

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY SERIES

1 CORINTHIANS

By Pastor Ray Viola

Dear Saints in Christ Jesus,

These notes were taken from our Old and New Testament Bible surveys at Koinonia on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. The intention was to give an overview of the entire Bible and see how the two testaments “connect.” Within the notes, practical truths were brought out because we know that the study of Scripture without application is like a vehicle without gas...going nowhere.

If the Holy Spirit can use these simple truths to draw you closer to Jesus Christ and develop a more mature love of God the Father, then it will have accomplished its task.

May the blessings of God be shed upon you as you receive, with meekness, His engrafted Word.

Selah,

Pastor Ray

******Portions of these notes were downloaded from Quick Verse and Online Bible study notes.***

******A special thanks to Pastor Chuck Smith for notes from his teachings that were used in this study.***

1 CORINTHIANS

Corinth was strategically located as a seaport city on the isthmus of Corinth, a narrow, 3 1/2-mile neck of land that offered direct passage between the Aegean and Adriatic Seas, avoiding dangerous sailing farther south. From 27 B.C., Corinth was the seat of administration of the Roman province of Achaia. This city also hosted the Isthmian Games, which were similar to the modern Olympics. Today Corinth stands in the country of Greece.

Because of its great location, Corinth was a city of much traffic and trade. The city was extremely wealthy; it also was a ‘mecca’ for great orators and the ‘mentally elite’. Worldly wisdom was prized in Corinth, which is why Paul contrasted this world’s wisdom with God’s wisdom (**1 Cor 1:17,30, 2:1-13, 3:19**; see also **James 3:13-17**). Like any large city, Corinth was a place for unbridled sexual immoral-ity. The temple to the goddess of love, Aphrodite, was in the city. There were countless religious harlots who would seduce the males of the city as an act of service for Aphrodite. The ‘New Age’ move-ment was also very popular here. It was at this city that the Christians were called to stand for Christ and share His good news.

According to **Acts 18:1-11**, Paul first came to Corinth on his second mis-sionary jour-ney and stayed there for eighteen months. Shortly after he arrived, Silas and Timothy arrived. Paul’s ministry was fiercely chal-lenged here, but Jesus assured him that there were many souls in that city who would be saved (**18:10**).

When Paul left Corinth for Syria (**18:18**), the Lord then brought Apollos to Corinth (**19:1a**). In **2 Tim 4:20**, Paul tells us that Erastus abode for a time at Corinth.

The approximate date of this letter by the apostle Paul was 55 A.D.

Chapter 1

1:1 Since Paul’s “**apostle**”ship was challenged in this city, he began the letter by stating his title (**Eph 4:11**). He also referred to a “**brother**” named “**Sosthenes**”, possibly the same man mentioned in **Acts 18:17**.

1:2 “**The church of God**”, as also indicated by numerous other Biblical verses (**Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 10:32, 11:22, 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:13; 1 Tim 3:5**), is not a building, nor is it limited to any one locality, but designates the univer-sal body of believers. The only one who has the right to say “My church” is Jesus (**Matt 16:18**). Also notice the words, “**both theirs and ours**”. No church group can claim the exclusive title of God’s “Church”. In fact, to boast of that is the mark of every cult.

The Greek terms for “**sanctified**” and “**saints**” come from the same root word, which means to be set apart for God’s exclusive use. (Remember Belshazzar, who used the holy vessels in an unholy way, resulting in God writing His judgment on the wall in **Daniel 5?**). Saints are those who have called upon the name of Jesus Christ for salvation. This term is found

sixty-two times from **Acts** to **Revelation**.

- 1:3** “**Grace... and peace**” is a phrase in Greek and Hebrew greetings conveying sentiments of beauty and rest; and they are ours through our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1:4** The Instrument and Distributor of God’s “**grace**” is Jesus Christ Himself (**John 1:16,17; Titus 2:11**). We are exhorted by Peter to grow in the grace of Christ (**2 Peter 3:18**). Grace is good for the heart (**Heb 13:9**).
- 1:5-7** The word “**enriched**” literally means “thoroughly furnished”. This group of believers at Corinth was blessed with some of church history’s best teachers as well as an abundance of spiritual gifts, and yet they were the most carnal body that Paul dealt with (**1 Cor 3:1-7**). Please note that the gifts being manifested among them merely confirmed that the true gospel had been preached and believed (**Mark 16:20**). It did not at all mean that they were mature in the Lord. In fact, they were void of the evidence of maturity, which is agape (**1 Cor 13:1-3**).
- 1:8** We are “**blameless**” before God because of the finished work of Jesus Christ (**John 19:30; Eph 1:4**). From God’s perspective, because we are in Christ and complete (**Col 2:10a**), saints are seen as sinners no more (**Psalms 103:12**). However, from our earthly, time-limited perspective, the picture appears to us as an unfinished and progressive work (**Eph 5:25-27; 1 Thess 5:23; Jude 24**). The word “blameless” means “unimpeachable” (**Rom 8:33; Col 1:21-22**). Satan’s accusations (**Rev 12:10**) against the children of God cannot ‘stick’ because we are covered by Jesus’ blood (**1 John 1:7b**). We too, like the early church saints, should be waiting for our blessed God’s return (**1 Thess 1:10**).
- 1:9** “**God is faithful,**” (**Rev 3:14, 19:11**) and He is the One who called us to “**fellowship**”. The church in Corinth was very divisive, but Paul told them that they were called by God to have fellowship, implying not only with the Lord Himself, but with each other as well (**1 John 1:3; Acts 2:42**).
- 1:10** One of the many problems within this body was division (**1 Cor 11:18**). This is always a mark of carnality (**1 Cor 3:3,4**). If Satan cannot destroy a church with bad doctrine, he will rip it apart from within by forming divisions or cliques. We must be united on those truths that are the foundations of our faith, while learning how to live where we differ on non-salvation convictions (**Rom 14:1-21**).
- 1:12** Favorite teachers were a source of division because they were focused on the messenger instead of the message.
- 1:13-17** Note that Paul did not receive from Jesus Christ the teaching that water

baptism was required for someone to be saved, because it is not (**Acts 10:44-48**). Adding any ritual to the cross of Christ makes the cross of Christ of no effect (**Gal 2:21; Acts 15:1-11**).

