
 3. Receive payment for his teaching

- Paul worked as a tent maker when he preached at Corinth. He didn't take money from the Corinthians for his work (Acts 18:1-4).
- He had the right to stop doing this work and receive pay for his gospel teaching.

These are a few of the big things Paul was willing to give up to be more helpful to others. None of the Corinthians could deny that he willingly gave up the rights to have these things. How was giving up these things helpful for others? What was the benefit of giving up these rights?

1. Eat and drink? If Paul wanted to live a comfortable Christian life then he wouldn't have been willing to travel the world, be shipwrecked, homeless, hungry, and beaten for the sake of Christ. His willingness to give up that cozy life is what led to the salvation of millions.
2. Marriage? If Paul was married he could've enjoyed that fulfilling relationship, but then he would've had to fulfill his responsibilities to her and his children. He wouldn't have been able to travel the world constantly risking his life, but his willingness to do that is what led to the salvation of millions.
3. We will discuss the benefits of denying pay later.

Paul is now going to prove that he has the right to receive compensation that way it's a powerful example for them when they realize he gave up this right to be more helpful to them.

9:7-14: Paul Proves His Right To Receive Compensation

- 7: We know that people deserve compensation for the work they do
 1. Soldiers deserved to be paid
 2. Those who plant the vineyard deserve to have dibs on the fruit
 3. The one tending the flock deserves to receive some milk
- 8: This is backed up by scripture
 - It's not just human judgment that says people who work deserve compensation (that alone wouldn't mean anything anyway).
 - The scripture also teaches this (which is authoritative).
- 9: Don't muzzle the Ox
 - The Law teaches that you shouldn't keep an animal from feeding if it's working for you.
 - The Ox would trample on the wheat so the grain would separate from the stalk. The Ox would then eat the wheat as he's trampling on it. To muzzle his mouth would keep him from being able to do that. God says, "That's not fair. He's working for you. He deserves food."
 - 10: This is a principle meant for humans
 - God didn't say this just for animal rights.
 - It's a principle humans need to live by in their treatment of others.
 - Who is the ox in this metaphor? The Bible teacher. He deserves to "eat" while he's working.
- 11: Spiritual work deserves physical reward
 - If someone is willing to bless you spiritually, you should be willing to bless them materially.
- 12: This should apply to Paul as well
 - You would accept this concerning other people. It applies to me as well.

[Temporarily ignore the last statement in this verse]

I Corinthians Notes

- 13: The Priests had this right as well
 - The priests doing sacrifices in the OT had the right to eat some of the meat offered in sacrifices as well as receive payment from the rest of the tribes.
- 14: Gospel teachers deserve compensation as well
 - Those who teach the gospel also deserve compensation.
 - Paul is obviously included in that.

SIDE NOTE: this is a good passage that gives us the authority to use the churches money to pay for evangelists teaching the gospel. The benefit from paying people to preach the gospel is it frees them from having to spend time earning money. If they don't have to earn their own money, they can use that time to be teaching the gospel.

The climax:

- 12: "Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ"

Paul says:

- I have the right to receive money for my work, but I give up this right so I won't be a hindrance to others.

The parallel:

- The Corinthians (thought they) had the "right" to eat meat sacrificed to idols, but they wouldn't give up that right even though it was a stumbling block for their brothers.

Here is a chart to help us see this better:

Who	The Right	The Decision	For Whom	The Result
The Corinthians	Eat meat sacrificed to idols	No give it up	Their brothers	Be a stumbling block (cause them to sin)
Paul	Receive compensation for preaching the gospel	Gave it up	Others (including non-christians)	To not be a hindrance (block them from receiving the gospel)

Stumbling block: something that causes someone to fall (like a trap). A stumbling block is something that would make others fall into the trap of sin. The Corinthians wouldn't give up eating meat even though it was causing their christian brothers to fall into the trap of sin.

Hindrance: to cut. Often used as a military strategy to cut of an enemy and keep him from getting where he's trying to get. Paul was willing to give up anything because he didn't want to do anything that would cut people off from the gospel, or cause them to get deterred from the gospel.

Why would Pay receiving money be a hindrance for people? Why was it beneficial for him to give up?

- Paul goes to new cities full of people he has never met. He is doing this so they can accept Christ.
- What if he rightfully demands people pay him for his work?

- People would assume that Paul is just doing it for the money which absolutely undermines the power of the gospel.
- If Paul preaches for free, people won't question that he is teaching because his sincere devotion to the cause of Christ. There would be no apparent ulterior motives to accuse him of.
- This is what he says in the following verses.

9:15-18: Why Paul Gave Up His Right To Receive Compensation

- 15: He doesn't want an empty boast
 - Paul wasn't writing this because he wanted to start getting paid. He still didn't want this payment.
 - He is bringing it up because it's a relevant example for his argument.
 - Paul wants to continue not receiving money so he can keep his boast.
 - What is his boast? His boast that he is preaching the gospel voluntarily, and not for money.
 - The boast is his sincere intentions.
- 16: Paul is obligated to preach the gospel
 - Jesus commanded Paul to preach.
 - He doesn't have any choice. He is obligated to do it.
 - There are no brownie points for doing what you're already obligated to do.
- 17: Doing this just makes me a servant
 - If I do this involuntarily, I'm just a servant doing a job.
 - Imagine the difference between a paid employee and owner of a business. The paid employee only does what he's paid to do. The owner will be willing to volunteer for many extra things.
- 18: Paul's reward.
 - Paul's reward is preaching the gospel for free and keep the boast that he's doing it voluntarily because of his sincere intentions.

What an example Paul is! He makes all of his decisions based on what will help others spiritually. All of our decisions need to be about what is the most helpful for others spiritually. Yet, like the Corinthians, we make decisions selfishly even when it causes others to sin.

9:19-23: Paul Gives Up His Identity

- 19: A servant to all
 - I am free: Paul has the right to be who he wants to be.
 - Dress how he wants, talk how he wants, live where he wants, eat what he wants
 - I am a servant to all: he subjects all of his decisions to what would be most helpful to others
 - He does this win more of them. Meaning, by being a servant of all, he will be able to win more people to the gospel
- 20-22: All things to all people
 - To the Jews: this would be Jewish Christians. He would conform to the culture and customs that they were used to (Acts 21:17-26).
 - The those under the law: this would be non-Christian Jews. He would live according to the Law so as not to offend them. For example, he circumcised Timothy before taking him into the synagogues.

- Yet not under the Law: that means he's under the Law for consideration's sake, but not as necessary for salvation.
- Tho those outside the Law: this is referring to gentiles. He wouldn't expect them to conform to Jewish tradition. He would be willing to conform to Greek culture around them.
 - But not outside the Law of Christ refers to the fact he would conform to gentile culture, but not to the extent of disobeying Christ.
- 23: All for the sake of the gospel
 - Paul is willing to give up everything, even his own identity, for the sake of making it more likely for people to accept the gospel.
 - We should be willing to do the same.

9:24-27

Paul gave them instruction in chapter 8 that they should give up their rights so they won't be a stumbling block. Then he spent a whole chapter using himself as an example of giving up his rights so he wouldn't be a hindrance. In chapter 10 he is going to begin giving the Corinthians instruction again. So verses 24-27 are transitional.

He gives a metaphor of the hard working athlete doing everything he can to win. The obvious application is we need to have the same zeal and commitment in our christian life. Paul is obviously living this way. The Corinthians are obviously not.

- 24: Run to win
 - Many people compete. Only one wins.
 - We need to compete to win.
 - Obviously getting to heaven isn't a competition against other Christians to see which person will make it to heaven,
 - But our spirituality needs to have competition as in a sense of urgency.
 - We compete against Satan and ourselves. We compete against complacency and laziness.
 - We compete as in we put forth effort to win instead of just being lazy because we are confident of our entrance into heaven.
 - Paul has this urgency and is putting forth as much effort as he can.
 - The Corinthians do not have this urgency, and instead of putting forth effort, they are trying to justify sin.
- 25: Exercise self control
 - The athletes have self control. We need self control.
 - This is what's going to make us put forth the necessary effort.
 - We will be tempted to not put forth any effort because it's:
 - Hard
 - Uncomfortable
 - Scary
 - Etc...
 - But self control is when we decide to put forth the effort anyways.
 - They do it to receive a perishable wreath
 - Their prize was a useless physical object that would quickly waste away.
 - Why would they put so much effort into receiving a useless object?
 - Of course they don't really want the object. They seek the glory that comes from the accomplishment.

I Corinthians Notes

- The glory is forgotten (Who won the gold a gold medal in gymnastics two Summer Olympics ago?).
- The glory is useless (Do the gold medalist live the rest of his life satisfied with that accomplishment?).
- What about us?
 - Our reward is of imperishable use and imperishable glory!
 - Why are we being outperformed by athletes? Such a sad condition.
- 26: I do not run aimlessly
 - He doesn't run "uncertainly"
 - The athletes put forth the effort with certainty.
 - They know what they need to do
 - They know how to do it
 - They know how much it's going to take
 - All their effort is carefully calculated to be as effective as possible.

EX: Consider how much effort is placed into proper form to start a 50 yard dash. Or the swimmers that work to turn around in the water as smoothly as possible. The even shave off all their hair. They want all their effort to be as profitable as possible. Their focus and understanding is what helps them to accomplish that.

- We need to know:
 - What to do
 - How to do it
 - What it's going to take
- Scripture is what's going to help us focus so that we can most effectively utilize this effort.
- This applies to the Corinthians because they were falsely justifying their idol practice, which is making all their effort wasted and pointless.
- 27: Lest I be disqualified
 - Paul is doing all this (discipline and self control) for a reason. It's necessary
 - He's not on vacation. He is competing to win, and he's not going to lose against himself by laziness and complacency. He doesn't want to be disqualified.
 - The Corinthians are not doing any of this.
 - In chapter 10 Paul makes the threat of their "disqualification" very real in hopes that they will have enough self control to put forth the necessary effort to "win the race".

I Corinthians 10: Flee Idolatry

Introduction:

We are in the middle of the three chapter (8-10) discussion about whether or not Christians can eat meat sacrificed to idols or not.

The complication:

They knew idols were fake, therefore they thought they could participate in idol sacrifices without worshipping the gods, and therefore it was acceptable practice for Christians.

Remember, the Corinthians worst problem was their pride. Their prideful attitude made them behave selfishly. They were proud in their knowledge that idols were fake. Their pride in this knowledge made them selfishly justify their participation in idolatry regardless of how it affected their brethren.

Chapter 8: Paul tells them that their participation in idol worship is sinful because it is a stumbling block causing their brother to sin. He tells them they need to be willing to give up this “right” to eat idol meat because it’s causing their brothers to sin.

Chapter 9: After telling them to give up their “rights” so they wouldn’t be a stumbling block to their brother, Paul uses himself as an example because he was willing to give up his rights so he wouldn’t be a hindrance to any man’s reception of the gospel. He does this to encourage them to follow his instruction in chapter 8 to give up their “rights” to eat idol sacrifices.

Chapter 10: Finally, Paul now tells them that their participation in idol worship is sinful because it’s fellowship with demons. Their knowledge of idol’s being fake doesn’t change that.

10:1-5

- 1-4: The spiritual blessings the Israelites received in the wilderness
 - They were baptized in the in sea and cloud
 - They had spiritual food: manna, the word of God
 - They had water which was coming from the presence of Christ
- 5: What happened to the Israelites
 - Even though they received all those spiritual blessings to help them, the majority if them were still unfaithful and were destroyed in the wilderness.
 - The majority is: 630,548 out of 630,550 died in the wilderness.

10:6-10

- 6: These things took place to be an example for Christians
 - Why was Paul telling the Corinthians about the Israelites received spiritual blessings and punishment? Because the Corinthians were in the same situation.
 - That’s why the events of the Israelites serve to be an example for the Corinthians.

How were the Israelites and Corinthians similar?

The Israelites	The Corinthians
Baptized in Red Sea and cloud	Baptized in water
Ate spiritual food: manna, word of God	Eating spiritual food: the Lord’s Supper, the word of Christ

The Israelites	The Corinthians
Drank, had the presence of Christ	Have living water and the presence of Christ

Paul uses NT language to describe the blessings the Israelites received to draw attention to their similar situation. The point is this: they received so many blessings and help from God, but they were punished because they weren't pleasing to God. The Corinthians had also received many blessings and help from God, but they are in danger of meeting the same fate unless they become pleasing to God.

- 7-10: The sins of the Israelites
 - Idolatry
 - Sexual immorality
 - Testing God
 - Grumbling against God

Just as the blessings the Israelites received were similar to the Corinthians', the sins of the Israelites were similar to the Corinthians'.

The Israelites	The Corinthians
Idolatry: sat down to eat and drink	Idolatry: eating meat sacrificed to idols
Sexual immorality	Sexual immorality (I Cor 6:15)
Tested God	Testing Christ (I Cor 10:21-22)
Grumbled	Grumbling against Paul's teaching (II Cor 10:10)

- 11: These things happened to them as an example, but were written down for our instruction
 - They can see the Israelites received spiritual blessings, but were punished because they were deliberately and rebelliously living in sin.
 - The Corinthians should then know that if they had received similar blessings and were involved in the same sins, they can expect the same outcome.
 - The particular sin Paul is currently addressing is their idolatry. They are trying to justify it and have confidence they will be fine. Paul says, "Look at the example of the Israelites. You are following their footsteps, and you can clearly see the destination will not be fine."

We need to realize, even if we've been baptized, nourished by the word, and even have the presence of Christ, our deliberate unrepentant involvement in sin will lead to our death in the wilderness. We will never get to enter the Promised Land. Of course our Promised Land isn't Canaan; it's heaven (Heb 4). If you want to enter heaven, don't follow the example of the Israelites like the Corinthians were doing.

10:12-13

- 12: Take heed lest you fall
 - Pride goes before the fall (Prov 16:18).
 - Here is another reference to the Corinthian's pride. Their pride was leading them to confidently participate in idolatry, but it was going to be their downfall.
 - How does pride cause us to fall?
 - When you think you're good, strong, or safe, you think you don't need to put as much attention and effort into something.

EX: Consider a young man playing basketball. If he thinks he's great, he will get cocky. Once he's cocky he isn't trying as hard (in fact he's more interested in looking cool), and then starts throwing up bricks and blowing passes.

- The pride that leads you to be less attentive is what makes it possible and likely for sin to get the better of you.
 - Never feel confident in your own ability to be righteous. That attitude is paving the road for sin.
- 13: You don't have to sin
 - After he tells them that their confidence will lead them to sin, he then tells them that they need to be confident that they can overcome temptation.
 - This seems enigmatic.
 - I thought we weren't supposed to be confident in our own righteousness.
 - If we can't be confident in ourselves, then we can't be confident in our ability to overcome temptation.
 - We might believe that giving into temptation is inevitable. This passage says otherwise.
 - Even though you shouldn't have confidence in yourself, you need to be confident in your ability to overcome temptation because we have a faithful God that will always provide the way out of sin.
 - The result is this:
 - Don't be confident in your own ability, yet be confident that there is no reason to ever sin, because our faithful God can deliver us.

Five things we learn about temptation:

1. No special temptations:
 - There is no temptation uncommon to man. That means, whatever temptation you have is a temptation others (possibly Christ Himself) has had. Your temptation isn't special. You aren't special.
 - If you think you are in a special temptation, you can be convinced that your particular temptation can't be overcome. Or you can believe that you have an excuse because your situation is special. Both mindsets will lead to more sin.
 - You CAN overcome temptation and you have NO excuses. Your temptation isn't special.
2. God is faithful
 - We know God is faithful. In this context, He's faithful to you WHILE you are in temptation.
 - During temptation we might feel that God is already mad at us or has abandoned us. If we think that, what's the point of overcoming temptation? He's already mad, so go ahead and give into temptation. This mindset encourages sin.
 - We need to realize, in times of temptation, God is still being faithful because He wants to lead you to victory.
3. God allows you to be tempted

I Corinthians Notes

- God won't allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. That means He allows you to be tempted.
 - God doesn't tempt us (meaning, He isn't trying to get us to sin) (Jms 1:13), but He does allow temptations to come.
 - We shouldn't expect everything to be easy and free from trouble. Temptations WILL come. We need to be ready for them
4. You'll never be tempted beyond your ability
- God allows you to be tempted, but He is faithful to only give you what you can handle.
 - This means there is no sin we ever HAD to commit. Theoretically, we can live sinless lives; yet, we don't.
 - When in temptation, remember: I CAN overcome this temptation
5. God provides the way of escape
- How is God faithful to us during temptation? By providing the way out.
 - How do we endure temptation? By taking the way out as soon as God provides it to us.

EX: Many of us willingly travel the highway of temptation. God has provided exits, but we drive past because we want to arrive at the final destination of sin.