- 1:18** Note that every person is either “**saved**” or “**perishing**”. Paul used the word “**foolishness**” only seven times, and they were all in the two letters to Corinth. The root Greek word can be translated as ‘moronic’. The “**message of the cross**” is the true gospel and is powerful (**Rom 1:16,17**)!
- 1:19** Notice what God thinks about godless, Spirit-less wisdom! The wisdom that God will destroy (**Isaiah 29:14**) is the very wisdom that this fallen world system is built upon, and it is destroying lives today (**2 Cor 4:4; John 10:10a**).
- 1:20** This verse is evident today in the theory of evolution. We are living today as in the days of the Judges.
Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
We’ve sown to the wind and are reaping the whirlwind (**Hosea 8:7**). We are experiencing the painful truth of **Proverbs 14:24**: “The crown of the wise is their riches, but the foolishness of fools is folly.”
- 1:21** God saves souls through the preaching of the gospel, which is the ‘Great Commission’ (**Matt 28:19**).
- 1:22** Jesus spoke harshly about “**sign**” seekers:
Matt 12:39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.
:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”
The only sign that Jesus said He would give would be His bodily resurrection (**John 2:18-21**).
- 1:23** Unsaved Jews stumble over **Daniel 9:26; Isaiah 53; Psalm 22**. Greeks found the gospel mentally unstimulating and even insulting, choosing instead their own “**foolishness**” (**Col 2:8**).
- 1:24** The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ displayed both “**the wisdom of God**” and “**the power of God**”, since this was the only way (**Matt 26:39**) for God to provide salvation and eternal life to those who believe in Christ (**1 Cor 15:1-4,17-22**).
This verse also declares that Jesus is Himself the embodiment of God’s wisdom and power (**Col 2:3,9-10**). It is Jesus’ power that is holding all things together (**Col 1:17; Heb 1:3**).
- 1:26** Note that Paul didn’t say, “not any”. There have been brilliant men and

women who have come to Christ for salvation. Their intelligence could not deter God's saving grace!

1:27 God uses ordinary people to **“confound”** (literally, “cause to blush with shame”) the ‘elite’ of this world who reject Christ or His word.

1:29 What did Paul glory in? The cross of Christ (**Gal 6:14**).

1:30 It is **“of Him”**, that is, of God the Father, that we are saved through Christ. **Jonah 2:9** “... Salvation is of the LORD.”
Salvation is a miracle. Notice the four words describing the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf: **“wisdom...and righteousness and sanctification and redemption”**.

1:31 The reference is to **Jeremiah 9:23-24**.

Chapter 2

2:1 We must keep in mind that Paul was raised in Tarsus, and studied under Gamaliel, which means that he could very well have sounded polished, but he knew that it is the Spirit of God who is the agent needed for effectiveness in the Lord's work (**Zech 4:6**).

Paul called these saints **“brethren”** twenty-eight times in this epistle. Despite their mistakes and all, Paul was being a faithful brother in the Lord by reaching out in love to correct their errors (**Gal 6:1**).

Note that “the testimony of Christ” in **1:6** is called here **“the testimony of God.”** This is just one of many texts where the names of Christ and God are used interchangeably.

2:2 Paul consistently declared the centrality of the cross of Christ (**1 Cor 1:22-24; Gal 6:14**).

2:3 Physically, Paul had gone from Galatia to Philippi, then Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens before coming to Corinth (recorded in **Acts chapters 16-18**). We know from the Galatia letter that Paul had contracted an illness (**Gal 4:13,14**), and his opponents even commented about his bodily **“weakness”** and speech (**2 Cor 10:10**).

Paul's **“fear”** and **“trembling”** were not because of preaching the message (**Acts 20:24**), but rather his anxiousness to obediently share God's word.

2:4 Worldly **“wisdom”** uses fleshly methods of persuasion (such as intimidation and guilt) to influence others. The man of God, though, relies upon the Spirit of God, not his own ability (as in **Acts 2** on Pentecost).

2:5 **Col 2:8** Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the

world, and not according to Christ.

A man does not and can not convert his fellow man. Universities cannot manufacture God's wisdom. All of Moses' wisdom from Egypt (**Acts 7:22**) could not prepare him for God's work. "Wisdom and spiritual understanding" (**Col 1:9**) are found in Christ (**Col 2:3**) and His word (**Col 3:16**). In heaven as well wisdom is ascribed to the Lamb of God (**Rev 5:12**)!

- 2:6** The word "**perfect**" here is literally "**mature**", but does not mean sinless (**1 John 1:8-10**). Maturity in the Lord is a process that occurs through obedience (**John 15:4-7; Rom 6:17; James 1:21,22**), not accumulating years (**Heb 5:12-14**). The saints at Corinth were primarily carnal, not mature.
- 2:7** A "**mystery**", according to God's word, is a secret revealed (not withheld) to those who open their hearts to Jesus Christ. The "**we**" speaking this wisdom were those mentioned in **1:12**. This "**wisdom of God**" that existed before the world began was the gospel of Jesus Christ (**Rev 13:8**). Only after the veil of unbelief is removed (**2 Cor 3:14-16**) do we see the beauty and love of God's Son.
- 2:8** The title "**Lord of glory**" (**Rev 4, 5**) proclaims the Deity of Jesus.
- 2:9,10** The quote is from **Isaiah 64:4**.
Salvation bypasses the five senses; it's a revelation from God (**Matt 16:17; Rom 16:25; Gal 1:12; Eph 3:3; Rev 1:1**).
Note the person of the Holy Spirit, who has the ability to search, know (v **11**), and compare (v **13**).
- 2:11** Pray before and during your Bible reading time since the Holy Spirit is your Teacher (**1 John 2:20,27**). He will help you and me to understand the word of God (**Psalms 119:18**).
- 2:12** The Holy Spirit will not lead us back into the world (**1 John 2:15-17; Eph 2:1-3**); but rather, He will work in us to conform us to the image of Christ (**Rom 8:29; Gal 5:22-23**).
- 2:13** Compare the Word with the Word (**Acts 20:27**), and your life with the Word in order to be on solid ground (**Matt 7:24-25**).
Never compare yourself to other believers (**2 Cor 10:12**).
- 2:14,15** There are three types of men:
1. The "**natural**" man is unsaved (**1 Cor 15:22a; 2 Peter 2:12**);
2. the "**spiritual**" man is saved and controlled by God's Spirit (**Rom 8:14**);
3. The "**carnal**" man is saved but living after the flesh or for the world (**3:3**).
- 2:16** The quote is from **Isaiah 40:13**.
What is "**the mind of Christ**"? We find it explained in **Philippians 2:5-8**.