- The biggest reason we give into temptation is because we don't take the way out that's been provided us.

10:14-22

- 14: Flee idolatry
 - Finally, Paul is now going to condemn them for their participation in idolatry.
 - They feel justified participating (being involved with) idolatry because they aren't worshipping the idols.
 - Paul says they shouldn't participate in it. They need to run from it. Have nothing to do with it.
 - This is directly related to his conclusion in verse 13 about taking the way out of temptation that God provides.
- 15: I speak to wise men
 - This is another reference to the Corinthians' pride.
 - They claim to be so wise. He says, "ok wise guys, what do you think?". Showing that this is very simple, and yet they're still so foolishly sinning.
 - This also means that he is confident that they will agree with the next thing he is about to say.
- 16-17: The Lord's Supper
 - Participating in the cup is a fellowship in the blood of Christ.
 - Participating in the bread is a fellowship in the body of Christ.
 - The one bread means it's one body, which mean all Christians are sharing the same body; therefore, participating in the bread is a fellowship with our brothers as well.
 - The Corinthians would agree that participating in the Lord's Supper is a fellowship with Christ and their brothers.
- 18: The Levitical sacrifices are another example
 - When the Israelites eat the sacrifices they are fellowshiping in the sacrifices.

The Principle:

Paul is using the examples of the Lord's Supper and Levitical sacrifices to establish this principle:

What you participate in is what you fellowship with.

If the Corinthians agree that participating in the Lord's Supper is sharing in Christ, then they have to admit that in the same way, participating in idol sacrifices is fellowship with those gods (demons actually).

- 19: Is an idol anything?
 - Here Paul is addressing their knowledge that idols are fake.
 - Simply put, the fact they know idols are fake doesn't change anything.
 - It is still sinful to participate in idol sacrifices.
- 20-21: Idols are fake; demons are real
 - If participating in idol sacrifices isn't worship of a god, it's fellowship with the demons that incited that idolatry. It's just as sinful.
 - When they participate in the idol sacrifice, they are fellowshiping with sin of idolatry that everyone else is committing. Therefore, they are guilty of fellowshiping with demons.
 - You can't be involved in both things. You can't fellowship with Christ and demons.

What we participate in is what we fellowship in:

The best way to apply this principle is with media. We know that a movie is full of wickedness. We justify participating in that wicked media because we "know better" and we aren't going to actually do the wicked things we see. Here, just by participating in the film, is fellowshiping whatever that film is portraying. We are already sinful whether or not we then go and do the sinful things we saw in the film. If there is something in your life that you know you shouldn't fellowship with, then don't participate in it. It's the same thing.

- 22: Don't provoke the Lord to jealousy
 - If we are participating in wickedness, we are fellowshiping with demons, and we are really testing God to destroy us.
 - That is not a fight you can win.
 - We can't get away with participating in any idolatry.

10:23-30

- 23-24: All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful
 - Paul again reminds them, they think they have the "right" to participate in idol worship, but it's not going to profit them. It's not going to help anyone.
 - Their actions need to be profitable and helpful for themselves and others.
 - We can't selfishly seek ourselves, we need to decide what's best for others, and commit to doing that.
 - Now Paul will deal with some other miscellaneous hypothetical situations regarding meat sacrificed to idols and tells them how to practically seek the good of his neighbor.
- 25-30: Two hypothetical situations regarding meat sacrificed to idols
 1. Meat sold in the market place
 - The temples would sell their left over meat to the market place.
 - People could then buy meat, and they wouldn't necessarily be able to tell if has been sacrificed to a god or not. It would just be sold as meat separate from any idolatrous context.
 - This meat can be eaten. It doesn't make a difference whether or not it was sacrificed to a god or not.

2. Meat served in pagan households
 - Pagans would invite their christian friends over for a meal.
 - They would serve meat. Perhaps this meat was sacrificed to a god. Or perhaps it wasn't.
 - It doesn't matter either way, because outside the context of idolatry, it's just meat. Christians can confidently eat it without asking any questions.
 - However, if someone else tells you, "it's been sacrificed to an idol", then you shouldn't eat it.
 - The person telling you is likely a weak brother. To him, the fact it was previously sacrificed to an idol means it still has idolatrous significance for him. He would consider it sinful to eat.
 - In that case, you eating it anyways would encourage him to break his conscience and sin; therefore, don't eat it, don't cause him to sin, and don't be guilty of sin.
 - You should give it up, not because it's sinful, but because he thinks it's sinful. Eating it anyways would then mean you are sinning because of his conscience. It's not worth it. Don't do it.

The principle:

Gods are fake, therefore they have no power over any meat that has been sacrificed to them. The meat isn't sinful. The idolatrous practice is what's sinful. You can eat the meat if it's not in an idolatrous context.

10:31-33

- 31: Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God
 - Situations like this can only be resolved by people who are completely interested in glorifying God.
 - If glorifying God is your goal, you will be like PAul doing everything you can as best as you can.
 - If glorifying God is not your goal, you will be justifying and rationalizing sin as much as possible.
 - There is no practical teaching that solves that problem. It's up to the heart of the individual.
 - If you aren't interested in glorifying God with everything you do, please kindly leave the church.
- 32: For any culture
 - It doesn't matter the culture or expectation, conform to whatever is most helpful for those people
- 33: Why do we need to be everyone else's slave?
 - Why do we have to live our lives as slaves to everyone else?
 - Because we care about the salvation of others more than our own personal rights.

Chapters 11-14: Worship Issues

I Corinthians 11: Head Coverings

Introduction:

Chapters 11-14 are another section that deals with issues regarding worship.

- Chapter 11 deals with two issues regarding church worship tradition:
 - Head Coverings
 - The Lord's Supper
- Chapters 12-14 deal spiritual gifts in worship
 - 12-13: Proper attitude regarding spiritual gifts
 - 14: Proper conduct regarding spiritual gifts

Chapter 11 is challenging because we are only hearing one side of a conversation; and just a portion of the conversation at that. In regards to head coverings and the Lord's Supper, not all of the details are supplied. We are left to discern how to apply these teachings in situations we don't fully understand.

We do not fully understand the circumstances in which Paul is teaching the practice of head coverings, therefore we are not completely sure of how to apply the teaching. For that reason, there is much controversy of how it should be applied. Let's be careful and humble.

Also, there is this assumption that this teaching is for women only. This isn't true. This chapter gives teaching for both genders.

11:1

- 1: Imitate me
 - Paul is telling the Corinthians to imitate him.
 - He can do this because he is imitating Christ; therefore, to imitate Paul is to imitate Christ.
 - Most commentators and translators agree that this statement is made in reference to the contents of chapter 10. This makes sense because Corinthians 9 is all about trying to get the Corinthians to imitate him. The conclusion of 10 he is repeating the same principles put forth in 9, so again reinforcing that they should imitate his behavior in chapter 9.
 - It also works as a segue into chapter 11 because it deals with worship traditions that they should be imitating as well.

11:2-6

- 2: Keep the traditions
 - He praises them for remembering him.
 - How do they remember him? By keeping the traditions he put in place

I Corinthians Notes

- They need to remember what he has previously told them.
- He will later criticize them for not properly keeping the traditions Paul had given them (I Cor 11:17).

Tradition: Tradition has a bad connotation in the religious world today. When we say tradition, we are thinking of man made extra-biblical concepts. Is that what this is? Is Paul coming up with his own traditions and we need to follow them? Is tradition good or bad? Do we need to follow traditions? It depends on whose tradition is is. Jesus strongly criticized the Pharisees because they made their own traditions and treated them as if they were equal to scripture (Mark 7:8-13, Col 2:8). But Paul also offers tradition and expects people to follow those traditions (I Cor 11:2, II Thess 2:15, 3:6) because those traditions are from God. If God gives us a tradition, we need to keep it.

The tradition he will talk about first is proper attiring of the head while praying and prophesying. Then he will talk about the tradition of partaking the Lord's Supper.

- 3: God's order of authority and submission
 - God>Jesus>Man>Woman
 - This isn't ordering who is better or more valuable.
 - Certainly there is a gap between Jesus and man, but there is no gap in value or power between God and Jesus. Similarly, there is no gap in value or power between man and woman.
 - This is a break down of authority and submission.
 - Jesus is willing to submit to the Father because that is His role.
 - Women submit to men because that is their role.
 - To say submission makes one less important or weak is to say Christ is less important or weak.
 - If Jesus was willing to submit to the Father, women need to be willing to submit to men (The difference is God is a much more desirable Head to submit to than man, but regardless, here is God's plan).
- 4: The proper tradition for man
 - When a man prays of prophesies, he should have his head covered.
 - If a man covers his head, it disgraces his head.
 - Head?
 1. His head, Christ
 2. His physical head
 - Both are in the context, but most likely refers to disgracing his head, Christ.
- 5: The proper tradition for woman
 - When a woman prays, she should not have her head covered.
 - If a woman covers her head, it disgraces her head.
 1. Her head, man
 2. Her physical head
 - Both are in the context, but most likely refers to disgracing his head, Christ.
- 6: As disgraceful as a shaved head
 - If she doesn't cover her head she might as well shave her head, because they're equally shameful.
 - Verses 14-15 reveal that it is natural for a woman to have long hair, so doing otherwise is unnatural and shameful.
 - This helps us see that the covering is an artificial covering and not the hair itself.

11:7-10

- 7: Why head coverings matter

I Corinthians Notes

- Since man is the glory of God, he is head of woman, and therefore should honor God by not having his head covered while praying or prophesying.
- Since woman is the glory of man, she should honor his authority over her, by keeping her head covered while praying and prophesying.

The purpose of the attire of the head is to reinforce authority and submission. God wants men to lead and women to submit. The head covering is worn to reinforce that relationship through symbolism.

- 8-9: Why is man head of the woman?
 1. Woman came from man (she was made from his rib)
 2. Woman was made for man (she was made to be his help meet)

God wants the roles of leadership and submission to be present in His creation. It is even in His very nature; the Father and the Son. Is man alone made in the image of God? Or are humans only completely made in the image of God with the creation of women? If God is the Father and Son, then leadership and submission exist within Him. To be in His image, humans need to have both of those roles as well.

The choice of man being the leader is arbitrary. He was first. That's it. It's not because he's better or more valuable. We can't take this personally. God wants this relationship to exist in humanity, so that necessitates that someone has to lead, and someone has to follow. We need to fulfill our God given roles whichever they might be.

- 10: The head covering is the authority on her on head
 - Because of this relationship of women submitting to men, she should wear a covering to be that authority.
 - This is translated to be a "symbol" of authority. If she has the covering on her head, she is communicating through symbolism that she is in submission while she prays and prophesies.

"Because of the angels": this phrase is a mystery. A reasonable explanation is that this phrase "because of the angels" is a reference to the angels who "did not stay within their own position of authority". This would make sense because it's in the context of men and women not staying within their proper position of authority.

11:11-12

- 11: Man and women aren't independent of each other
 - Being the head, man might think he is more important, and therefore not really need woman.
 - God says, "man isn't independent from woman". Men are not more important than women. Men need women.
- 12: Every other man comes from a woman
 - God has communicated to men clearly that they need women.
 - Their very existence depends on women.
 - Sure God made the first woman from a man, but every other man has come from a woman. This is to communicate and propagate equality and respect between genders.

11:13-15

- 13: The conclusion

- “Judge for yourselves”
 - Here Paul is getting to the conclusion, and expecting them to be able come to the proper conclusion.
 - He states the conclusion in the form of a rhetorical question. The conclusion is: women should not pray with their heads uncovered.
 - Notice this time only the word “pray” is used. Prophecy isn’t mentioned.
- 14-15: An example from nature
 - He solidifies his point with an example from nature (natural):
 - We just know naturally that is man (being covered) with long hair is a disgrace.
 - A woman’s (cover) long hair is her glory.
 - The point is: we can tell naturally just from hair style that a covered man is a disgraced man, and a covered women is a glorified woman. Therefore it should be obvious that men shouldn’t be covered, and women should be covered when they pray.
 - Note: the hair isn’t THE covering that Paul is advocating for praying and prophesying (vs 6), but is a covering from nature.

11:16

- 16: No such practice
 - The NASB renders “such” as “other”. Doesn’t seem to be a justified translation.
 - What does “no such practice” refer to?
 - Could refer to the practice of being contentious.
 - If you want to be contentious and disagree with this issue of head coverings, the churches of God don’t have the practice of disagreeing.
 - Could refer to the practice of men being covered and women being uncovered.
 - After advocating proper head attire for a chapter, it doesn’t make sense for Paul to then strongly say that no churches actually practice that custom.
 - Instead, “no such practice” refers to verse 13 of a woman praying with her head uncovered.
 - The point is: if you want to disagree, you are on your own. If you don’t want to accept this custom, this church, nor any church of God, will agree with you.

Interpretations:

Face value:

The simplest, is to just take it absolutely literally. The face value literal interpretation is this:

- If a man is ever praying or prophesying, he should never have anything covering his head (this would even include private silent prayers walking down the street).
- If a woman is ever praying or prophesying, she should always have something covering her head (this would even include private silent prayers walking down the street).

Reasons why we might not be inclined to take it for face value:

It seems to be such an obvious teaching that the Corinthians already know, and yet, we never hear this teaching instituted previously. It’s not stated as a gospel teaching, or a practice we hear the church doing previously. It’s something based in the principle of men and women’s roles, and yet, we see no sign of such things ever in the Old or New Testaments elsewhere. It just kind of shows up here with no explanation. It seems like a circumstantial teaching that has some specific yet undisclosed relevance.

I don't think we can ever know the exact circumstance of why this teaching is being given, therefore I'm not confident we can come to a perfect understanding of how to apply this teaching.

Though I'm not convinced the face value interpretation is THE answer, I'm leaning more towards it being the wisest and safest interpretation for us to put in practice.

Questions to ask:

If we aren't going to take this passage at face value, we need to know the right questions to be answered. Here are some suggestions:

- Is this referring to a custom of their day? Or is it a command of God for the whole church?
- Is it a command for all time? Or is it relevant to specific circumstances of their day?
- Is Paul advocating an artificial covering? Or is the hair the covering?
- What covering is necessary? How big? How much needs to be covered?
- What is meant by prayer or prophesy?
 - Leading prayer? Participating in public prayer? Prayer in the assembly? Prayer at any point in time? Praying in private?
 - Reference to utilizing spiritual gifts? Or regular prayer?
 - Prayer in mixed company? Or women praying over other women?
- Is the statement about hair length equally binding? Is it sinful to do otherwise?

Woman leadership position:

Besides the face value interpretation, this is the interpretation I currently think is most accurate. It mentions women praying and prophesying. Prophecy is obviously a spiritual gift. Prayer isn't necessarily a spiritual gift, but we do know about prophetic prayers (I Cor 14:15, also the many prophetic prayers in the OT). God wanted to pour forth His spirit "on all flesh". It is mentioned that sons and daughters would prophesy (Acts 2:17). Though the pouring forth of the Spirit isn't just miraculous gifts, the miracles were proof that God's Spirit has indeed been poured into those people. That's why God pours His Spirit onto Cornelius that they could speak in tongues; to prove that He has accepted the gentiles as well. So, God poured forth His Spirit for women to perform miracles as well. We know of female prophets (Acts 21:9). Because God wanted to prove that He had poured forth His Spirit into women as well, He also made them to prophesy. However, prophesy (and prophetic prayers) would be outside the typical role of women; therefore, for that special circumstance God told women to pray and prophesy with a covering to compensate by reinforcing their submission through the symbolic significance of the covering. Women would wear this covering when they were prophesying or leading prayer in public, but not in the assembly (I Cor 14:34). This interpretation would imply that women could still lead in prayers today, but should wear a covering when doing so. I would say, since spiritual gifts have passed, it isn't necessary or ideal for women to be leading worship. That was a special circumstance that came with the presence of spiritual gifts in the first century.

Culture interpretation:

The culture interpretation is that there were cultural circumstances that made praying covered or uncovered necessary for the Corinthian church, but not necessarily today. Roman male prophets would worship their gods with covered heads. The custom was for women to have covered heads, and therefore a woman uncovering her head was contrary to her proper gender role in that culture (for instance a man wearing a dress would be the equivalent). These statements are historical facts, but is the actually why Paul is teaching women should be covered and men shouldn't? Who knows? The best argument for this that I know is Marty Pickup's lessons. You can visit www.valricococ.org for those lessons. The link is:

<http://www.valricococ.org/media2/bible-classes/2010/09/01/1st-corinthians-ch-11-vs-2-16-1>

During worship interpretation:

Sometimes women will wear a covering during the assembly, but no other time. This doesn't make sense to me because I Cor 11 isn't even referring to the assembly.

Things to keep in mind:

- The emphasis of the passage is respecting the different roles of men and women in our worship. That's the principle behind the teaching. Keep that principle foremost when determining how to apply this teaching.
- Many early church writings make it clear that many who professed Christ wore head coverings. Head coverings have been consistently worn by most branches of "Christianity" until about the 1900's if I'm not mistaken. It is helpful to see how the early "christians" put this chapter into practice. For instance, several references to head coverings emphasize modesty, but that's clearly not the point of I Cor 11. There can be some helpful insights to gather from those early writings however. It's worth considering.
- We should be careful to not explain any scripture away. We are most accustomed to not applying this chapter. Is that fair? It's a bold move to say a scripture doesn't apply to us. That's a reasonable interpretation, because there are many passages that don't apply to us, but let's make sure we are determining that accurately.

I Corinthians 11: The Lord's Supper

Introduction:

Chapters 11-14 are another section that deals with issues regarding worship.

- Chapter 11 deals with two issues regarding church worship tradition:
 - Head Coverings
 - The Lord's Supper
- Chapters 12-14 deal spiritual gifts in worship
 - 12-13: Proper attitude regarding spiritual gifts
 - 14: Proper conduct regarding spiritual gifts

Remember, the biggest problem the Corinthians had was their prideful attitude. That attitude led to selfish behavior. The biggest consequence of this attitude and behavior was the existence of divisions among the saints at Corinth. We are going to see all three of these elements in this portion of text. Because they were prideful they partook of the Lord's Supper in a selfish way which led to divisions.

Paul condemns their sinful partaking of the Lord's Supper and reminds them of the proper way to keep this tradition. Consequently, this passage reveals the most information available to us about how we should partake in the Lord's Supper. For that reason, it is essential to us.

11:17-19

- Regarding this tradition, I do not praise you
 - This statement is made in connection and contrast to what he said about head coverings (vs 2).
 - They claim to be keeping the traditions, but Paul points out their failure to keep this tradition.
 - Here he will:
 1. Criticize their failure
 2. Remind them of what they should be doing
- Come together for the worse
 - When they assembly, the way they are partaking the Lord's Supper is so bad that they are doing more damage than good.

We might think that bad worship is not better than no worship at all. This is not true. It is proven in many texts:

- I Cor 11:17-34
- Mal 1:10
- Rev 3:16
- I Sam 15:22-23

All these verses make it clear that offering God vain or idolatrous worship is more of a burden to Him than no worship at all. We seriously need to consider our worship. Is it pleasing to Him? Is it done with the proper heart? Is it done in the proper way? Unfortunately for the Corinthians, they were successfully accomplishing neither.

- 18: There are divisions among you
 - This goes back to 1:10-13. The Corinthians were divided.
 - The Lord's Supper gave them an opportunity to behave selfishly and thus make manifest this division among them.
- 19: Benefit of divisions
 - Paul condemned their divisions, but here he says they must exist. Why?
 - The existence of divisions reveals those who are genuine in their practice.
 - If people are practicing properly, a division comes when others decide to do differently. Thus, a division is seen between genuine followers and vain followers.
 - Sometimes it appears that those keeping the original traditions are causing division because they won't go along with the changes. This is not the case. Those who depart from the original traditions are causing the division.

11:20-22

- 20: You are not partaking in the Lord's Supper
 - They were doing something, but it wasn't what God commanded or had in mind; therefore, it wasn't the Lord's Supper at all.
 - It was someone's supper, but it wasn't the Lord's.

Calling it the Lord's Supper isn't what makes it His Supper. Doing what He says is what makes it His. If it's not what He asked for, how can we claim it to be His. We claim to do many things "in the name of the Lord". Doing something in the name of the Lord is doing what the Lord has commanded. Doing something besides what He has commanded and claiming it to be in His name does not make it so.

I Corinthians Notes

EX: If I want to make brownies, I get a recipe for brownies. If by the end of it I have cookie batter with chocolate chips in it, it's not considered brownies just because I say they're brownies. I have to actually follow the brownie recipe for it to be considered brownies.

- 21-22: Why it wasn't considered to be the Lord's Supper
 - Here we see what the Corinthians were doing, and why it wasn't the Lord's Supper.
 - They weren't waiting on each other. They were taking their OWN meals.
 - They were selfishly consuming so that some had and some didn't have.
 - They were consuming enough to the point of being drunk.
 - They were using it as an opportunity to get full.
 - They were despising their needy brethren.
 - You despise the church of God
 - This division seems to be a social class division to me
 - "one goes hungry"
 - Then we find out who goes hungry: "humiliate those who have nothing"
 - Those who socially and financially had less were also being neglected and excluded from the Lord's Supper.
 - There were those in the church of lesser social status. The proud arrogant of the church go ahead and take their own meal as an opportunity to be full and glorify themselves. They end up drunk while they neglecting those in the church who don't have as much as they do.
 - The church of God
 - When partaking in the Lord's Supper, one of the traditions is the take the bread which symbolizes the body of Christ.
 - The body of Christ is also the church.
 - So as a double meaning, Paul says, "You aren't honoring the body of Christ (His physical body) when you partake of the Lord's Supper. You are despising the body of Christ (the church, your other brethren) when you partake in the Lord's Supper."

Let's flash forward and see Paul's two corrections offered in verses 33 and 34. Paul's correction can help us understand more clearly their failure.

- 33: Wait for one another.
- 34: Don't use the Lord's Supper as a common meal to be filled.

Here we can see their problem is two fold:

1. Division: being unfair to their brethren
2. Common meal: being unfair to Christ

I Cor 10:16-17 make it very clear that partaking of the Lord's Supper is about sharing with Christ and their brethren. They were accomplishing neither. They were divided because they were selfishly consuming this Lord's Supper while neglecting other members. They were separate from Christ, because instead of using this as a memorial to Him, they were just having a meal to get full.

When we put I Cor 10 and 11 together, it becomes very clear that the purpose of the Lord's Supper is two fold:

1. Fellowship with brethren by sharing in this memorial of Christ's death
2. Fellowship with Jesus by sharing in this memorial of His death.

So when we consider how we partake of the Lord's Supper, those are the two principles we are most concerned with. Here is a chart to help make this more clear.

11:23-26: The original teaching

- 23: I received this from the Lord, and I gave it to you
 - Paul states what Christ had already told Him.
 - Paul reminds them that he has already told them this.
 - This is not a new teaching. This is something they already knew.

To solve a problem, we need to go back to the original teaching. We don't need more or new teaching. We need to rely on the teaching already given to us by God.

- 24: The body of Christ
 - The bread symbolizes the body of Christ
 - We are supposed to literally partake in this bread as a memorial to Him.
- 25: The blood of Christ
 - The cup symbolizes the blood of Christ
 - We are supposed to literally partake in this cup as a memorial to Him.
- 26: Proclaim the death of Christ
 - As we partake of the bread and cup as a memorial to Him, we proclaim His death
 - The Lord's Supper is about His death.
 - It could be about other things:
 - Forgiveness of sins: that's what we get
 - His resurrection: His power
 - But it's PRIMARILY about His death.
 - His death = His love.
 - That's the most amazing thing about Christ
 - That's what we are primarily remembering, proclaiming, celebrating.

This is what we're supposed to be doing. Literally partaking in the bread and blood to remember and proclaim the death of Christ. That's the point of the Lord's Supper.

11:27-32: The new teaching

- 27: Partaking un an unworthy manner
 - Paul offers new teaching, but it's not telling them anything new that they should be doing. He's just telling them why their actions are sinful and what the consequence are.
 - Unworthily
 - How are they partaking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy way?
 1. Divisions among the brethren
 2. Not remembering Christ

How can we be partaking in the Lord's Supper unworthily today? Not paying attention? On our phones? Talking?

Does this have anything to do with previous sins? Some people think this means you can't partake in the Lord's Supper because you are sinful. That is not what this text teaches. This text teaches if you partake

of the Lord's Supper in a sinful way (division, blaspheming Christ) you will be punished. There is no mention in scripture about whether or not we should partake in the Lord's Supper if we've been acting sinful. So we can't teach people that they shouldn't. We also can't tell ourselves that we shouldn't partake in the Lord's Supper because we've been sinful. We would like to do that because we think it's some sort of temporary solution to our sin. "Well I just shouldn't take the Lord's Supper now, because that will make it worse." If you can't partake in the Lord's Supper and feel you can't fellowship in the body of Christ (Jesus) then you can't have fellowship in the body of Christ (the church). If you are living in such a manner, the only solution is immediate repentance. If you come to the assembly, and feel that you shouldn't partake in the Lord's Supper, then you shouldn't leave the assembly until you've confessed to someone in a determination to repent.

- 28: Examine yourselves
 - This is a personal issue.
 - We all need to look within ourselves to make sure we are united with our brethren and focusing on the death of Christ while we partake in the Lord's Supper.
- 29: Eating and drinking judgment
 - If we partake in the Lord's Supper improperly, we are consuming judgment.
 - We are adding to our sins by making the Lord's Supper to be a sin.
 - Judge the body rightly
 - Our judgment of the body of Christ (the church) = proper fellowship
 - Our judgment of the body of Christ (His physical body) = focus on Him
- 30-31: The judgment
 - Because of their blasphemous sinful supper, God was making some:
 - Weak
 - Sick
 - Sleep = dead
 - God was actually physically harming them because of their sinful practice
 - They didn't have to be judged by God, if they would simply judge themselves before they partook of the Lord's Supper to ensure that their participation wasn't sinful.
- 32: Discipline
 - God's judgment was to help them repent so they wouldn't continue in sin and be condemned along with the rest of the world.

11:33-34

- 33-34: The solution
 - Here Paul offers short practical solutions to their problems:
 - Wait on each other. Be united. Not divided.
 - Don't use the Lord's Supper as a common meal. Remember Christ.

The Modern Day Dilemma:

We know that the Corinthians are a bad example that we shouldn't follow; yet, when we read this passage we get an overwhelming impression that logistically our Lord's Supper must be a far cry from what the

Corinthians were doing. We know they were abusing the Lord's Supper as a common meal, but in order for that to happen, their Lord's Supper must have been something much more closely resembling a full meal. Then we look at our plates of broken crackers and tiny cups and feel uncomfortable as if we've missed it. We think, "We can't really be partaking of the Lord's Supper like the first century church did."

Logistics:

First let's consider the logistics of the Lord's Supper.

- What do we eat?
 - Bread
 - Fruit of the vine
 - Anything else?
- How much do we eat?
- When do we eat?
- What do we do while we eat?
- What mood should we be in while we eat?
- Should this Supper be quiet and somber or loud and talkative?
- Who should eat?
 - Men
 - Women
 - Children
 - Unbelievers
 - Believers that aren't yet baptized
- Is this Supper part of the assembly?
- Can women speak during this Supper?

Some of these logistics are explained within scripture pretty clearly:

- What do we eat? Unleavened bread and grape juice.
- When do we eat? Acts 20 shows us that the church broke bread on the first day of the week.
- Who should eat? It's clear that saved Christians are supposed to partake in this Supper.
- Is this Supper part of the assembly? Verses 17, 18, 20, 33, 34 all talk about "coming together" and some say "as a church/ assembly". It is clear this Supper is part of the church's assembling together.
- Can women speak during this Supper? I Cor 14:23, 34 talks about the assembly of the Christians and makes it clear that women shouldn't speak in the assembly. Therefore, women shouldn't be speaking during this Supper.

Other logistics are not specifically stated in scripture:

- Did they eat things besides the bread and drink the cup? If it was based off the Lord's Supper, the disciples and Jesus were partaking more than just the bread and cup.
- Does the fruit of the vine need to be fermented? It is likely that what they were drinking was partially fermented, but it could've been unfermented.
- How much bread should we eat and cup should we drink? It is clear they had more than a small piece of cracker and a sip of the juice. They had enough to potentially get full and drunk (though "drunk" could be an condemning exaggeration). Consider that the Lord's Supper was a transformation of the Passover which was a full meal.
- Who should eat? Did the Christian's children partake of the Lord's Supper? Remember, if it was transformed from the Passover, the children might have eaten since they partook of the Passover. What about unbelievers? Or those who aren't baptized yet? It doesn't say in scripture anything specific about being baptized before partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Regarding these logistics, we need to remember that scripture doesn't explicitly give us answers. Therefore, we need to take what scripture makes clear, and apply those principles to coming to wise

judgments regarding the logistics. The spiritual principles must guide our decisions regarding these specifics.

The principles:

During the Lord's Supper we need to have fellowship with your brethren, and eat the bread and partake of the cup to remember the death of Christ.

Application:

- Should we eat anything besides the bread and cup? Is any other thing said to symbolically resemble Christ? Are we commanded to partake in anything else?
 - Adding other foods is either irrelevant or sinful. We don't need to do that.
- Fermentation of the fruit of the vine? Does fruit of the vine mean alcohol? Or the grape juice. The point isn't the consumption of alcohol. It's consuming the fruit of the vine. Fermented or not isn't relevant.
- How much should we eat and drink? Is the purpose to be full? Are we more righteous if we're eating more? How much we eat isn't the point. It's what's in our hearts and mind that matters.
- Who should eat? This one is less clear. It's obvious that Christians need to partake in the Lord's Supper. This meal is fellowship with God made possible by the death of Christ. It makes sense that those who have fellowship with God because they've accepted the death of Christ to partake in this meal. Should we say that children and unbelievers have this fellowship with God if they haven't yet accepted the death of Christ? Or is it just to remember Christ's death and anyone can do that?

Other questions about how we should partake (what do we do during the Supper? What attitude? Quiet or loud? Happy or sad? etc...) need to be answered by previously mentioned principles as well.

I Corinthians 12: Spiritual Gifts & Unity

Introduction:

We are continuing the section of Corinthians from 11-14 regarding worship issues.

- Chapters 12-14 are a section specifically about spiritual gifts.
 - 12-13: Proper attitude regarding spiritual gifts
 - 14: Proper conduct in worship regarding spiritual gifts

Remember, the biggest problem the Corinthians had was their pride. That pride led to selfish behavior. The biggest consequence of pride and selfishness was the existence of divisions among the saints at Corinth.

We are going to see that spiritual gifts were ironically a great source of division among them. The Spirit empowered some Christians to be able to do some pretty amazing things. Instead of using these gifts for the greater good of the church,

- They were prideful about their abilities (12, 13)
- They selfishly used their abilities in worship to get attention (14)

I Corinthians Notes

- They became divided between the seemingly honorable members that had the gifts and the seemingly weaker members that didn't (12)

Chapters 12 and 13 are all about Paul trying to get them to see that their spiritual gifts should unite them, not divide them.

- 12: Spiritual gifts are supposed to bring unity because they're all from the same Spirit
- 13: Spiritual gifts aren't worth boasting about because love is more important

After Paul helps them have a proper attitude towards their spiritual gifts, he can begin teaching them of how they should use their spiritual gifts in worship (14).

12:1-3

- 1: Now concerning spiritual gifts
 - "Now concerning" is the key phrase we see when Paul begins addressing a new issue. Many suggest this is the phrase he says when specifically responding to something they had previously written to him.
 - Spiritual gifts.
 - All the translations add the word "gifts", but it's not actually in the text.
 - The Greek word spiritual is like our English word spiritual. It is an adjective used to designate things being of a spiritual nature or realm. It is also used "spiritual man", "spiritual things".
 - This sentence doesn't actually have a noun that the adjective spiritual addresses, so the editors add the word gift.
 - We see these spiritual abilities described as gifts in verses 4, 7, 9, 30, 31.
 - Therefore the idea is that spiritual gifts are special abilities that the Holy Spirit has granted to Christians.
 - Consider the difference of the phrase "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38. There it is promised that those who repent and are baptized will all receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; yet, in Samaria, those converts repented and were baptized, but "the Spirit had not yet fallen on them" until the Apostles prayed for them to receive Him. We begin to see the scripture differentiates miraculous abilities of the Holy Spirit, and receiving the Holy Spirit.
 - In Chapters 12-14 we are talking specifically miraculous abilities.
 - I don't want you to be unaware
 - The Corinthians were proud of their wisdom and knowledge.
 - Here he is saying that he doesn't want them to be ignorant.
 - This is a reference that they've been acting ignorantly.
- 2-3: The difference between idols and the Spirit
 - He says that they were led astray by mute idols when they were pagans.
 - The false gods don't speak or offer any real language.
 - Yet, the Corinthians followed that emptiness.
 - But the Holy Spirit offers revelation and teaching
 - You can't curse Jesus by the Spirit, because that's not the teaching of the Spirit.
 - You can't say that Jesus is Lord without the Spirit, because the Spirit is who taught you that.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is the revelation and teaching given to us concerning the person Jesus Christ. It's not about crazed emotions or strange experiences. It's about teachings, claims, and conclusions.