Chapter 3

- 3:1,2** Once again, Paul identified these saints as **“brethren”**. However, he said that he could not pass along the meat of the gospel because they were still **“carnal,”** meaning dominated by the flesh, or living after the flesh. The same Greek word for “carnal” is translated “fleshly” in **2 Corinthians 1:12** and **1 Peter 2:11**. Paul wrote about the contrast between being Spirit-led or flesh-led in **Romans 8:5-8**. Although each believer’s destiny is eternal life (**1 John 5:11-13**), our goal should be maturity (**Heb 5:12-14**) by abiding in Christ (**John 15:1-8**) and cultivating that love relationship (**John 15:9,10**). **“Babes”** require the milk of God’s word for growth (**1 Peter 2:2**).
- 3:3,4** Notice that the reason for their carnality was their cliques that were formed around the instruments of God. They were saying, “I (*belong to*) Paul ... Apollos ... Cephas” (**1:12**). If that is being carnal, should not each of us examine our hearts to see if we are not guilty of the same thing? Division destroys (**Mark 3:24,25**). Christ’s physical body was broken so that His spiritual body may be unbroken, that is, one (**John 17**).
- 3:5** Compare the “who” in this verse with the One who is the focus of the last three verses of chapter one. Never ‘lift up’ (exalt) any instrument that God uses to bless you, unless of course you lift them up in prayer (**1 Tim 2:1,2**).
- 3:6** In Corinth, Paul **“planted”** and Apollos **“watered”**, but in Ephesus the reverse took place (**Acts 18:24-19:10**) by Divine design (**Matt 16:18b**).
- 3:7** **“God...gives the increase”**, so to Him be all the glory. As He increases, we decrease (**John 3:30**). He causes His church to increase (**Acts 2:47b**) and mature (**Eph 4:16**).
- 3:8** All born-again leaders are **“one”** in Jesus Christ, and He will **“reward”** them for their **“labor”**, not for their success. God is the Christian’s “rewarder” (**Heb 11:6**).
Look at these “reward” passages, and may they encourage you to be faithful to Christ (**1 Cor 15:58; Heb 6:10**), especially if you are feeling ineffective and unproductive: **Matt 5:12, 10:41,42, 16:27; Col 3:23-24; Rev 11:18. Rev 22:12** “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”
- 3:9** Another title for the church is His ‘husbandry’, or **“field”** ‘under cultivation’. He tells us to make us more fruitful.
Note the multiple uses of the phrase **“you are”** in **1 Corinthians**:
1. carnal (**3:1**)
 2. God’s field and building (**3:9**)
 3. the temple of God (**3:16,17**)
 4. Christ’s (**3:23**).

3:10,11 There are two important concepts to grasp here:

1. We cannot labor beyond the **“grace”** that God gives. God determines the boundaries and effectiveness of every ministry (**1 Cor 15:10**), and His grace never runs out (**2 Cor 12:9a**).
2. The **“foundation”** of the Christian faith is our Lord **“Jesus Christ.”** He is the chief cornerstone (**Psalms 118:22; 1 Peter 2:6**). We are to build our lives upon Him and His word (**Luke 6:46-48**), laying those vital doctrinal foundations (**Heb 6:1-2**) passed along to us by apostles and prophets (**Eph 2:20**) in the Scriptures (**2 Tim 3:16-17**).

3:12-15 At the “judgment seat of Christ” (**Rom 14:10c; 2 Cor 5:10**) the true motive and quality of what we’ve done for the Lord will be revealed.

3:16,17 It is important to note that **“the temple of God”** in this chapter refers to the entire church at Corinth, whereas in **6:19** Paul speaks to the individual as being a temple of God. We must each walk in such a way as to not defile the work of God. What **“defiles the temple”**? Read **Matthew 15:18-20**. Peter was given a vision instructing him not to call “common” (Gr., “defiled”) those who have been cleansed (**Acts 10:15**). May we ‘catch’ the vision!

3:18 Worldly wisdom must ‘bow the knee’ to the Word of God! The most practical book in the Bible (**Proverbs**) refers fifty-nine times to God’s wisdom, which we can draw from in day-to-day living.

3:19-20 These are God’s thoughts on human wisdom, void of His Spirit, quoted from **Job 5:13** and **Psalms 94:11**.

Luke 16:15 “... what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”

3:21-23 Because we belong to Jesus Christ, every aspect of our life is in His sovereign care, including our ‘homecoming’ (**Psalms 31:15a**). Remember, our life is directed by the hand of God (**John 10:27-29**), not by a series of accidents.

Chapter 4

4:1 The word **“ministers”** (or **“servants”**) here is a different Greek word than in **3:5**. Here it means under-rowers, those rowing beneath the ship at the command of the captain (**Joshua 5:13-15**). We are servants **“of Christ”**, not heads of parties.