12:4-7

- 4-6: The diversity and unity of spiritual gifts.
 - There is diversity in spiritual gifts, because there is a variety of abilities that He enables:
 - Varieties of gifts
 - Varieties of ministries
 - Varieties of effects
 - There is unity in spiritual gifts because they all come from a single source:
 - Same Spirit
 - Same Lord
 - Same God

The abilities may be numerous, but the source is singular, therefore, in our diversity, we need to be as united as the source that provides the abilities.

Also, consider the word choice in these three verses. The words concerning the abilities are all designed to humble the Corinthians.

- Gifts = these abilities are given. The Corinthians didn't learn or earn them
- Ministries = these abilities are for the purpose of serving the body of Christ
- Effects = these abilities are effects that someone else is effecting in you
- Spirit

The words concerning the source represent the full Godhead:

- Spirit = Holy Spirit
- Lord = Jesus
- God = Father

Consider the diversity and unity of the Godhead. This is meant to be an example to the Corinthians. We are supposed to be a diverse people acting as one body.

- 7: The common good
 - The Spirit has manifested these abilities for the common good.
 - They're supposed to benefit all
 - Often these abilities in the world of false religion are to elevate select chosen individuals as being very special. Instead using these gifts for the common good, all worship these specially divine few. That is not the nature of true spiritual gifts.

12:8-11

- 8-11: Diversity of gifts. Commonality of source
 - Here is a list of special miraculous abilities the Spirit empowers. It is not stated that this list is comprehensive. It is also not stated that all these gifts are necessarily miraculous; however, the context is about miraculous abilities.
 - Word of wisdom = divinely revealed application of facts
 - Word of knowledge = divinely revealed facts
 - Faith = is this a miraculous gift? What exactly is this referring to?
 - Healing = miraculous ability to cure diseases
 - Miracles = signs and proofs to validate the message of Christ
 - Prophecy = divinely inspired messages

I Corinthians Notes

- Distinguishing of spirits = the divine ability to discern which spirits (prophecies) are from the true divine source or not
- Tongues = the miraculous ability to speak in foreign languages you've never learned

We see there is a great variety of abilities that the Spirit empowers. Yet this passage still emphasizes the commonality of the source of these gifts:

- Spirit
- Same Spirit
- Same Spirit
- The one Spirit
- One and the same Spirit

Regardless of the diversity of abilities, there is supposed to be unity because of the common source.

Also, note that last on the list is tongues. This is last for a reason. It is seen to be the least significant and practical spiritual gifts; yet, ironically the most honored and emphasized amongst the Corinthians. Paul is going to specifically deal with that in chapter 14.

- 11: The Spirit is in charge
 - Yes there is diversity, but the One Spirit is who created that diversity.
 - The diversity is deliberate, but not for the purpose of division.
 - There is going to be diversity in the church, which is for a purpose, but not for the purpose of division.

12:12-13

- 12: One body
 - Now Paul introduces a metaphor that will very affectively argue that there should be unity amongst a variety of abilities.
 - The metaphor is the body.
 - The body has many members (diverse abilities)
 - But is still one body (unity)
 - The metaphor is used to describe Christ, i.e. His body, the church.
 - Many members = different individuals with different abilities
 - One body = a united church
 - Just like there is unity in spiritual gifts even though there is diversity, there should be unity in the church even though there is diversity.
 - This metaphor will conclude when we see him bookend it with a similar phrase in verse 27, "You are the body of Christ and individually members of it."
- 13: Examples of unity amidst the diversity of the church
 - What's the diversity of the church?
 - Jews
 - Greeks
 - Slave
 - Free
 - What's the unity in the church?
 - One Spirit
 - All baptized

I Corinthians Notes

- One body
- All drink
- One Spirit

We need to learn that diversity is not for the purpose of division. Diversity doesn't need to create division.

12:14-20:

- 14: Diversity of members in one body
 - The body is a great example of unity in diversity
- 15-16: Members with inferiority complex
 - Some members of the body seem less honorable.
 - The foot:
 - It's jealous of the hand
 - It doesn't consider itself valuable because it isn't the hand
 - It doesn't consider itself to be part of the body (necessary)
 - The ear:
 - It's jealous of the eye
 - It doesn't consider itself valuable because it isn't the eye
 - It doesn't consider itself to be part of the body (necessary)
 - Still the conclusion is that regardless of how they feel, they are in fact valuable and part of the body (necessary)

The first source of division: those claiming to be inferior

In the diversity of our abilities, some people are better at more impressive or noticeable things. Not everyone is a great teacher. Members that can't teach well resign themselves to uselessness. Paul says it shouldn't be this way. The member that can't teach well is still part of the body and has a use. Do not let an inferiority complex be your excuse for not being involved. It's interesting to note that the ear is in fact a pretty significant part of the body, and yet it still doesn't feel useful. Some people are just insecure and conceited. Even though they have great ability, they still feel jealous of others.

- 17-19: Proving that seemingly less important members are still vital
 1. If the body were reduced to the more significant members, the body would be useless. If the church were reduced to teachers...who would be there to be edified?
 2. God is the designer of the body. If you think you are useless, you are saying that the God who made you and put you in the church didn't know what He was doing. He has made every member of the church to have ability and purpose.
 3. There is no body without the diversity of members. A single eye isn't a body. The body is the compilation of all these different members.
- 20: Many parts, but one body
 - We need to accept the diversity of the body, and learn to be united.

12:21-22

- 21: Members with superiority complex
 - Some members of the body seem more honorable

I Corinthians Notes

- The eyes:
 - Proud over the hand
 - Isn't impressed with the hand because it can't see
 - Thinks that it doesn't need the hand
- The head:
 - Proud over the feet
 - Isn't impressed with the feet because they can't do what the head can do
 - Thinks that it doesn't need the feet
- 22: The truth
 - The members that seem less honorable are in fact necessary

The second source of division: those claiming to be superior

Some abilities are more visible and impressive. These members may think that they are more important than other people. Teachers may think they are more important than those listening. Scripture makes it clear that those with such abilities should never think that they don't need every other member in the body.

12:23-26

- 23: More honor to the less presentable members
 - We are supposed to treat out less impressive members with greater honor.
 - The members of the church that don't have the impressive abilities and responsibilities are supposed to receive more honor.
 - Why? Is this because they are in fact more important?
- 24: Presentable members don't need more honor
 - The less honorable members need honor because they are less likely to receive honor.
 - The presentable members, teachers, don't need any extra honor. Their honor is the privilege to edify the assembly. They don't need to be told that they're special. They've already got an audience. That is more honor than they need already.
 - Yet, those who don't have such responsibilities should receive more honor.
 - Is it because they are more important?
 - It's so there can be equality. The honor of all members will be equal.
- 25: No division
 - How can there be unity in diversity?
 - Realize that regardless of our diversity, we're all essential and valuable.
 - And therefore strive to communicate that value to all members equally.
 - This is how we have the same care for each other.
- 26: We are one body that feels together
 - We should all rejoice together.
 - The whole body rejoices when the tongue gets to taste ice cream.
 - We should all suffer together.
 - The whole body suffers when the toe is stubbed on a coffee table.

We need to be close enough that we all know of and experience each members triumphs and failures. This is God's plan for His church.

12:27-30

- 27: One body of Christ made up of individual members
 - We need to accept the diversity of the church, but determine to operate as a united body.
- 28-30: Different responsibilities made by God
 - Apostles
 - Prophets
 - Teachers
 - Miracles
 - Healings
 - Helpings
 - Administrations
 - Tongues (again tongues is way down on the list)
 - Interpretations of tongues

We don't all have the same abilities. We need to deal with that. Those who have these abilities need to avoid feeling superior. Those without these abilities need to avoid feeling inferior.

We should also note that not all speak in tongues. Some Pentecostal churches teach that speaking in tongues is the sign you've received the Holy Spirit; therefore, if you haven't spoken in tongues, you haven't received the Spirit, and therefore you haven't yet been saved. This text clearly shows that teaching to be false.

- 31: Desire the higher gifts
 - The higher gifts.
 - What are the higher gifts?
 - Well way up there is prophecy. Way on the bottom tongues
 - Paul is going to show the inferiority to tongues in comparison to prophecy in chapter 14.
 - He's wanting them to be less enamored with their tongue speaking ability, and place more priority on prophecy.
 - The more excellent way
 - Still, there is something even more excellent than prophecy. What is it?
 - Chapter 13 talks about how love is greater than spiritual gifts.

I Corinthians 13: Love Is Greater Than Spiritual Gifts

Introduction:

Chapters 11-14 deal with worship issues:

- 11: Covers two traditions: head coverings and the Lord's Supper
- 12-14: Deal with the issue of spiritual gifts
 - 12-13: Teach the proper attitude regarding spiritual gifts
 - 14: Proper conduct of spiritual gifts in the assembly

Remember, the biggest problem the Corinthians had was their pride. That pride led to selfish behavior. The biggest consequence of pride and selfishness was the existence of divisions among the saints at Corinth.

Unfortunately, the possession of spiritual gifts were making the Corinthians proud. Those who had these miraculous abilities felt superior over others. Paul needs to address this misguided attitude about spiritual gifts. Paul does that in chapters 12 and 13 before he addresses practical matters about spiritual gifts in worship in chapter 14.

- In chapter 12 we saw that spiritual gifts were making people proud. Not everyone had spiritual gifts, but those who did were selfishly using their spiritual gifts as an opportunity to elevate themselves over others. This caused division in the church.
- To remedy the situation, Paul taught that the variety of gifts is given from a single source, the Spirit, and the gifts are meant to benefit the whole group as a single body. Spiritual gifts are supposed to bring unity in the body of Christ, not division.
- He also made it clear that the possession of spiritual gifts does not elevate one individual over another, nor does the lack of spiritual gifts debase an individual under another.

Having said all that in chapter 12, Paul still isn't satisfied they have the proper attitude regarding spiritual gifts. They thought those who possessed spiritual gifts were awesome because they thought the gifts themselves were awesome. In chapter 13, Paul is going to make it clear that the spiritual gifts aren't as awesome as they think they are; and subsequently, convincing the Corinthians that those possessing miraculous abilities also aren't as awesome as they might think.

To do this, Paul proves that love is greater than spiritual gifts. This is such a brilliant argument.

- Not everyone had spiritual gifts.
- But everyone can/ is supposed to love.
- So if love is more important than spiritual gifts, it's easy to see our equality whether or not we have spiritual gifts.
- Spiritual gifts are a useful tool given by the Holy Spirit for edification. Love is the whole point of our spirituality. Therefore those who don't have spiritual gifts are just as capable of fulfilling their purpose as a Christian as those who do possess spiritual gifts.

Paul shows that love is more important than spiritual gifts by:

1. Proving that spiritual gifts are pointless without love
2. Proving that spiritual gifts will cease, but love is eternal

I Corinthians 13 is the famous "Love Chapter", but it's extremely important to see how this chapter fits in the context of this entire section of Corinthians.

12:31

- 31: Desire the greater gifts
 - They were supposed to desire the spiritual gifts because they were useful and valuable tools for building the body of Christ.
 - Greater gifts: This implies that not all miraculous abilities were equally valuable. The Corinthians really loved speaking in tongues because it seemed more impressive. That's the

gift that they really desired, but in chapter 14 Paul is going to make it clear that prophecy is the preferred gift over tongues.

- More excellent way
 - Even though spiritual gifts are valuable, there is an even more excellent way. There is something that's better and more important than spiritual gifts.
 - That more excellent way is love. That's what chapter 13 is about.

13:1-3: Love is greater Reason #1

- 1-3: Amazing deeds done without love are pointless

Verse	Amazing Deed	Absence of Love	Result
1	Speak in tongues of men or angels	... but don't have love...	I am a Clanging cymbal (something ugly bothersome)
2	Prophecy		I am nothing
	Know all mysteries		
	Extreme faith		
3	Give away possessions		It profits me nothing
	Self sacrifice		

- Regardless of what amazing thing we do, if it isn't motivated by love for God or men, it is a pointless.
 - Consider Phi 1:15, 17:
 - There were men doing a good deed
 - But they did it with evil motives
 - There was still a good result for others
 - But it didn't benefit them at all
- The point Paul is making:
 - Love is essential.
 - Spiritual gifts are not essential.
 - Therefore, love is greater
- Let's look at the verses a little more closely
- 1: Tongues of angels
 - Today tongue speaking is incoherent babble. The individuals "speaking in tongues" don't know what they are saying. Those listening don't understand what they are saying.
 - They use this verse to prove that the reason no one understand that "tongue speaking" is because it's not a human tongue, it's an angelic tongue (a language we don't understand).
 - First, tongue speaking in Acts 2:5-12 is clearly speaking in human languages that others can understand.

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- Second, this passage isn't teaching that we should or can speak in angelic tongues. Paul is using hyperbolic language. Consider verse 3: are people really burning themselves? The point is this: even if you speak in an angelic language (which would seem more impressive than speaking a human language), but don't have love, it's useless. He's just trying to stress that any deed, no matter how amazing, without love is useless. He's not advocating or instructing us to speak angelic languages.
 - Third, if there is this angelic language, we are not permitted to speak it (II Cor 12:4)
 - Conclusion: people today claim to be speaking an angelic language because they are unable to miraculously speak in any other human language.
- 2: More miraculous abilities
 - All three of the abilities in verse 2 are listed in I Cor 12, and therefore, seem to be miraculous abilities as well.
 - Prophecy (12:10)
 - Knowledge (12:8)
 - Faith (12:9)
 - Again, the point is to emphasize that no matter how incredible the deed is, if it's lacking love, it's useless.
 - 3: Non-miraculous deeds
 - Both of the amazing deeds in verse 3 don't appear to be miraculous.
 - Giving all your possessions
 - Self sacrifice
 - This would show that the principle doesn't apply to spiritual gifts alone.
 - Love isn't just more important than spiritual gifts. Love is the most important thing of all. Every deed we do needs to be motivated in love for it to have meaning.

Diminishing tongues:

The Corinthians really prided in their ability to speak in tongues. For that reason, Paul is really trying to lower their perception of that miraculous ability. Consider the pattern in these three verses:

- Speaking in tongues without love = noisy gong, clanging cymbal
- Prophecy, knowledge, faith without love = I am nothing
- Giving possessions, self sacrifice without love = profits me nothing

Giving without love doesn't benefit you, but speaking in tongues without love is an active negative force. It's as if giving without love isn't as bad as speaking in tongues without love. They loved speaking in tongues, but Paul is telling them that it's doing more harm than good.

Speaking in tongues is last on the two lists in I Corinthians 12 in comparison to the other gifts to show it's of lesser value than the others; however, it's first on the list in I Corinthians 13 to show it's the most bothersome thing to be done without love. Chapter 14 will make it even more clear that tongues really isn't the most important gift even though they praised it the most. Consider our religious world today. Tongues is highly elevated over all other gifts, but it's just not that valuable (even when done properly).

13:4-7: Love defined

- 4-7: Love is...
 - The Corinthians need to know that love is more important, but they also need to know what love is, and how to do it.
 - Consider how this list specifically applies to a proud, divided, selfish, immature church that can't get along (I've quickly listed chapter numbers where the command is relevant):

- Patient (6, 8)
 - Kind (6, 8, 11)
 - Not jealous (6, 12)
 - Doesn't brag (3, 4, 12)
 - Isn't arrogant (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12)
 - Isn't rude (6, 8, 11, 12)
 - Isn't selfish (5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12)
 - Isn't easily provoked (6)
 - Doesn't hold grudges (6)
 - Isn't happy about falsehood (3, 4, 5, 8, 15)
 - Rejoices with the truth (15)
 - Bears all things
 - Believes all things
 - Hopes all things
 - Endures all things
- By now, it should be very clear why Paul defined love in this way. Each of these explanations of love is so relevant to the many issues the Corinthians are struggling with.
 - The Corinthians were busy doing many religious deeds, but were so lacking in love. This definition of love should be a great wake up call for them to greatly change their hearts and actions.
 - Since this list is specific and relevant to the Corinthians, that means the full definition of love is much longer. Love is such a powerful word.

13:8-10: Love is greater Reason #2

- 8: Spiritual gifts will cease
 - Love: never fails. There is not point in which love fails to exist or is irrelevant.
 - Spiritual gifts will fail:
 - Prophecy: done away
 - Tongues: will cease
 - Knowledge: pass away
 - The second way Paul proves that love is more important than spiritual gifts is by showing that love is eternal, whereas spiritual gifts will end.

This passage informs us that miraculous gifts will end one day. This much is clear. If spiritual gifts are going to go away someday, then it is clear that their value is limited. The next question to be answered is: **When will miraculous gifts cease?**

* This verse recalls three of the four miraculous abilities mentioned in 13:1-2 and 12:8-10. Are only these three gifts going to cease? Or are these selected gifts representative of all miraculous abilities? I think it makes most sense to say that these few gifts are representative as miraculous gifts as a whole. These three, in particular tongues and prophecy, are the most relevant gifts in the context. That is why he mentions those. Also, it is impractical to list all the other gifts each time.

- 9-10: **Spiritual gifts will cease when the perfect comes**
 - Know in part
 - Prophecy in part
 - When the perfect comes, the part will go away
 - We know that spiritual gifts will cease when the perfect comes. The next question to be answered is: **What is the perfect?**

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How can we determine what the perfect is? The text tells us.

The words part and perfect are related. They both discuss quantities.

- Part of something (a portion, but not all)
- Perfect of something (the completion or totality of something)
- These quantity words are describing the same thing.
 - A partial quantity of something.
 - The complete quantity of that same thing.
- Therefore, if we know what “part” refers to, we’ll know what “perfect” refers to; and thus, we will know what “the perfect” is.

What is the partial?

- Know in part/ prophesy in part?
- Know part of what? Prophecy part of what? What were they partially knowing? What were they partially prophesying?
- That should be clear. They had partial knowledge of God’s revelation. The prophesied part of God’s revelation.

What is the perfect?

- “Perfect” refers to the same thing that “part” refers to.
- Therefore, if “part” is referring to part of God’s revelation, then “perfect” also refers to God’s revelation.
- The perfect is the complete and full revelation of God.

Now we know when spiritual gifts cease:

- **When the complete and full revelation of God comes, the partial will cease.**
- **When God’s full and complete revelation comes, the spiritual gifts will cease.**

This shouldn’t surprise us. God can use temporary tools to accomplish His bigger mission. The tools might come and go, but the purpose is eternal.

EX: The Law wasn’t complete. It didn’t totally solve the problems of sin. When the perfect sacrifice and the complete atonement of Christ came, it fulfilled the Law, and the Law passed away.

When did the full and complete revelation of God come? Through the complete inspired written word from the Apostles. There is also mention of this in chapter 1:7. Paul thanks God that they weren’t lacking in any gift. That could be referring to spiritual gifts. He also mentions that they were eagerly awaiting the revelation of Jesus Christ. The ESV renders that, “the revealing of Jesus Christ”. That phrase can be taken two ways. Either the revelation from Jesus Christ, or the revelation of Jesus Christ. The revelation is something that Christ is revealing, or the revelation is the revealing of Christ Himself. The ESV’s translation makes it seem more to be the revealing of Christ Himself, i.e. the last day. The NASB renders it to be something that Christ is revealing, i.e. the complete gospel message. If you look up the Greek word, apokalypsin, it is a word that is almost always referring to a revelation like a message. It’s a variant from of the word “apokalupsis” which can be used either way, but more commonly as revealing a message of sorts. Refer to the chart below to consider how these words are used. I’ve also included another word that is exclusively used to refer to Christ coming. This will be a useful comparison

Apoklypsin	Revelation: message	Revelation: something appearing or coming
Apoklylipsin	Lk 2:32, Rom 16:25, I Cor 14:26, Gal 2:2, Eph 3:3	Rom 8:19

Apoklypsin	Revelation: message	Revelation: something appearing or coming
Apokalupsis	Rom 2:5, I Cor 14:6, II Cor 12:1, II Cor 12:7, Gal 1:2, Gal 2:2, Eph 1:17, Rev 1:1	II Thess 1:7, I Pet 1:7, 13, I Pet 4:13,
Epiphaneia		II Thess 2:8, I Tim 6:14, II Tim 1:10, II Tim 4:1, II Tim 4:8, Titus 2:13

The point is, it is very likely Paul is stating that they have been given sufficient gifts to equip them as they wait for the full revelation of Christ to come. To me that fits with the picture of I Corinthians 13 as well.

13:11-12

- 11: Childish ways
 - Paul now describes the nature of the temporary spiritual gifts to the complete revelation of God.
 - When I was young (immature), I used immature methods, when I grew up, I adopted mature methods.
 - EX: When I was young I picked my nose. When I grew up, I put aside those immature methods, and adopted the more mature method of using a tissue.
 - What is the immature state? The early church with partial knowledge and prophecy of God's revelation.
 - What are the immature methods? The partial prophecy and knowledge given by the Holy Spirit.
 - What is the mature state? When we have the complete revelation of God.
 - What is the mature method? Referring to that complete revelation of God recorded in the inspired scriptures.

The early church didn't have a New Testament. They first had the information taught by Paul. They would have to rely on the knowledge that Paul told them. They would only have partial knowledge, and they would have to rely on their memory. This wasn't sufficient, so Paul (as an apostle) had the authority to bestow miraculous gifts to these first century Christians (Acts 8). These individuals would then have the ability to prophesy and possess divine knowledge; however, apparently each individual only had part of the revelation. They didn't miraculously know everything. Naturally, Paul and other men began writing letters to these churches. These writings were copied and dispersed (Col 4:16). This collection of writings gives us the complete revelation from God (II Pet 1:3-4). Now that we have the complete revelation of God in written form, the immature method of partial knowledge by spiritual gifts passes away. Only the apostles had the authority to bestow miraculous gifts. As the apostles died, that authority died with them. They would be outlived by others who had spiritual gifts, but those would soon die as well. At the turn of the century when those gifted individuals slept, the New Testament was completed and being dispersed. The written word is the perfect and mature method for knowing the full revelation of God.

- 12: I shall know fully
 - When you look in the mirror, it is a blurred misrepresentation of the truth.
 - To fully see something accurately, you have to see it face to face.
 - At that time, they knew in part, but when the perfect came, they would know fully. As fully as they've been known by God.
 - The complete written word is a more mature method of knowing the will of God because:

- It is complete, not partial or lacking
- Permanent. It's been recorded. It can't be changed or contradicted
- All of His revelation is fully accessible to all people
- It is certain. We don't have to question the validity of a teaching because we know the source of that teaching

13:13

- 13: The greatest of these is love
 - Love is greater than spiritual gifts. This is proven because love will outlast spiritual gifts.
 - But how important is love in comparison to other important things? Such as faith and hope? We are saved by faith. Faith is extremely important.
 - Faith and hope will also cease. When in heaven with God, we will no longer have faith in the unseen or hope in the unpossessed.
 - Faith and hope will also cease.
 - Love will remain, even in heaven. Love is eternal.
 - Hopefully now Paul has convinced the Corinthians to see the value of love over spiritual gifts. Hopefully this changed their behavior, as it should change our behavior.

I Corinthians 14: Proper Use of Spiritual Gifts in the Assembly

Introduction:

Chapters 11-14 deal with worship issues:

- 11: Covers two traditions: head coverings and the Lord's Supper
- 12-14: Deal with the issue of spiritual gifts
 - 12-13: Teach the proper attitude regarding spiritual gifts
 - 14: Proper conduct of spiritual gifts in the assembly

Remember, the biggest problem the Corinthians had was their pride. That pride led to selfish behavior. The biggest consequence of pride and selfishness was the existence of divisions among the saints at Corinth.

We've already read about how these spiritual gifts made the Corinthians proud. Paul addressed that bad attitude in I Corinthians 12 and 13. Now, in I Corinthians 14, Paul is going to give them specific instruction and basic guidelines of how to use these gifts in the assembly. As we read this chapter, we will get some insight into how the Corinthians were using their spiritual gifts in a selfish way rather than in a loving way. Paul is trying to correct that behavior in this chapter. In particular, Paul is going to talk about tongue speaking and prophecy.

What are tongue speaking and prophecy?

- Prophecy: speaking a divine message from God.
- Tongue speaking: speaking a divine message from God in an unlearned human language.

- EX: On Pentecost, first they were speaking in tongues, then Peter prophesied in his familiar language.

This chapter is also valuable because it holds the most information available regarding a very controversial and misunderstood subject: speaking in tongues. We can study this chapter and compare it to the modern claims of the purpose and nature of speaking in tongues to determine the truth.

Let's consider some background information before continuing. First we will consider three items:

1. Speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost
2. The differences between the Corinthian assembly and the assembly at Pentecost
3. The Corinthians mindset and practices of speaking in tongues

Speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost:

Tongue Speaking in Acts 2	
When?	On the day of Pentecost where the gospel was preached for the first time ever
Where?	In Jerusalem
Who spoke?	The apostles, Galilean men that had likely never traveled outside of Israel
To Whom?	Many Jews that didn't believe Jesus to be the Christ, and were from many different regions of many different languages
What?	Various human languages that were spoken in the various regions of the visiting Jews, but were unlearned, and likely unheard by those who were speaking them
Why?	A miraculous sign to prove the message was from God

The introduction of tongues speaking in Acts 2 was a special circumstance. It was spoken to an audience of many languages. It was spoken to people who didn't believe Jesus to be the Christ. Speaking in tongues in this situation was a way to communicate to many people, while giving convicting proof at the same time. Tongues might not have even been necessary since the Jews probably had a common language. Whether Aramaic or Greek. They were already gathered in Jerusalem so they had to be communicating for their affairs. Also, Peter speaks a single message to the entire assembly. It was spoken in a single language. The tongues, therefore, were an additional sign to convince the visitors that the message was true. This was a great sign. They didn't have the internet or Rosetta Stone. These foreign languages were not spoken all over the world. It's extremely likely that the apostles had never heard the languages they spoke. That is why people were convinced it was a miracle. It's not like these Galileans could've actually learned all these distant dialects on their own time. Consider those who thought the apostles to be drunk. They could be the natives of Jerusalem. They were already antagonistic of Christ, and when they heard the apostles speaking languages of distant lands, they didn't understand them, and scoffed. Those from the distant lands however soon heard words in their own

languages and believed. This is the introduction to tongues. Let's now compare this situation to the Corinthian assembly.

The differences of speaking in tongues in the Corinthian assembly:

Tongue Speaking in the Corinthian Assembly	
When?	After the Corinthians had already believed Jesus to be the Christ
Where?	In the Corinthian assembly
Who spoke?	Various gifted believers of Corinth who spoke a single language
To Whom?	The saints at Corinth who spoke a single language
What?	Human languages that were not interpreted or understood
Why?	Glorify self rather than edify

The Corinthian assembly was very different than the day of Pentecost.

- First, the Corinthians already believed in Christ, and therefore didn't need the sign of speaking in tongues as proof
- Second, the assembly was of a single language. When different tongues were spoken, the assembly didn't understand

The Corinthian assembly was very different than the audience at Pentecost. Their belief in Christ and common language obviates the two main purposes of speaking in tongues. We already see that tongue speaking in a Christian assembly is a different kind of situation than at Pentecost; therefore, Paul is going to give some instruction on proper use of tongues in the assembly.

The Corinthians mindset and practice of speaking in tongues:

- The Corinthians were proud of their spiritual abilities and thought they were better than others (I Cor 12:21)
- Apparently they liked the showiness of speaking in tongues over other gifts because Paul's trying to convince them to focus on tongues less (I Cor 14:1, 5, 19)
- They were so impressed with their ability, that they didn't really even care whether anyone could understand or was being edified (I Cor 14:13, 16)
- They were many fighting for stage time and speaking all at once (I Cor 14:27, 30)

For the Corinthians, the use of tongues in the assembly became an opportunity to show off and get attention instead of convicting or edifying others. Paul is going to try to correct these bad attitudes and practices.

14:1

- 1: Pursue love, desire spiritual gifts
 - The Corinthians were proud because they thought their spiritual gifts made them better people. To combat this idea, Paul spent the entire chapter 13 convincing them that love is more important than spiritual gifts.
 - He then conclude that they should:
 - Pursue love: Love is something we need to work to attain. It's our responsibility to put forth sufficient effort to grow in love.
 - Desire spiritual gifts:
 - Spiritual gifts, though not as valuable as love, are still important and desirable
 - Desire, there's nothing to do to get them, so desire them:
 - Acts 8 shows that gifts are given by the laying on of hands from the Apostles
 - Once you've received the miraculous abilities from the Holy Spirit, He determines what gifts you have (I Cor 12:8-11)
 - Therefore, to get other gifts, desire and pray for them (I Cor 14:13)
 - But especially that you may prophesy
 - In I Cor 12:31, Paul tells them to desire the greater gifts.
 - I Cor 14:1 shows that prophecy is a greater gift.
 - The Corinthians loved speaking in tongues because it was impressive, but prophecy is better because it's more edifying.

14:2-5

- 2: What is accomplished by untranslated tongues in the assembly
 - Does not speak to men but to God
 - The person speaking in an untranslated tongue doesn't speak to men, because it's a mystery to them. The meaning is hidden and uncovered. The meaning of the tongue needs to be translated for them.
 - The person speaking in an untranslated tongue is speaking to God, because God is the only person that can understand.

Is the purpose of tongues to speak to God? This verse says that they were speaking to God because He was the only person who can understand, but the rest of the chapter makes it very clear that tongues are meant to be understood by men (I Cor 14:5, 6, 9, 13). In Acts 2, the tongue speaking was to men for their understanding. Speaking to God is a way of saying the message isn't accomplishing anything. God doesn't need to understand the message. He's the one that gave you the message for other people to understand. So if you communicate the message in a way only He can understand, then you're not accomplishing anything.

- 3: What is accomplished by prophesy in the assembly
 - One who who prophesies speaks:
 - Edification: building up, constructing with teaching
 - Exhortation: encouragement, urging on
 - Consolation: comfort
 - Paul is emphasizing how much more is accomplished by prophesy rather than tongues. This is what makes prophesy greater than tongues.
- 4: Comparing tongues and prophesy

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- Tongues: edifies self
- Prophecy: edifies the church
 - The emphasis here is one
 - Here we see the selfish use of the Corinthians tongue speaking instead of being concerned for the whole assembly.

How would tongues edify the one speaking? If he understands the message it would be edifying, but verses 13-14 seem to indicate that not every tongue speaker understood his own message. Perhaps the edification is just the encouragement that comes from speaking a divine message from God. Either way, the self edification in this verse is not a good thing in comparison to the edification of the assembly.

- 5: Paul's conclusion
 - I desire that more of you prophesy
 - Paul admits that he wants them to speak in tongues
 - It's good to have gifts; therefore, it's good to be able to speak in tongues
 - But he wants more to prophesy
 - Even though tongues are good, it's more valuable for them to be prophesying
 - Why is prophesying greater/ more valuable than tongues?
 - Prophecy, being an understandable message from God, edifies the church
 - Tongues, being a message from God that they couldn't understand, doesn't edify the church.
 - Prophecy is more valuable because it is understandable, and therefore more edifying.
 - However, if tongues are interpreted, they are understandable, and therefore edifying to the church as well.

To further make this point, Paul will now spend a good deal of time teaching that the message needs to be understandable in order for it to be edifying, and if it isn't an edifying it's just noise. Apparently the Corinthians were quite content to just make unedifying noise in their assembly.

14:6-12

- 6: Speaking in tongues is useless if it isn't understood
 - Paul says that speaking in tongues is only valuable if it's by:
 - Revelation: direct message from God
 - Knowledge: divine understanding of facts
 - Prophecy: inspired message from God
 - Teaching: edifying message
 - These are all different things that can be communicated, but if the communication isn't understood, the meaning is lost, and the message isn't edifying
- 7-9: Example #1
 - Musical instruments
 - Musical instruments have specific tones and sounds they can make. This is like the instrument's language by which it can communicate.
 - If the instrument doesn't communicate these tones clearly, then the meaning is lost, and the message is useless.
 - EX: Bugles (small trumpet) were used to communicate to large armies. If a certain melody was played, the armies knew that meant "attack". Imagine if the king wants to attack, but they've got a brand new bugle player who can't actually play the melody coherently? The indistinct tones are made, and the army has no idea what to do because they didn't get the message.

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- In the same way, if the tones coming out of your mouth aren't understood, the message has no meaning and is a complete waste. The message is just to the air (it's just noise). This is kind of like "speaking to God" in verse 2.
- 10-11: Example #2
 - Languages
 - Humans have tones they make with their mouths called "languages".
 - All these tones made by the human mouth have meaning that can be understood.
 - It is interesting to note that the word "languages" is actually the same word as "tones" in verse 7. "Languages" is not the same word as "tongues". I think this is emphasizing the fact that Paul is giving another example to prove his point.
 - If the meaning of the tones/ languages aren't understood, then we are like barbarians to each other.
 - The meaning of barbarian. Two options:
 1. Someone who doesn't speak Latin or Greek. I.e. a foreigner who can't be understood
 2. "Barbar" was the greek version of "blahblahblah" or "yadayadayada". They would say "barbarbar". So someone who just babbled would be called a Bar-Bar-ian.
 - Either way, the point is, if the meaning of the message isn't understood, it's a complete waste.
 - 12: Seek to edify the church
 - You are eager for spiritual gifts
 - He told them to desire spiritual gifts. They really loved the spiritual gifts.
 - But why did they love them? To turn the assembly into an opportunity to perform and glorify themselves. They wanted to get up in the front and give their flashy message. They didn't even care that no one understood them.
 - Paul tells them their primary concern needs to be edifying the church.