A **“steward”** is a slave in relation to his master, but an overseer in relation to other servants; one who manages another’s goods (**Luke 12:42-48; 16:1-12**). Overseers (bishops) are stewards (**Titus 1:7**). Every believer has been entrusted by God with talents and abilities (1 Peter 4:10) for which they will be brought into account.

4:2 The single thing that God expects from us is love (**Matt 22:37-39**), and the

single thing that God requires of us is faithfulness - not brilliance, eloquence or even perfection. A pure heart with pure motives is what pleases God.

4:3-5 Three judgments are listed here:

1. other people's - Receive the judgment of others that is truthful, but never allow the opinions of others to steer your life.
2. self-judgment - This is very incorrect. It is at times too condemning, and at other times too lenient. One thing I know for sure - you and I know worse things about ourselves than the worst of our critics!
3. God's (**2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10c**) - The judgment of Christ will reveal the true motive and quality of our lives, but it is not a judgment for sin (**Psalm 103:12**).

Note that every believer will receive "**praise**" from the Lord, or literally, recognition for what we did in His name. For verses on judgment, see:

Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:37; Romans 2:1-3; and, James 4:11,12.

Out of the three judgments, only God's takes into consideration all the circumstances and motives.

4:6 This flock had a pride problem. Other than in **Colossians 2:18**, the only other places where Paul used the phrase "**puffed up**" is in **1 Corinthians 4:6,18,19**, and **5:2**. Pride is the opposite of agape (**1 Cor 13:4**). To think that we are better than, smarter than, wiser than, holier than, or superior to anyone or any church is pride. Any area of pride has not had the encounter with God of **Isaiah 6:1-8**.

4:7 They thought that they were 'the elite' flock because of their gifted teachers and spiritual gifts. They were glorying in the gifts of God as if they earned them. When the grace of God is truly apprehended, pride, boasting and arrogance go 'down the drain'.

- May God's blessings and gifts humble us and cause us to serve and worship Him more faithfully, patiently waiting our reward (**Matt 25:21,23**).

4:8 They were living as though the millennium had already arrived!

4:9 Paul said that the apostolic ministry was like ancient P.O.W.'s who were thrown to the beasts to die.

4:10 Notice the contrasts, and give special consideration to the fact that you can either be a "**fool for Christ's sake**" or a fool for this world.

4:11 Does this sound like the health and wealth, prosperity message to you that some preach? Yet, Christ's servants were famished, poorly clad, beaten like slaves, and "**homeless**", as their Master had been (**Luke 9:58**).

4:12 "**We labor**"; i.e., they poured out their lives for the Lord. They took the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew, chapters 5-7**) literally!

- The more we pour out, the more He pours in (**Luke 6:38**).

- 4:13** They encouraged those who sought to injure their reputations! As far as the world was concerned, they were nothing more than the trash of the earth, scrapings off the bottom. But oh how Jesus saw them, and us (**Matt 5:13,14**)!
- 4:14** Paul told them their lifestyle and attitudes are not in step with the message that he brought them, but he still called them his **“beloved children”**.
- 4:15** Evidently, Paul had led many of them to Jesus and was feeding them God’s word. They were dear to his heart.
- 4:16** Paul exhorted them to **“imitate”** him, as he followed Jesus Christ (**11:1**).
- 4:17** He **“sent Timothy”** as a ‘follow-up’ to his teaching to get them back on track.
- 4:18** Some were arrogantly attacking Paul’s ministry and life, and even doubting his concern for the church at Corinth.
- 4:19** His coming to them was not a matter of his choice, but of God’s will (**James 4:15**). ‘Lord willing’ is often used as an excuse today to not get involved, when it is really a phrase of submission to the will of God, whatever the issue.
- 4:20** So much for ‘positive confession’! Fruit is seen (**Gal 5:22-23**), not heard!
- 4:21** Paul was prepared to do whatever needed to be done to return the hearts of the Corinthians to Jesus Christ, even if it meant the **“rod”** of apostolic correction.

Chapter 5

This chapter deals with the issue of sexual sin within the church, and it gives the proper way to deal with the matter as a local church. As we will see, the Corinthians were proud about their liberal and tolerant views about this sin. They were actually abusing or misunderstanding the doctrine of the grace of God (**Jude 4; Titus 2:11-12; Rom 6**).

- 5:1,2** How sad to contrast this report to the one found in **1 Thessalonians 1:8-10**. The sin here was incest, strictly forbidden by God (**Lev 18:8; Deut 22:30**). However, the English word **“fornication”** (**“sexual immorality”**) comes from the Greek root word “pornos”. “Pornography” would be an accurate English word as well.

It can never be overstated that the only holy, pure, and God-honoring sexual relationship is a heterosexual, monogamous one, within the bonds of marriage (**Heb 13:4**). Any other sexual activity is an abomination in God’s sight. Therefore, you can know for sure that moral purity, whether you are single or married, is God’s will for your life (**1 Peter 4:1-3**). We must actively and

aggressively flee from, not permit entrance of, and resist every avenue or agency of impurity (**Phil 4:8**). Jesus Himself taught this (**Matt 5:27-30**), as did Paul (**2 Cor 10:3-5**). Remember, the path to victory over not only sexual sin but every temptation begins by aligning our thoughts to the Word of God (**Psalms 119:9-11**). God always provides a way of escape for the willing soul (**1 Cor 10:13**).

The early church leaders recognized the importance of moral purity in warning new believers to abstain from sexual immorality (**Acts 15:20**). Paul issued these statements:

1 Cor 6:13 ... Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord...
:18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

The first two sins (“works of the flesh”) Paul warned against in **Galatians 5:19** are adultery and fornication.

Eph 5:3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints.

In **1 Corinthians 7:2** Paul addressed how we avoid sexual sin. In our immediate text (**5:2**), please note the church’s response to this sin and how they should have responded. It’s very important to realize that church discipline is not the sole responsibility of the leadership; the entire flock must stand together. This was a public letter and it is quite possible that the man himself would hear what Paul wrote!