Now Paul will start telling them how tongues and prophecy can be used to edify the assembly.

14:13-19

- 13-14: A message that isn't understood doesn't benefit your own mind
 - Pray for interpretation
 - Interpretation of tongues was another distinct spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:10).
 - Those who spoke in tongues couldn't necessarily interpret their own message. By implication, those who spoke in tongues didn't necessarily understand their own message.
 - My mind is unfruitful
 - If the Spirit is guiding you to speak a message you don't understand, it doesn't benefit your mind.
 - If the meaning of the tongues isn't understood, it's useless to all (even the one speaking); therefore, the solution is praying for the interpretation so the meaning can be revealed.
- 15: The solution
 - Pray and sing with the spirit and with the mind
 - They need to make sure there is meaning in their worship

Today, we need to make sure that we have meaning in our worship. Some people like to go crazy with the "spirit" and stir up the emotions. If there isn't meaning to that, it's not benefiting our mind. It's useless.

We also need to make sure we pay attention to the meaning in our worship. If we are singing songs or following prayers, we might be able to understand the message, but if we aren't paying attention the meaning is lost. That's essentially the same as worshipping in a language you don't understand.

- 16-17: A message that isn't understood doesn't benefit the mind others as well
 - If the outsider doesn't understand the meaning of your thanksgiving prayer, how can he say "amen"?
 - Amen means to agree. You can't agree with what you don't understand.
 - If it's an inspired divine message, it's probably very good, but it doesn't matter how good it is if no one understands it.
 - No one is built up if no one can understand it.
- 18-19: Paul's conclusion
 - I thank God I speak tongues more than you
 - Tongues are useful to Paul (outside of the assembly, as we will see), so he's glad he can speak in tongues.
 - He's glad he speaks tongues more than they can, because they weren't mature enough to handle the tongues they already had. Any more tongues would just be chaos.
 - Paul would rather speak five words with his mind than 10,000 in tongues.
 - Now we have a ratio of how much more valuable prophecy is than uninterpreted tongues: 10,000/5.
 - This is referring to speaking to the assembly of Christians.
 - Actually, Paul says "with my mind", so he's saying that speaking from memory is that much more valuable than uninterpreted tongues.

14:20-25

- 20: Be mature
 - Don't be children in your thinking
 - We are told to have the humility of children (Mat 18:4-5)
 - Here, Paul is criticizing them for having the maturity of children. This is similar to his comment in I Cor 3:1.
 - Children are immature:
 - Impressed by bright, loud, shiny, superficial. He could be criticizing their superficial desire for speaking in tongues.
 - Needy for attention and self-focused. He could also be criticizing the fact that they use the assembly to get attention.
 - In evil be children
 - Children are ignorant of evil. If we are going to be immature, we should be immature in evil, inexperienced, ignorant, etc...
 - In your thinking be mature
 - Worship needs to be mature. Thoughtful and orderly. Focused and not selfish.
- 21: In the Law is written
 - This quote is from Isaiah. The people weren't listening to the word of God. Isaiah said it was soon going to come from them in foreign languages, i.e. out of the mouths of those who were going to take them captive, and yet they still wouldn't listen.

I Corinthians Notes

- This is another verse that is downplaying the value of tongues. Tongues came to them in bad circumstances, and were ineffective. It is also signifying that tongues were ineffective for God's people. He will make that point apply to the Corinthians.
- 22-25: The purpose of tongues and prophecy regarding unbelievers
 - These verses seem to have an apparent contradiction
 - First, he says that tongues are a sign for unbelievers, and that prophecy is for unbelievers. Then he says that tongues will not convict an unbeliever, but prophecy will. I think the answer to this confusing statement is in the situation of where and when the tongues and prophecies are spoken.
 - Tongues are a sign for unbelievers
 - The purpose of tongues is two fold:
 1. Revealing a message from God accompanied
 2. With miraculous proof of it's validity.
 - Tongues are meant to be spoken to individuals that don't believe for the purpose of helping them to believe, therefore, tongues are most useful when spoken to unbelievers outside of the assembly.
 - Tongues are not for believers:
 - If tongues are a sign to help people believe, then the main purpose of tongues is obviated by the believer's faith.
 - The message itself might be valuable, but the proof that comes in the form of tongues is redundant.
 - Prophecy is for believers
 - Prophecy's purpose is primarily for those who already believe.
 - Most translations include the word "sign". That isn't in the original text. Perhaps there's some grammatical things that give valid implications that the word sign should also refer to prophecy as well, but if not, the reading is "prophecy is not to the unbelievers, but to the believers".
 - If the individual doesn't believe in Jesus Christ, he won't be inclined to believe the prophetic message, and it is wasted. The unbeliever needs reason to believe the prophecy before the prophecy is valuable.
 - If the individual already believes, then he is ready to hear and obey the prophetic message.

Acts 2 is a great example of this principle. The Jews in Jerusalem didn't believe that Jesus was the Christ. The apostles began miraculously speaking in tongues to give people proof that the words were true. After the people started to believe the validity of the message, Peter got up and gave the prophecy which taught people Jesus truly was the Christ. If tongues didn't occur, the audience would have no reason to believe. If the prophecy never occurred, the audience wouldn't have known what to do.

Verses 23-25, apply to the assembly. The differences in the statement are because they are being made about a different situation.

- 23: An unbeliever's response to tongues in the assembly
 - The whole church comes together
 - Here we clearly see that this verse is describing when the church is assembled together
 - An outsider or an unbeliever enters
 - Outsider: The first word is challenging to translate, and has been rendered various ways: outsider, ungifted, uninstructed, unlearned
 - The word is idiotés and it seems to refer to people who haven't been fully trained or learned certain skills yet.
 - The NASB rendering "ungifted" and the ESV rendering "outsider" both seem to be interpretive translations.

- Marty Pickup suggests that this is someone who has been visiting the assembly regularly, but isn't fully educated, isn't a Christian yet.
- Unbeliever:
 - First we were talking about unbelievers outside of the assembly. Now we are talking about an unbeliever in the assembly.
 - This individual is curious and interested enough to come to a Christian assembly in order to hear some teaching, and see what this religion is all about.
- If all speak in tongues, won't the unbeliever say that you are mad?
 - When the unbeliever hears the tongue speaking, he will conclude that the church is insane.
 - This seems like a contradiction of verse 22 where it states that tongues are a sign for the unbeliever. So why are the tongues not a sign for the unbeliever in the assembly?
 - Remember, if tongues are being spoken to unbelievers outside of the assembly, the speaker has the miraculous ability to speak languages that can be understood by that individual in order to validate the message.
 - In this circumstance, the unbeliever is coming to the assembly because he wants to hear teaching. Then the Christians get up and start speaking multiple languages not understood by the unbeliever. No one interprets the message. So, even though the unbeliever wanted to learn, he just heard a bunch of nonsense, and therefore, rightly concludes that the church is just crazy.
- 24-25: An unbeliever's response to prophecy in the assembly
 - If an unbeliever hears prophecy, he:
 - is convicted by all
 - is called to account by all
 - has the secrets of his heart revealed
 - falls on his face to worship and declare that God is really among you
 - Prophecy has an immense impact on unbelievers in the assembly
 - Again, this seems like a contradiction of verse 22 that says prophecy is not for unbelievers
 - Verse 22 is referring to prophesying to unbelievers outside of the assembly. They don't believe, and they're also not interested in hearing. They won't be inclined to believe any prophecy without proof.
 - This verse describes an unbeliever that willingly comes into the assembly seeking teaching. Because of this, he is open minded to the teaching. When he hears the teaching, it connects with his heart in an immense way. God made us and understands us perfectly, therefore, when we hear His truth, it's as if He has always known our deep desires and how to fulfill them. The unbeliever then is impacted by the accuracy of this teaching and concludes that this teaching must really be from an omniscient God.

These verses conclude that in the assembly, prophecy is greater than tongues, even for unbelievers.

14:26-33

- 26: All items of worship done for edification
 - There are various things to be done in worship
 - Hymn
 - Lesson
 - Revelation
 - Tongue
 - Interpretation
 - Whatever is done, it needs to be done for the purpose of edification
- 27-28: Proper use of tongues

I Corinthians Notes

- Here are the basic rules for speaking in tongues in the assembly:
 - Only two. At the most three
 - One at a time
 - Needs to be interpreted
 - If not interpretation, stay silent
- Use of the words “only”, “at most”, “let him keep silent” really show that tongues in the assembly are limited. Their most appropriate use is to convict unbelievers outside of the assembly. They can be used in the assembly, but in moderation and only if done properly for edification.
- “Let him speak to himself and to God”
 - This is similar to verse 14:2. Without an interpretation, God is the only one that can understand, therefore, it’s pointless. Keep silent. This isn’t advocating that the purpose of tongues is speaking to God. This is advocating that tongues shouldn’t be spoken in the assembly without a translation.
- 29-30: Proper use of prophecy
 - Here are the basic rules for prophesying in the assembly:
 - Two or three
 - Let others weight what is said (I Jn 4:1)
 - If a revelation is given to someone, while another prophet is already speaking, the first must be silent to allow the other prophet the chance to speak.
 - This seems like a strange rule. Gary Fisher suggests it’s in order to keep one individual from hogging the podium. This rule ensures that other people will be giving other revelations as well.
- 31-33: Order; not confusion
 - Speaking one at a time
 - Apparently the Corinthians were so desperate to be heard that they would talk over each other.
 - Also, since no one could understand them anyways, it wasn’t that much to have several people speaking at the same time.
 - It is clear that there should only be one person speaking at a time. Otherwise it would just be confusing.
 - That all may be encouraged
 - The speakers were selfish and interested in speaking. They weren’t so interested in whether people could understand. They should be more interested in making sure all are encouraged.
 - Some speakers are more interested in making sure they get their chance to speak than whether they’re actually encouraging the people that are listening.
 - The spirits are subject to the prophets
 - They were told to be silent and take turns. That means they would have to control themselves when the revelations were given to them.
 - They might use the fact that they received a revelation from the Spirit as an excuse to just blurt it out at any point in time. Paul says they need to control themselves even when they receive some revelation.
 - God is not a God of confusion, but of peace
 - God is simply revealing His own character. The nature of His character, naturally, should be reflected in our worship of Him.
 - Worship should be done God’s way, not our way. When we let our selfishness rule, worship will be confusing and unedifying. If God is our priority, the worship will be peaceful and edifying.

14:34-35

- 34-35: Women’s role in the assembly
 - Women are to keep silent in the churches

I Corinthians Notes

- Why? They are not permitted to speak?
- Why? They are to be in submission as the Law says.
- What is the result if they break this rule? It's shameful
- What should they do?
 - If they have questions, ask their husbands at home.

What is the rule?

Why does Paul mention this rule here? The context is regarding proper use of spiritual gifts in the assembly. It seems strange then to throw in this other rule regarding women. This section of text he's dealing with orderly worship. It applies to more than just spiritual gifts. Apparently, in their assembly, there were women that were speaking as well. What kind of speaking is this talking about? Were they addressing the whole assembly with teaching? Were they just making comments or asking questions? In the context it could very well be that they were addressing the entire assembly (since this whole chapter is teaching about properly addressing the assembly), but the command to ask their husbands at home could mean that the women were only making comments and asking questions. Either way, it is clear that this rule of "silence" means that the women shouldn't be speaking at all. Let's now try to understand this rule better.

There are two things at work here:

1. Principle: women submissive to men. Verse 34 says women are to be in submission. This is not a new concept. This has been taught since the Law (I Pet 3:5-6). I Tim 2:10-15 also makes it clear that women shouldn't teach men, but be submissive to them.
2. Specific application: women keep silent in the churches. This verse in I Cor 14 is a specific application of that principle.

Where does this rule apply?

If women are told to keep silent in the church, we need to know when or what the church is. The word church (ekklésia in greek) means "called out" and is used to refer to those "called out" by Christ. In short, it refers to an assembly of people. The word is also used three different ways in scripture:

1. Universal church: all the saints in for all time combined together (Mat 16:18)
2. The local church: a specific group of saints in a specific region (I Cor 1:2)
3. A local church's assembly: when the local group assembles together for worship (I Cor 14:19)

Which meaning of the word church are the women not permitted to speak? Well after she's been baptized into Christ she is in the universal church until she dies. If she's not allowed to speak in that church, then she can never speak again. This obviously isn't the point. The same goes for the "local church definition" of the word church. The woman then is not permitted when the church assembles together.

Here are some verses that emphasize there was a specific assembling of the church for worship: I Cor 11:17, 18, 20, 33, 14:19, 23,-25, 28, 34, 35. When the church was gathered to partake of the Lord's Supper and listen to prophets and teachings, the women were to remain silent. After that assembly was over, that specific application of the principle of submission would no longer apply until the next assembly.

Why does this rule apply to the assembly?

God created the specific roles for man and women based on His own nature. He created man and women to work together as God Himself operates. He wants this especially to exist in the families where it is most essential. The roles continue to have significance in the churches. I expect that God made this rule in the assembly fortify the proper gender roles of men and women. The assembly is a very special gathering. God wanted to use this special time to allow men to fulfill their role as leaders so they will be

more likely to fulfill their roles as leaders elsewhere also. It gives men the opportunity to be seen as leaders which builds their confidence to be leaders elsewhere also. The women would also get the opportunity to grow accustomed to their role of submission as they see the men leading the assembly. If men were to stop being leaders in the assembly, and if women were to start leading in the assembly, it would encourage the break down of gender roles

How does this rule relate to spiritual gifts?

This topic isn't such a far cry from the topic of spiritual gifts. I think it's likely the major reason the women started speaking in the assembly is because they also had the spiritual gifts. Women could also prophesy (Lk 2:36, Acts 2:17, 21:9, I Cor 11:5). If anything would justify a women speaking in the assembly it would be that she has received a revelation from God. It is curious then to see that even if she does receive a revelation she should keep silent in the assembly. This shows that this rule isn't about equality, but about different roles. If I receive a revelation from God, and my sister receives a revelation from God, who's revelation is better? They're equal of course. So why am I allowed to speak that revelation in the assembly? Just because I'm a man and that's the role God established before I was born. This has nothing to do with equality of genders, but the role of genders. So we also see that whatever prophesying women did, it was done outside of the assembly.

Does this rule apply outside of the assembly?

The rule of keeping silent only applies to the assembly. The principle of submission obviously applies outside of assembly, and the rule of women not exercising authority over man by teaching applies outside of the assembly (I Tim 2:11-12) since it is not specifically applied to the assembly.

So what about spiritual gatherings that aren't considered the assembly? If Christians gather together to read, study, or pray, are women allowed to speak? They aren't allowed to have authority over men, but since it isn't the assembly, the rule of silence doesn't apply. We have examples of this (Acts 12:12-17, 16:11-15, 18:26).

If the church isn't gathered together as the assembly, the women are permitted to speak. So what about Bible classes connected to the assembly? Are those classes considered the assembly? The question is, what constitutes the assembly? Do we have the ability to determine what is the assembly or not? I've heard it suggested that you know the church is assembled if it would be the group you would take the Lord's Supper with. For example, if the church divides into several classes, it would be inappropriate for each individual class to have their own Lord's Supper because the church isn't assembled together. Therefore, that means it's not really the assembly, and women can speak.

14:36-40

- 36-38: A preemptive challenge of those who wouldn't accept these teachings
 - Paul knows that many of the church would not want to accept these rules. To those he asks these questions:
 1. Did the word of God come from you? Did you come up with this? Do you get to make up your own rules?
 2. Are you the only ones to receive the gospel? Do you get to do your own thing? Or should you conform to the same divine practices as the rest of the churches ("as in all the churches" I Cor 14:33).
 - If you are a prophet, then you would know that what I'm speaking is prophecy from God
 - This is God's show. It's not about what we want.

I Corinthians Notes

- Prophets there wouldn't like it. They would have to accept it.
- I wonder if this is a challenge for female prophets as well.

- If you don't accept this, you aren't accepted
 - The Corinthians have to conform to the church of God, otherwise they aren't part of the church.

- 39-40: Closing summary
 - Paul gives a final summary of rules regarding prophecy and tongues in the assembly
 1. Desire prophecy: it's good and helpful. Pray for it.
 2. Don't forbid tongues: though not as efficient in the assembly, if done properly they can be edifying, so don't rule them out
 3. Do everything decent and orderly: be mature in your thinking, and do things in a manner that is conducive to edification.

Chapters 15-16: Final Issues

I Corinthians 15: The Resurrection of the Saints

Introduction:

Paul now deals with one last issue. This last issue is a false teaching that the Corinthians were accepting:

- I Cor 15:12 “How can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?”
- The Corinthians were being convinced that the saints were not going to be resurrected.
- There would be some Corinthians who started teaching this, and other Corinthians who started believing it. Both parties are wrong.

Why would the Corinthians teach and believe that there is no resurrection of the saints?

- Greek culture and philosophy believed in some form of afterlife and a time when the spirit would be set free from the body, but the concept of a bodily resurrection was considered absurd (Acts 17:31-32)
- Why would they reject the idea of a bodily resurrection? Because it's ludicrous. What happens to bodies when they die? They decompose. It's hard to imagine how a body can resurrect, so the whole idea is then rejected.
- The Corinthian Christians wanting to be wise were influenced by the pagan culture and began to teach that there was no bodily resurrection of the saints.

Paul now will address this teaching and prove it to be false by:

1. Proving that Christ resurrected
2. Exposing the implications of denying the resurrection of the saints
3. Show how Christ's resurrection proves the resurrection of the saints
4. Expose inconsistencies of denying the resurrection of the saints
5. Explaining the resurrection of the saints

It is interesting to note that even today, many Christians don't believe in a bodily resurrection. It is widely accepted that the body dies, and the spirit or soul is resurrected to heaven. This isn't even taught. This is just assumed. However, we will see that it is false. True Biblical teaching is that God resurrects our body. We will see why this is so significant.

15:1-5

- 1-2: Make known to you the gospel
 - Paul reminds them of the true gospel he taught and they accepted
 - I preached to you: he reminds them of the gospel he already taught them
 - You received it: he reminds them that they already received that gospel

I Corinthians Notes

- You are saved by it: he reminds them that this true gospel is what can save them
- If you hold fast
 - Paul taught, and they accepted the true gospel. However, if they accept a different gospel, they reject the only gospel that saves.
 - Not holding fast to the true gospel that saves means we aren't saved by that true gospel.
 - By rejecting the resurrection of the saints, they were rejecting that gospel.
- Unless you believed in vain
 - To believe in vain means you believed at one point, but then abandoned that belief. You are no longer saved by the gospel you have rejected; therefore your previous belief in that gospel is useless.

We are saved by faith. That is the human quality by which God chooses to save. Therefore, if we reject that faith, we reject our means of salvation. We are saved by faith. We remain in salvation by continuing in faith.

- 3-5: The gospel
 - First importance
 - Some aspects of Bible teaching are more important than others.
 - Aspects regarding Christ's saving works are of first importance
 - The gospel is that Christ
 - Died (according to scriptures)
 - Was buried (the assurance of His death)
 - Was raised (according to scriptures)
 - Appeared (the assurance of His resurrection)

Now Paul will prove that Christ did in fact resurrect. The Corinthians wouldn't deny the resurrection of Christ. Paul starts with this common ground, and solidifies it's certainty, so that he can use that truth as leverage to prove his point that the saints ALSO resurrect.

15:5-11: Proving that Christ resurrected

- 5-9: Eyewitnesses of resurrected Christ
 - Cephas (Peter)
 - The twelve
 - 500 brethren at one time
 - James (brother of Christ most likely)
 - All the apostles (again)
 - Paul (last of all)

How can these eyewitnesses prove to the Corinthians or to us that Christ really did resurrect. They could just be lying right? How can we know these eyewitnesses have credible testimony?

Witness	Credibility of witness
Peter, and the Apostles	Peter and the apostles were weak and doubtful before the resurrection of Christ. They ran away. Peter denied Christ. They didn't come looking for Christ. They gave up hope and hid from the enemies. However, they dramatically changed after seeing resurrected Christ. Peter was put in prison and beaten for Christ soon thereafter. Tradition tells us that all the apostles except for John went to the death for Christ. Would they suffer and die for a lie? No. Well, there are people who die for lies, but those people believe those lies are true. Would anyone die for a lie that they made up and knew to be false? No. The apostles weren't lying. Their transformation can only be explained by the fact that they really did witness resurrected Christ.
500 brethren	Is it likely that 500 people hallucinated at once? No. If most of these people were still alive at the time Paul wrote this, then this testimony could be easily confirmed or denied by simply asking these people. This isn't a claim Paul could easily make it if were false. This is only explained by the fact that they really did witness resurrected Christ.
James	James didn't believe in Jesus was the Christ during Jesus' lifetime. James really knew Jesus, but stumbled over this new difficult idea. What could explain his conversion and active involvement in the church? This can only be explained by the fact that James witnessed resurrected Christ.
Paul	Paul's testimony is most significant of all. Not only did he not believe, he hated Jesus and Christians. He actively persecuted the church as he rose in power, fame, and wealth in the Jewish community. What would cause Paul to throw away every satisfying earthly thing (fame, power, wealth, family, comfort, etc...) and become the very thing he hated? This can only be explained by the fact he witnessed resurrected Christ.

- 8-9: The apostleship of Paul
 - One untimely born
 - This refers to Paul becoming an apostle later
 - As if and overdue pregnancy
 - The appearance of resurrected Christ is what qualifies Paul to be an apostle
 - Least of the apostles
 - Paul states his apostleship, but says he is the least of all apostles
 - This isn't based on power or ability, but on worth
 - Paul knew he didn't deserve to be an apostle because he persecuted the christians

I Corinthians Notes

- No human deserves to be an apostle, but Paul recognizes the evil of his deeds and acknowledges the appropriateness of humility in his position

Regrettably, these comments come back to bite Paul because some arrogant Corinthians start to deny Paul's apostleship based on his "weak" abilities (II Cor 11:4-6, 12:11-13)

- 10: Paul's transformation
 - Despite Paul's beginnings, he changed into a dedicated servant of Christ. He describes it as such:
 - By the grace of God I am what I am
 - Paul knew that he deserved to be punished by Christ because of his crimes.
 - He knew that he didn't deserve a special appearance from Christ to change his mind.
 - But Christ chose to give him that life changing appearance anyways.
 - Thus, Paul knows, if God didn't give him that gift, he would still be lost, but since God did give him that gift, his whole life changed.
 - Everything that Paul had become at the time he wrote this letter was because God chose to give him something he didn't deserve.
 - Every good thing we are or have become is given by God's grace.
 - Grace was not in vain
 - Paul recognizes this amazing gift from God and he wants to make it worth God's while.
 - To do so, Paul works especially hard for God.
 - That motivation from grace works through him to keep him going.
 - We need to be motivated by the grace of God, not by guilt. Responding by the good things God has done for us transforms us more than responding to not wanting to be judged and punished.
- 11: Regardless of witnesses, Christ was preached resurrected
 - No matter who saw it:
 - We preached Christ resurrected
 - You believed Christ resurrected
 - Paul knew for a fact that they accepted Christ had resurrected, so any different belief would be a change from the original truth.

15:12-19: The implications of denying the resurrection

- 12: The false teaching
 - How can some of you say there is no resurrection from the dead?
 - If it was preached and accepted that Christ resurrected, how can you deny a resurrection?
 - They would agree that Christ was resurrected. He's going to use this as leverage to get them to belief in the resurrection of the saints as well.
- 13-15: Implications of denying the resurrection #1 (regarding teachers)
 - If there is no resurrection then Christ isn't raised
 - If Christ isn't raised then:
 1. Our preaching is pointless: we preached a lie
 2. Your faith is pointless: you believe a lie
 3. We are liars: because we lied
- 16-18: Implications of denying the resurrection #2 (regarding the Corinthians)
 - If there is no resurrection then Christ isn't raised
 - If Christ isn't raised then:
 1. Your faith is worthless: you believe a lie

2. Your sins aren't forgiven: you aren't saved by a lie
3. The dead in Christ are just dead: there's no hope in a lie

The Corinthians weren't denying that Christ resurrected. They just didn't believe that the bodies of Christians would be resurrected. They didn't realize the major implications of that false teaching. If bodily resurrection really was impossible, then the entire faith falls apart.

We need to be HEAVILY impressed by the great significance "minor" false teachings have. Just the most minor difference of understanding, and it ceases to be the gospel unto salvation. Paul says in Galatians that accepting circumcision as essential for salvation renders one lost and cursed. In a society that doesn't love the truth, it's hard for people to see these minor differences in understanding as being so significant, but they are that significant. Any difference in the truth at ALL is a different gospel. God help us to desire to know the truth perfectly, and to understand the truth perfectly.

- 19: Implication of denying the resurrection #3 (regarding Paul and other devoted Christians)
 - If in this life only we have hoped in Christ...
 - If there is no resurrection, then this life is the only life you have.
 - If there is no resurrection you only hope in Christ for this life.
 - ...We are to be most pitied.
 - If this is the only life you hope in Christ, then your life is a great pity
 - This means, this lifetime on earth hoping in Christ isn't worth it.
 - We spend this whole life invested into Christ without receiving the reward.
 - If there is no resurrection, then there is no reward, and this hope in Christ is such a rip off that you whole life becomes a pity!

We need to realize that this life isn't where we receive the rewards of our hope in Christ. We can't expect this life to fully satisfy us. The Bible says that this life with Christ alone isn't sufficient without the resurrection. It's just not worth it.

But for some people, it is worth it to be a Christian even if it's fake. It's because those people make such minor sacrifices that they receive the benefits of a "Christian" life without the sacrifices and challenges that come from a "Christian" life. Paul, however, was so committed that he made such extreme sacrifices in this lifetime, that, without the resurrection, there's no way it would benefit him in this life enough for it to be worth it. We need to be more like Paul and make sacrifices that have eternal benefit, and not only make changes that have earthly benefit.

15:20-28: Jesus' resurrection proves our resurrection

- 20: If Jesus has been raised, then so shall we
 - But in fact Christ has been raised
 - They already believed this.
 - Paul proved this without a doubt.
 - So now let's follow the implications of Christ having been raised
 - He is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep
 - First fruits: when you plant a field, the first crops and the first fruits. They are evidence of more fruit to come. Christ having risen is the sign that more are to resurrect after Him.
 - Those who have fallen asleep: this is the euphemism for death
- 21-22: Jesus is able to resurrect us
 - One man, Adam, brought death
 - Because of Adam's sin, all humanity was cursed with physical death from that point on

I Corinthians Notes

- Therefore one man, Jesus, can bring resurrection
 - Because of Jesus' sacrifice, all men are promised the opportunity to have resurrection
- In Adam all die, so in Christ all men shall be alive
 - If one man can bring all to death, it should be believable that one divine man can offer life to all.
 - Jesus CAN resurrect us.
 - This argument is similar to Romans 5 where Paul is discussing the spiritual death of Adam and the spiritual resurrection of Jesus.
- 23: The resurrection will happen at an appointed time
 - The resurrections happen at the right time.
 - Jesus resurrected at the right time as the first fruits.
 - Those who belong to Christ will resurrect at the right time as well.
 - It's strange to think of a resurrection, but that's because we haven't seen it happen yet. It will happen in the future.
 - When Christ comes
 - The right time for the resurrection of the saints is at the second coming of Christ.
- 24-26: What happens at Jesus' second coming
 - The end comes
 - When Christ comes, it's the end.
 - At the end Jesus will deliver the authority of rule back to the Father.
 - Before Jesus hands back the authority, however, He conquers all of His enemies.
 - He is going to reign until He has conquered all of His enemies.
 - The last enemy He will destroy is death.
- 27: All things will be subjected to Christ
 - God made all things subjected to Christ
 - Christ will subjugate all things, with the obvious exception of the Father who subjected all things to Christ.
 - The point is, Christ will have rule over everything (including death) except for the Father
- 28: Christ then is subject to the Father
 - When Christ has subjected everything, he then subjects the Himself back to the Father.

The conclusion is this:

- When Christ comes back:
 - He has to conquer all of His enemies.
 - The last enemy to be conquered is death.
 - He conquers death by raising His own back to life.
 - After death is subjected under His feet, He returns the rule to the Father.

The resurrection of the saints is in the eternal purpose of God. If there is no resurrection, Christ never conquers all of the enemies, and the rule is never restored to the Father. If Christ never resurrects the saints, then the consequences of sin are not reversed, and Christ is ineffective. Christ rose from the dead to prove and establish that the saints would be resurrected from the dead as well to fulfill God's eternal plan.

15:29-32: Inconsistencies of denying the resurrection

- 29: Baptism is inconsistent with a denial of the resurrection
 - This is a confusing and controversial passage because the baptism for the dead isn't fully explained. We aren't exactly sure what Paul is referring to. There are a few ideas.

- To help us understand this section, consider some grammatical help:
 - 29: pronoun = those, they, third person: undetermined
 - 30-32: pronoun = we, us, first person: Paul
 - 33-34: pronoun = implied you (from a command), second person: the Corinthians
 - Whatever verse 29 refers to, it isn't regarding Paul or the Corinthians
- Baptism for the dead
 1. Can't refer to people being baptized to save dead people from their sins because that's in absolute contradiction to everything else about the gospel.
 2. It could refer to a practice of some "christians". Paul's mention of it doesn't necessarily condone it, but even though he considers it a false practice, he mentions it to expose its inconsistency with a denial of the resurrection. I find it hard to believe Paul wouldn't more specifically teach against this practice if it really was practiced by some "christians".
 3. It could refer to some pagan practice that would show the inconsistency pagan thinking in denying the resurrection
 4. Most likely, Paul could be referring to false teachers that deny the resurrection, and yet are still baptized into Christ. In actuality we are baptized into Christ for forgiveness of sins and eternal life. If you deny the resurrection, you're just a dead person that got baptized. What's the point of being saved if you're just going to be dead anyways?
- Whatever the meaning, it is mentioned here to expose inconsistent practice with a denial of the resurrection.
- 30-33: Paul's life is inconsistent with a denial of the resurrection
 - Why am I in danger every hour? I die everyday!
 - Paul's entire life was one consistent risk.
 - If there was no resurrection, would he so recklessly spend his only life?
 - What do I gain from suffering?
 - Paul suffered at the hands of the Ephesians.
 - If there is no resurrection, why would Paul be willing to suffer so much.
 - Eat, drink, and be merry
 - If there is no resurrection, there's no reason to live the way God told you to, so just live for the moment.

Now we can see how "minor" differences in the truth can be so significant. With the denial of the resurrection comes a breakdown in all reason to live this life in submission to God.

15:33-34

- 33: The danger of false teaching
 - Don't be deceived
 - Paul is going to tell them something they aren't going to want to believe, but they need to.
 - Bad company
 - Consider the bad company of which Paul is speaking.
 - False teachers.
 - People who are distorting the truth of the gospel.
 - Corrupt good moral
 - Good morals are corrupted when people of different ideas corrupt your understanding of the truth.
 - Friends can rewrite your truth into "popularity" being more important than God.
 - "Christian teachers" can rewrite your truth into believing God has saved you and you can't do anything to be unsaved.

- Atheist professors can rewrite your truth into being no absolute truth at all. All beliefs are equal and there's no right way to live this life.
- Do not be deceived!
 - This is what happens when we consume all these false ideas from unbelievers.
- 34: Repent!
 - Wake up!
 - Realize the lies you are being fed
 - Do not go on sinning
 - Paul here condemns the sin of falling for this false teaching
 - And he acknowledges that this false teaching encourages sin
 - Some have no knowledge of God
 - No knowledge of God is what makes us so susceptible to false teachings that are pleasing to the ears.

15:35-41: Explaining the resurrection

- 35: The objection
 - How are the dead raised? What kind of body do they have?
 - This is the major objection against the existence of the resurrection.
 - They can't understand how a dead body can come back to life. When bodies die, they decay and are destroyed. So how can that body resurrect?
 - Since they don't understand it, they reject it.

Is it wise for us to reject something just because we don't understand it? No. There are plenty of things we accept even though we don't understand it. My mind can't comprehend how a small piece of metal scraping against grooves in vinyl can reproduce a previously recorded sound, but it can. I might have no understanding about the workings of the resurrection. That doesn't, however, prove it to be false

- 36-38: Simple answer
 - You fool
 - What seems complicated to us is simple for God. Let's not be fools and reject God's teachings because we don't understand everything about them
 - In fact, teaching about the resurrection is seen by all every single day. The answer is as simple as a tree.
 - The explanatory metaphor
 - That which is sowed: a seed
 - Doesn't come to life unless it dies
 - A seed is a lifeless dead object that becomes life after its burial.

It should be easy to believe in something dead coming to life. It happens everyday.

- The seed is a different body than the new life it produces
 - A seed is a small hard object.
 - After it's burial, it produces new life in a new body with different texture, size, chemical make up, etc... It's like a whole new thing all together
- God gives the new plant its own kind of body
 - God has enabled the seed to produce a different and special kind of body.

It should be easy to believe in something dead coming to life in a completely different kind of body. It happens everyday.