5:3 In other words, Paul is saying: ‘I don’t even need to pray about what to do about this matter; the Word of God is very clear.’ God’s Word on sexual sin is not vague! People usually respond in one of two ways when confronted about this issue. They either run and hide (usually to another ‘more loving’ church!), or they repent and humble themselves.

5:4,5 This ability to discipline comes from the power of Jesus Christ (**Matt 28:18-20**). All discipline is to be given lovingly, humbly, Biblically, and directly. This “**deliver(ance)... to Satan**” means to cut him off from any fellowship whatsoever and release him to the afflictions of the enemy which, hopefully, like the prodigal son (**Luke 15:11-19**), will drive him to godly sorrow and repentance (**2 Cor 7:9,10**).

Note again the simple procedure to follow after someone is notified about sin and given space to repent (See **Rev 2:21,22**):

1. Excommunication, until repentance; otherwise their “leaven” will spread throughout the church (**Gal 5:9**).
2. The church members should deprive the person of fellowship and notify other saints and churches as well.
3. Release them, prayerfully, to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

5:6 Interestingly enough, the punishment for eating leavened bread during Passover was the same for the sin in this chapter – being cut off from fellowship

(Ex 12:19). Leaven represents evil in Scripture (**Matt 16:6,11,12; Luke 12:1**) It illustrates pride because it works by puffing up.

- Note, “**a little leaven**” is all it takes. Is your home unleavened?

5:7,8 The command to “**purge out**” means literally to cleanse thoroughly. Never relax the effort! There can be no peace treaty with sin. To tolerate it is both unbiblical and unloving.

Note that Christ, our Passover Lamb (**John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-19**), is also our Yom Kippur (atonement, “propitiation”) according to **Romans 3:25**.

- May each of us do our part to stay pure (**1 John 3:3**), be holy (**1 Peter 1:14-16**), and maintain an atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to move freely.

5:9 We do not have this letter.

5:10-13 Notice Paul’s counsel regarding the church’s response to believers (“**anyone named a brother**”) who persist in ungodliness, as distinguished from non-believers doing the same things. He put forth this same principle to the Thessalonian believers (**2 Thess 3:6-15**).

Chapter 6

In **verses 1-8**, Paul was dealing with a situation in Corinth where believers were taking each other to court over some unexplained matter. Never did Paul discredit civil justice (**Rom 13:1-7**), but Christians taking other Christians to court would be a defeat spiritually, despite the outcome. Immaturity, carnality, and selfishness abounded here at Corinth. This situation indicated that these believers were more concerned with their wallets than their witness.

6:1 Paul said this matter should be handled by “**the saints**” and not the secular court system. Paul referred to these baby Christians as saints. Their spiritual infancy was revealed by the manifestation of fleshly, selfish indulgence.

6:2 Another one of the “**Do you not know...?**” in Corinth.

- Do you know that as saints you and I will participate in judgment? (See **Daniel 7:18,22; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 2:26,27, 20:4**.) In light of this truth, we should be able to handle our petty difficulties by submitting ourselves, whether right or wrong, to the Word of God.

6:3 In the Jehovah’s Witness publication *Studies in Scriptures*, vol. 5, pg. 84, Jesus is referred to as Michael, or Chief of the Angels. If that were so, then according to this verse, you and I would judge Jesus Christ! See **Romans 14:10** and **2 Corinthians 5:10** for the truth about Who will be judging whom.

6:5 While claiming to be so wise, Paul said that their attitude (as already seen in **chapter 5**) was a “**shame.**”

6:7,8 To take another Christian to court is wrong. Paul said the individual who seemed to have a valid case, with an almost certain settlement, should allow himself to be wronged or deprived rather than misrepresenting the Lord's name and obstructing His honor.

At this point, Paul switches his train of thought and returns to the area of moral purity and sanctification. As we saw in the introduction to this letter, Corinth was a morally loose, sexually permissive and explorative city. The Lord's counsel through Paul is as relevant to us today.

6:9-10 We must be careful not to pick which one of these sins we want to take a stand against, as some do. We must take a stand against all of them.

(Compare **Galatians 5:19-21**; **Ephesians 5:5**.)

No Christian is entirely sanctified, practically speaking, in this life (**1 John 1:8-10**); but we no longer practice sinning (**1 John 3:8,9**). All believers in Jesus are overcomers (**1 John 4:4, 5:4**) and shall "inherit" through Jesus Christ "all things" (**Rev 21:7**).

6:11 We are "washed" from our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ (**Rev 1:5b**).

This "calling on the name of the Lord" (**Acts 22:16**) is the new birth (**Titus 3:5**). Our present position is "sanctified" and "justified": sanctified by faith in Jesus (**Acts 26:18**; **Heb 10:10**), by God the Father (**Jude 1**) and the Holy Spirit (**Rom 15:16**); justified by faith in Christ (**Rom 3:28, 5:1,9**; **Gal 2:16, 3:24**).

In **verses 12 and 13** there are 'mottos' or 'slogans' at the outset of each passage which were very popular among the libertines of the day. They had a 'if it feels good, do it' mentality.

6:12 As in **10:23**, we shouldn't ask, 'Is this okay?' but, 'Is it edifying?' Paul said that he treated his spiritual walk like an Olympic athlete (**1 Cor 9:24-27**). **Phil 3:7** But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. **:8** Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

6:13 Note, the body is meant to be used to worship, glorify and serve our Lord (**Rom 12:1,2**). Each and every member of our body is to be an "instrument of righteousness" (**Rom 6**).

6:14 The body's goal is immortality, not immorality; holiness, not hedonism; service, not selfishness. More on the resurrection of the body in **chapter 15**.

6:15 Spiritually, this verse can be tied to **Revelation 17:5**. Again, note: Is God 'tolerant' of extramarital, premarital, or unbiblical sex? "**Certainly not!**"

6:16 See **Genesis 2:24** and **Ephesians 5:31**. We are married to Jesus (**Rom 7:4**), and to have an affair with the world (**1 John 2:15,16**) is adultery (**James 4:4**).