- 39-41: Examples of different kinds of bodies
 - All flesh is not the same flesh
 - When we look at the creation around us, it becomes clear that there are all kinda of bodies:
 - Bodies of men:
 - Bodies of beasts: i.e. monkeys that can climb trees
 - Bodies of birds: wings and hollow bones to equip for flight
 - Bodies of fish: gills and fins for life underwater
 - Bodies in the heavens: sun, moon, stars
 - It is clear that God has created different kinds of bodies that are specially equipped to inhabit the realm for which they were made. God made bodies that could live underwater. God even made bodies that can exist in space.
 - This is setting up to make it seem very believable the resurrection can happen because God is able to produce for us a body that can inhabit the realm He has prepared for us

15:42-49

- 42-44: So is also the resurrection of the dead
 - The resurrection of the dead is just like the dead seed being buried, and coming to life in a whole new body

See how simple that is? Something that seemed so foreign and impossible becomes so simple and clear when God reveals it to us. How many other ideas does this apply to? We might wonder about those people who haven't heard the gospel? We can't understand the justice of that situation. If God sat down and explained to us His judgment in such cases we would quickly respond, "Ohhhh... well that makes sense". The problem is He hasn't revealed the specific answers to certain situations. Trust God that He has a good simple answer, and keep working until it is revealed to you.

- The body sown (buried) isn't like the body to be raised. Paul explains to us what our new body will be like. Compare this also to II Cor 5:1-01.

Body sown	Body raised
Perishable: mortal	Imperishable: eternal
Dishonor: in sin and shame	Glory: without sin and shame
Weakness: temptations, physical limitations	Power: having overcome sin, not tired or sick
Natural: of the earth	Spiritual: of similar essence as divinity

- 45: Jesus gives us life
 - First man, Adam, became a living soul
 - God gave Adam life
 - The last Adam, Jesus, became a life giving spirit

I Corinthians Notes

- Jesus gives life
- 46-49: The resurrection happens later
 - The natural body comes first. The spiritual body comes later

The reason the resurrection seems so impossible is because we haven't seen it happen yet. We haven't seen it happen yet because it's not time for it to happen yet. The spiritual body comes in the future.

- First man is from the earth, earthy
- The second man is from heaven, heavenly
- Bodies are fitting for where they come from.
 - Earthy beings have earthy bodies. Heavenly beings have heavenly bodies.
- We have been born of earthy men, so we have an earthy body.
- We are being reborn of a heavenly Father, so we soon shall be in the image and similar body as that heavenly Father.

15:50-57

- 50: The need for a new body
 - Flesh and blood can't inherit the kingdom of God. Mortality can't inherit immortality
 - It makes sense that God will produce for us a new body.
 - Just as it's impossible for this earthy body to inhabit outer space, this physical body can't inhabit the spiritual realm where we will soon dwell.
 - There is a great need for a new body.
- 51-53: The explanation of how we get our new body
 - I tell you a mystery
 - This is information that wasn't revealed. After it's revealed, it's less of a mystery.
 - We will all be changed
 - This is the reception of our new bodies God has prepared for us.
 - It is received differently by those physically dead and those physically living.
 - Dead or living, all the saints will be changed into the new body.
 - In a moment
 - It will happen at any given moment as a twinkling of an eye.
 - No real warning. It will just come to pass.
 - The trumpet blast will call all our attention as this transpires.
 - The dead will raise
 - They will be raised with these new bodies
 - We will be changed
 - This is referring to those physically alive being transformed without ever dying.
 - Perishable must put on imperishable
 - This is the necessary process that has to happen for us to dwell with God.
- 54-55: Taunting death
 - When the perishable and mortal have put on imperishable and immortal, then they will have this taunt: "Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your sting?"
 - Jesus conquers His last enemy, death, when He raises us from the dead and gives us our new bodies.
 - Then we shall taunt this curse of sin, having overcome it.
- 56: Why death is our enemy

- Sin causes death. Death is the consequence of sin. As long as death remains, sin still has its power over us.
- Sin has power under the Law. The standard of God's Law becomes our enemy because our failure to abide by the Law is where sin can have power over us.
- Grace frees us from the power of the Law. The resurrection frees us from the power of sin.

Death is the curse of sin. Even after the coming of Christ, it is still our enemy. We know that we will overcome, so we do not fear death, but its consequences still hurt and harm us and death remains a barrier not yet removed. This is why the bodily resurrection is so important. It's the absolute conquering of sin and its consequences. Once given our new bodies to dwell with the Lord, there will be no lingering hint of our enemies, sin and death.

- 57: Victory through Christ
 - We could never be set free from the Law if it wasn't for the grace of Christ.
 - We could never be set free from death if it wasn't for the resurrection of Christ.
 - All the terrible effects of sin are conquered by our King.

15:58

- 58: We have reason to persevere
 - Instead of the denial of the resurrection taking away our reason to be obedient, the existence of the resurrection gives us reason to stay obedient
 - We need to stay strong in the TRUTH
 - Be steadfast
 - Immovable
 - We need to stay consistent in our obedience
 - Abounding in the work of the Lord
 - Knowing it will not be in vain
 - Because of the resurrection, we aren't pitied. We WILL be rewarded.

I Corinthians 16: The Collection and Closing Comments

Introduction:

Paul has finally addressed every issue but one. He covers some details on the collection before wrapping up this letter with future travel plans, closing exhortations, and greetings from other Christians.

16:1-4

- 1: The collection for the saints at Jerusalem

I Corinthians Notes

- Now concerning
 - Again we see this phrase being used to mark the beginning of a new topic.
 - This is likely something previously mentioned, that Paul is now speaking in further detail.
 - It also could be something that the Corinthians asked about in the letter they sent him.
- The collection for the saints
 - The Corinthian Christians were involved in collecting money to give to the Christians in Jerusalem (vs 3).
 - The idea of Christians collecting money to give to other Christians is not a new concept:
 - Churches collecting money to share with their own church:
 - Acts 2:44-45
 - Acts 4:32-37
 - Other acts of benevolence as well (Acts 6:1-6, Acts 9:36-39)
 - Churches collecting money to share with other churches:
 - Acts 11:27-30
 - Saints collecting funds to share with other saints is a staple part of the Christian ministry.
 - As is stated here, all accounts of Christian benevolence done by means of the collected church is for the ministry of other saints.
 - I Tim 5 gives pretty strict regulations on which saints should receive benevolence from the collected funds of the church to keep the church from being “burdened”.
 - Scripture makes a distinction about what is done with the church’s collected money and what individual saints do with their own money.
 - As individual saints, we are commissioned with the responsibility to help all in need, whether Christian or lost.
 - As the church, we have no authority from God to use those funds for ministries outside the benevolence of other churches and saints.
 - My assumption is God desires for saints to have two responsibilities: their service towards each other as well as their service towards the world. If our church’s collected money is used for benevolence to the lost, then I’m only fulfilling one Christian’s responsibility, while the church does the other for me.
- As I directed in Galatia
 - Other churches were involved in the benevolence to Jerusalem as well
 - The other churches were, like Corinth, also predominantly Gentile churches established by Paul on his first and second journeys.
 - Churches in Galatia (I Cor 16:2)
 - Antioch, Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe (Acts 13:13-14:28)
 - Churches in Macedonia (Rom 15:25-26, II Cor 8:1)
 - Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica (Acts 16:12-17:15)
 - Each church volunteered to be a part of this ministry to the need in Jerusalem. It wasn’t mandatory (II Cor 8:8)
 - But for those involved, there is uniformity for how the church is supposed to do such work, which Paul will now describe.

Paul had started all these churches on his first two journeys. He is currently at Ephesus in the middle of his third journey. His plan is to continue now through Macedonia and then Achaia collecting the money to then take it to Jerusalem. We see that the donation was delivered at the end of his third journey (Acts 24:17).

- 2: How the collection should be made
 - On the first day of the week
 - Acts 20:7 tells us that the first day of the week was when saints gathered together to “break bread” (partake of the Lord’s Supper).

I Corinthians Notes

- This passage confirms that Sunday was the day that Christians were gathering, and therefore was a practical time to collect money
- Put aside and save
- The weekly collection is the practical way to save a large amount of money over time. If they wait till Paul comes and then give, they will just give what they have available, which won't be nearly as much as if they had been saving weekly.
- This collection would be the church collectively gathering their funds together.
 - It conforms to the image of Acts 4:35.
 - If the church wasn't gathering funds together, then what's the point of designating a specific time to do it?
 - Also, the church is supposed to gather these funds so it will all be ready in one place for when Paul arrives.
 - The scriptures make a distinction about what is to be done with the church's collected money as opposed to the individual saint's personal money.
- As he may prosper
 - In the Old Covenant, God designated how much each individual was supposed to give to the priests (Num 18:24)
 - It was tithing. Giving 10%.
 - It was innovative in the sense that it's a proportionate amount to the individual. The rich would give more money, and the poor would give less money, but according to proportion, they're giving the same amount.
 - In the New Covenant there is no command of how much to give.
 - The proportionate concept still exists: "as he may prosper".
 - But God never commands how much you should give proportionately.
 - This is both a blessing and a responsibility.
 - It is a blessing to be able to personally determine by our own spirit how much we want to give. That's more freedom for personal worship and sacrifice to God as opposed to following a mandated command.
 - It is a responsibility that we don't take advantage and fail to give as we ought to because it's not specifically commanded.
- 3-4: How the donation will be delivered
 - Whomever you may approve
 - When Paul arrives, he expects there to be saints of Corinth ready with the money to take the journey (possibly along side Paul (vs 4)) to Jerusalem.
 - It would be unwise for Paul to collect all this money and then personally deliver it because that would just look like a great opportunity for thievery.

Even though we are Christians, we sin, and things need to be done in a wise manner. We don't want to provide room for temptation and failure or the opportunity for accusation.

- Your gift
 - It was their voluntary choice to collect and give this money to the saints
 - We need to remember what our collection really is:
 - The sacrifice is an act of worship to God (Phi 4:18)
 - But the gift is given to other Christians
 - II Cor 8:7-15 gives us more insight on this concept.
- To Jerusalem
 - We have Gentiles collecting money to give to Jews they've never met living in a region they've never been to. How is this even possible?
 - It's amazing what Jesus Christ accomplished.

I Corinthians Notes

- Here gentile Christians are caring for Jewish Christians, and God has a specific purpose for it (Rom 15:24-27). This giving was a means to build a better relationship between these two groups of people.
- God had already sent a famine in Jerusalem just after the first gentile church was started. The gentiles then gathered their money to help the Jewish Christians.
- Here again, we see that God has created need in Jerusalem, and the gentile brothers are coming to their aid.
- Giving and receiving is a powerful way to build bonds.
 - The Jews would be proud and naturally look down upon the gentiles as lesser participants in the church. God humbled these Jews by placing them in need.
 - The gentiles wouldn't be so inclined to care about this ethnic group they've disregarded for years. God gives them the opportunity to show concern.
 - As the Jews are receiving help, they feel gratitude and build respect and trust for the gentiles.
 - As the gentiles give, they feel more responsible and tied to their Jewish brethren.
 - The result is a much more formidable relationship

Here in the United States, we don't have as much need. We think we need to do everything independently. We need to be humble enough to accept help, and loving enough to give help. The result will be much better relationships throughout the church.

Last thought: keep in mind the way this donation is organized. Each individual church decides if they will give, how much to give, and how to deliver. There is no hierarchy, or head quarters. They do not receive command from any head but Christ. They don't give to any head or institution. They simply deliver the funds straight to the church. We need to follow the simple example set out in Acts, and skip all the man made organization and systems.

16:5-9

- 5-6: Paul's travel plans
 - I will come to you
 - He started the church and knows they need lots of help. He wants to return to give more exhortation.
 - After I go through Macedonia
 - He plans to leave Ephesus and travel through Macedonia before he comes to them.
 - This is actually different from his original plan he previously told them (II Cor 1:15-16)
 - Paul has to change his travel plans because his life is somewhat unpredictable. The opponents of Paul are using his changed travel plans as an opportunity to discredit him as being unloving (II Cor 1:17-18).
 - Perhaps
 - This is a sign that he can't really be sure of what's going to happen.
 - Stay the winter
 - His goal is to get to Corinth before winter. During the winter, travel is impractical. That will give him the opportunity to stay for an extended amount of days.
 - That you may send me
 - He wants them to be involved, in favor, and supportive of Paul's ministry
- 7: Paul's desire to stay a while

I Corinthians Notes

- Not just in passing
 - Paul has a strong relationship with the Corinthians and realizes their great need. He knows a quick trip won't get the job done
 - We need to realize that brief trips to other locations might be nice, but aren't necessarily exceedingly helpful. All real work takes time. We need to be willing to give the time to spend with Christians for the growth to occur
- If the Lord permits
 - This is another sign of Paul realizing how out of control his life and plans are.
 - He wants the Corinthians to understand this so they will be patient if things don't go the way he expects them to.
- 8-9: Opportunities in Ephesus
 - I will remain in Ephesus
 - Paul was writing in Ephesus, and is staying there longer than he intended.
 - Paul doesn't know what each city will be like, or what opportunities it beholds, so he needs to be flexible to go where the need is.
 - A door has been opened
 - This is the reason Paul has extended his stay in Ephesus. There's too much work to do so he's not ready to leave.
 - The Corinthians need to be patient with Paul and loving towards the Ephesians. We can't whine and complain about good spiritual workers being involved other places.
 - There are many adversaries
 - Open doors from God:
 - Don't come easy. You have to knock on a door for it to open. Paul has been knocking on many doors. God is causing them to open.
 - Aren't always pleasant. With more open doors comes more adversaries. With more evangelism comes more opponents.

16:10-12

- 10-11: Timothy's travel plans
 - If Timothy comes...
 - Paul is sending Timothy to Corinth since he can't be there himself
 - There need to be more workers available to increase the amount of work being done.
 - He is doing the work as I am
 - Timothy is so reliable, that Paul trusts him to do the work in the same way as himself (Phi 2:20)
 - The integrity of the workers needs to be outstanding.
 - How they should treat Timothy
 - Give him no reason to be afraid
 - Do not despise him

Consider the church that Paul is throwing Timothy into. Consider the exhortation and criticism that is coming in the letter that he brings. Besides their pride and immaturity, they will likely be even more upset by the letter that Timothy brings from Paul. Such courage and boldness on Timothy's part.

- 12: Apollos' travel plans
 - I encouraged Apollos to come, but he doesn't desire to

- Out of concern for Corinth, Paul encourages Apollos to go back there to work.
- By his own personal judgment, Apollos declines.
- Apollos doesn't have to do what Paul suggests.

16:13-14

- 13-14: Five closing exhortations
 - Be on alert: looking out for troubles so as not to succumb to them
 - Stand firm in the faith: hold fast to the true teaching (15:2)
 - Acts like men: as opposed to children. Be mature (14:20)
 - Be strong: be tough and ready to put up a fight (9:24-27)
 - Do everything in love (8:1, 13:1-3)

16:15-18

- 15-16: Respecting worthy saints
 - Stephanas
 - Apparently one of the first converts in the region.
 - Also older and of good character. They are devoted to the ministry of the saints.
 - Be in subject to such men
 - Since true spiritual leaders are servants, it is the church's responsibility to subject themselves to these worthy men.
 - The servants won't subjugate others to them, much like a husband won't subjugate; therefore, the church should submit themselves to these men much like the wife should submit themselves to their husbands.
 - This isn't declaring Stephanas to be of any special position, but rather the principle of honoring and submitting to men by worth of their godly character.
- 17-18: The coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus
 - These brethren came to see Paul in Ephesus
 - He was encouraged to see them
 - They filled what was lacking. I assume this refers to information regarding the Corinthian church
 - Visits from brethren refresh Paul.

16:19-24

- 19-20: Greetings from other Christians
 - Churches of Asia
 - Paul is currently in Ephesus which is Asia.
 - Those churches give their regard
 - Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily
 - We know that Aquila and Priscilla lived in Corinth and were active in the work to start the church with Paul (Acts 18:1-4).
 - When Paul left Corinth, this couple went with him. They ended up staying in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19)
 - They give a hearty greeting to their old friends

I Corinthians Notes

- Greet one another with a holy kiss
 - Kiss was a customary greeting
 - Let it be holy, as opposed to Judas' insincere kiss of betrayal
- 21: Paul's personal greeting
 - Whereas by implication and custom the whole letter was dictated by Paul, and written by another, here Paul took the pen and wrote these words by his own hand.
 - This is a customary signature and proof of authentic authorship (II Thess 3:17)
- 22: Final extreme exhortation
 - This is a nice ultimatum
- 23-24: Final salutation
 - He prays that Jesus grace be with them. What we all need.
 - He affirms his love for them (which might be in question during parts of this letter).