6:18 “Flee”! Literally, “seek safety; run for your life.” Flee “ pornos”, whether it be in thought, word, or deed. (See other “flee” passages: **1 Corinthians 10:14**; **1 Timothy 6:9-11**; **2 Timothy 2:22**.)

6:19 Christians belong to God.

Rom 14:7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

:8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord.

Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.

6:20 Note the redemptive tone here – “bought with a price” (**1 Peter 1:18,19**).

- May Christ be “magnified” in our bodies (**Phil 1:20**)!

Chapter 7

In this chapter Paul responded to questions he was asked about marriage.

7:1,2 In Greek “touch” means literally, “to fasten self to”; thus, cohabitation and intercourse are meant here.

Note that to avoid sinning against God in a sexual sense, marriage is the only honorable option, other than abstinence. The timeless morals of God are not popular with mankind.

Heb 13:4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

7:3-5 Married couples no longer have exclusive rights over their own temples. (The gift of marriage is beautifully described in **Ephesians 5:22-33**.) Whenever there is a suspension of physical intimacy, it should be for a specified period of time, agreed to by husband and wife, for the purpose of developing one’s intimacy with Jesus Christ. Our flesh’s weakness is good reason not to go beyond the time which the grace of God permits.

1. If single, divorced, or widowed, cohabitation is not an option because it gives Satan an opportunity to speak “reproachfully” (**1 Tim 5:14**).
2. Never consider being “unequally yoked” (**2 Cor 6:14-16**).
3. Use your singleness to serve the Lord (v **32**).

7:7-9 Paul, to be a voting member of the Jewish body known as the Sanhedrin, had to have been married. His wife is never mentioned, and why Paul was “unmarried” has been the topic of much speculation. However, we know that he never remarried, and considered the ability to remain celibate and holy unto Jesus Christ as a gift from God (**Matt 19:10-12**).

It’s a sad commentary that there have been numerous sexual crimes committed by those who have been told, contrary to Scripture (**1 Tim 3:1-13, 4:1-3**), that celibacy was required for ministry. The majority of the early church

ministry team consisted of married men, including Peter (**1 Cor 9:5**)! **“It is better to marry than to burn”** in lust; but, it is not better to marry merely to relieve your lust! A 100% commitment to Jesus Christ and each other is the ideal marriage as God instituted in the Book of **Genesis (2:24)**.

7:10-16 Here are issues directed to those unequally yoked and what to do Biblically; and the permanency of marriage vows.

1. Some Corinthians appear to have wanted to switch mates, and use for an excuse the teaching on being unequally yoked. Paul said if the unsaved spouse is happily married, or is serious about keeping his or her vows, pray for God’s grace to show the love and beauty of Christ (**1 Peter 3:1-7**). The entire family is **“sanctified”** (set apart) by the saved spouse.
2. If the **“unbeliever”** walks out of the marriage, no longer willing to live with you and your God, after you’ve made your best effort prayerfully and practically to maintain the marriage, he/she has the freedom to go. You are not in **“bondage”** to that unbiblical situation. However, you are to remain unmarried until it is legal for you to remarry, but **“only in the Lord” (v 39)**. Remember, you are legally married in God’s eyes, and no relationship is to be entered into, in this type of case, until the marriage has been terminated.

What did Jesus teach about marriage? Is there a Biblical basis for divorce?

Matt 5:32 “But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”

See also **Matthew 19:3-9**.

I also believe that abandonment or abuse are grounds for at least separation. Marriage, humanly speaking, requires both the man and the woman keeping their vows before God (**Ecc 5:2-7**).

The Book of **Hosea** reveals the posture of forgiveness and restoration.

God hates **“divorce” (Malachi 2:16)** because it so pollutes and destroys the beautiful type of Jesus’ marriage to His bride, the Church, which is forever (**Eph 1:13-14**) and unbreakable (**Heb 13:20**).

Through Jesus’ example and teaching in **John 4:6-26** and **8:3-11**, we see that divorce and adultery are forgivable, though (humanly) unforgettable. The gospel of Jesus Christ can make not only any person, but any marriage new when you give your hearts, minds, emotions, bitterness and unforgiving attitudes to Jesus (**Rev 21:5**).

7:17-24 These verses convey the exhortation to abide in God’s **“calling”**, no matter what the former religious, social, or employment status was.

7:25,26 Evidently, pressures at Corinth, along with an anticipation of the Lord’s return, made singleness advantageous.

7:27 Make no effort and give no thought to alter your present marital status.

7:29-31 Jesus Christ is coming soon and we, whatever our marital status, are to keep Him first in everything.

Matt 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Matt 22:37 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

:38 This is the first and great commandment.”

We must be diligent not to leave our “first love” (**Rev 2:4**)!

We must also take care to have a proper attitude toward this “world”.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

:16 For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world.

:17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

7:32-35 Paul points out the obvious differences and distractions that every person, married or unmarried, has. Neither status should detract from our individual vows of marriage to Jesus (**Rom 7:4**). A true heart devotion to Jesus is the crowning grace to both marriage and singleness.

7:36-40 Some words of wisdom on giving away a daughter (“**virgin**”) in marriage, and with regards to remarriage.

Chapter 8

In **chapters 8, 9, 10:23-11:1**, Paul deals with the topic of Christian liberty or freedom. Christian liberty is deliverance, through Jesus Christ, from legalistic, ritualistic works-based systems which teach that my salvation depends on my efforts, as opposed to Christ’s efforts (**Eph 2:8-9; Gal 5:1**). Liberty is freedom from lists of do’s or don’ts. It’s a life governed by the Spirit of God and the Word of God. However, liberty in Christ is never to be thought of as a license to sin (**Rom 6:1,2**), but rather redemption from sinful living (**Titus 2:11-14**).

The Greeks and Romans were polytheistic, meaning that they believed in many gods: a god of love, a god of entertainment, nature, etc. It was the custom to offer up to these gods various types of sacrifices or offerings that included meat. Every sacrifice to an idol was divided three ways.

1. Part was burned on the altar in the name of that particular god, thus appeasing their wrath.
2. Part belonged to the priest who would bring the remaining part of his share to the public market to be sold.
3. Part was taken home by the person making the offering and served at a meal.

For the believers in Jesus Christ at Corinth, numbers 2 and 3 were the problems that needed to be addressed. Could they eat the meat or not? How would their personal

conviction affect the unsaved and the church? This section of Scripture, along with **Romans 14** and **1 Corinthians 13**, give us the principles needed today in those ‘gray areas’ of Christian practice in daily living.

- 8:1** In any gray area of discussion, “**knowledge**”, even correct knowledge, is not the key. In fact, one’s legislation of personal convictions upon the entire body of Christ is legalistic, divisive, and actually a display of immaturity. The key ingredient in gray area issues is “**love**” (agape). Paul states why:
1. “**Knowledge puffs up**”. Whom? Me. Knowledge deals only with facts and concludes that their answer is the only acceptable one.
 2. Agape deals with people. “**Love edifies**”, cares, and understands. Knowledge defends the display of liberty; agape defers the display of liberty. Knowledge is concerned with pleasing self; agape’s concern is with edifying others.
- 8:2** Any person claiming to have all the answers is really displaying ignorance.
- 8:3** The key to ‘neutral topics’ is, as we said, agape. That key is developed by an intense desire to know Jesus more. Jesus said, “Learn of Me” (**Matt 11:29**); i.e., keep on learning (**Phil 3:10**; **2 Peter 3:18**), and be assured that the Lord knows those who belong to Him (**2 Tim 2:19**; **Gal 4:9a**; **John 10:27**).
- 8:4-6** The mature believer knew these verses to be the absolute truth.
1. All of the gods of the nations are idols (**Psalm 96:5**), the works of men’s hands (**Psalm 115:4-8**), and inventions of their unregenerate minds.
 2. The Scriptures teach monotheism (**Gen 1:1**; **Deut 6:4**; **1 John 5:7**); not an inanimate shrine, but a living Creator and Redeemer (**John 1:1-3,14**; **Matt 1:23**). Paul used this knowledge to preach the gospel at Athens (**Acts 17:22-31**), and Lystra as well (**Acts 14:8-18**).
- Also, this matter of eating what had been “**offered to idols**” was discussed and written about in **Acts 15:19-20,28-29**.
- 8:7** This verse refers to the new converts at Corinth who did not yet have this foundation. They were spiritual babes, and their limited understanding of the word of God affected their decisions. As far as they were concerned, to buy this meat at the market or eat this meat at someone’s house was a matter of sin, because they were still in doubt (**Rom 14:22,23**).
- Note, Paul refers to a very important factor in decision making, and that is “**conscience**” (not ‘gut feelings’); intuition would be a close meaning. Thus, for the unpersuaded new believer, to eat this meat would pollute their fellowship with the Lord because their conscience was still weak.
- Here are some guidelines for us to follow in this area:
1. Allow the Holy Spirit to develop those personal convictions on non-salvation, non-sinful, practical issues in the lives of new converts.
 2. Don’t force anyone, or try to argue with anyone, in an area that the Holy Spirit has not given them liberty to engage in.

- 8:8** A mature, Spirit-filled believer knows this about **“food”**; so does the Lord Jesus, but our attitudes and actions before other believers, especially new believers, is critical.
Matt 25:40 And the King will answer and say to them, “Assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”
Luke 17:1,2 Then He said to the disciples, “It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”
1 Tim 4:12 ... be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

- 8:9-13** Here Paul addressed the mature believer and warned about what happens whenever a mature saint flaunts a personal **“liberty”** before a new believer.
1. It is a sin against Jesus.
 2. It can ruin their spiritual walk.
 3. It impedes spiritual growth by placing a **“stumbling block”** in the way.

As in other areas of life, maturity brings responsibility in the body of Christ. Here are some questions for each of us to ask concerning ‘gray areas’:

1. Is this necessary? (**1 Cor 6:12**)
2. Is this edifying, both to me and to others? (**1 Cor 10:23**)
3. Does this, or will this, glorify the Lord? (**1 Cor 10:31**)
4. What does this do for my witness or testimony? (**Col 4:5**)

Chapter 9

This chapter reveals how Paul applied the message of **8:13** in his personal life. As an **“apostle”** he had every ‘right’ to be given equal support along with Peter and others, but he waived that right. Some people were challenging Paul’s ministry, even denying that he was a true apostle; others simply considered him to be a fraud. Either way, his opponents made Paul’s and Barnabas’ receiving their rightful support an issue.

- 9:1** It was a requirement of apostleship to have **“seen”** the risen Christ (**Acts 1:22, 2:32, 3:15, 4:33**), and Paul had seen Jesus (**Acts 26:13-16**).
- 9:2** The Corinthians’ faith in Jesus and fruit of the Spirit were proof of the validity of Paul’s being an **“apostle”** (**2 Cor 3:2,3**). When a person is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, they are internally sealed (**Eph 1:13**), which inevitably expresses itself by the external ‘seal of approval’.
- 9:3** The word **“examine”** is actually “investigate” or “search out”. I might add that the world has every right to ‘check you out’ as a Christian. May each of us be walking epistles of Christ’s goodness and love! Paul gave an answer, literally a **“defense”**, to those who questioned his right for support.

- 9:4,5** The word “**right**” means “a privilege” or “power”. Note that Jesus’ half-brothers, Jude and James, were apparently married and in full-time ministry, and so was Peter (Cephas).
- 9:6** The apostles were not working fulltime jobs because the work God called them into required their complete attention (**1 Thess 2:8,9**). Paul’s ‘career’ was serving the Lord. However, we know at times he made tents for support (**Acts 18:1-3, 20:34,35**); and he also received love offerings from the church at Philippi (**Phil 4:10-18**).
- 9:7-10** Using **Deuteronomy 25:4** as a text, Paul gave the Scriptural basis for support of a minister or ministry. In fact, Jesus taught this principle in His ministry (**Luke 10:1-7**), and was supported like any other rabbi (**Luke 8:1-3**). Does a soldier hold down a part time job (**2 Tim 2:3,4**)? Does a farmer go to the market to buy fresh fruit? Does a cattle farmer pay for the milk his cows provide? The answers are obvious; they deserve to benefit from their labors. Paul repeated this principle in **1 Timothy 5:17,18**. Note that God likened ministers to “**oxen**”, beasts of burden (**Prov 14:4**).
- 9:11,12** Evidently, they had no trouble with the principle of supporting other ministers, but they did have a problem with Paul and Barnabas. So, they waived their right to be supported because it hindered the gospel from being received properly.
- 9:13** Old Testament priests were allowed to partake of the various offerings as their pay. See **Numbers 18:8-24**. In India I’ve seen fruits and vegetables given to the pastors for support.
- 9:14** God ordained the support of His servants. See **Matthew 10:10b; Luke 10:7**.
- 9:15** Paul wasn’t writing to them so that they would feel guilty and send him money. Paul coveted no man’s silver, gold, etc. (**Acts 20:33-35**). He did not want to be a burden to the flock of God (**2 Cor 11:9**) at Corinth. Paul had no problem taking a collection for other saints (**1 Cor 16:1,2**), but he never asked for financial support personally.
- 9:16-18** Paul was called to preach the gospel, and his motive was to do it without charge.
- 9:19** Paul had “the mind of Christ” (**Phil 2:5-7**). Notice how Jesus defined greatness in His kingdom (**Mark 10:42-45**).
- 9:20-23** Paul sought to win people to Christ by being sensitive to where they were at, yet without compromising the gospel (**Acts 14:8-18, 17:22-31**).
- 9:24-27** Paul likened his life to winning a “**race**”. He used athletic terminology to

describe the required discipline and self-denial.

How are we to run this race effectively?

Heb 12:1 ... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...

Note how Paul was inspired to run his race by the “**crown**” that awaited him.

2 Tim 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

The believer’s salvation is “incorruptible” (**1 Peter 1:4**), but Paul was concerned about his salt losing its flavor (**Matt 5:13**). Hopefully, we also have this concern.

Chapter 10

This chapter can be broken down into three main sections: 1) **verses 1-13** – warnings about self-indulgence; 2) **verses 14-22** – warnings about participation in idolatrous feasts; and, 3) **verses 23-33** – exhortation to glorify God and edify others, not by abusing liberty, but denying self.

10:1-4 “**Moreover**” is a word that keeps the context in what Paul was saying, i.e., in continuing with the theme of discipline.

There are three considerations to note in these verses:

1. The word “**all**” is mentioned five times. All Israel was “**baptized into Moses**” and participated in:
 - a. deliverance physically from Egypt;
 - b. the provisions of God – spiritual meat and drink.They were removed from Egypt, but the lust for Egypt was still in their hearts.
2. The existence of a pre-incarnate Christ (called a ‘theophany’). Other such occurrences include:
 - a. the Captain of the Lord’s host in **Joshua 5:14**;
 - b. Melchizedek in **Genesis 14:18-20**.
3. Christ is still the Rock (**2 Sam 22:32**) and the Source of living water (**John 7:37-39**) for the believer.

10:5 This verse begins with the biggest three-letter word in the English language, “**but**”. **Hebrews 3:7-4:2** tells us they were “**overthrown**” (“scattered”) because of “unbelief”. The Greek means “faithless or without trust”.

1. What an athlete won by discipline (**1 Cor 9:24-27**), Israel (except for Joshua and Caleb) lost by indulgence.
2. In the body of Christ the vessels of honor (**2 Tim 2:20,21**) are those who are controlled by the Spirit of God. They are driven by love, not lusts.

10:6-11 Both **verses 6** and **11** tell us that Israel's history gives us object lessons. Let's look briefly at the events recorded here.

1. **Verse 7** deals with idolatry, referring to worship of the golden calf (**Ex 32:1-6**). The word "**play**" means to act like a child.
2. **Verse 8** refers to **Numbers 25:1-9**, when Israel committed sexual sin with the daughters of the Moabites. Note, there was a spiritual compromise (**Num 25:2,3**) before the immoral physical act was committed.
3. **Verse 9** references **Numbers 21:4-6**, recalling when Israel was discouraged, because of their way, and displeased with God's supply.
Note: It has long been the serpent's method to try to convince us that God is holding back from us (**Gen 3:1-5**); but God's word tells us otherwise (**Psalm 84:11**).
4. **Verse 10** alludes to Israel's repeated complaints against the Lord (**Num 11:1-6, 14:1-3, 27-37**), and when Korah led a protest against Moses and Aaron (**Num 16**).
Remember, saints, complaining opens the door to the destroyer (**John 10:10**); otherwise, it is God who works in us (**Phil 2:13**).

10:12 There appears to have been a tone of over-confidence on the part of some in Corinth; after all, they were saved, baptized, and had spiritual gifts. But, the Scriptures warn that pride precedes a fall (**Prov 16:18; 29:23a**).

10:13 Every Christian is both tested and tempted. Each episode listed previously was a solicitation by the enemy to draw Israel into sin. It's important to note:

1. "**Temptation**" is a process (**James 1:13-16**), and it is inevitable. It's as human and common as eating and sleeping. But, remember:
 - a. Temptation itself is not sin.
 - b. God provides a "**way of escape**", which includes the ability to "**bear it.**"
 - c. The devil is the tempter (**Matt 4:3**).
2. God's forgiveness restores fellowship to those who confess their sins (**1 John 1:9; 2 Cor 7:9,10**).
3. It bears emphasizing that "**God is faithful**" to His children!

10:14 "**Idolatry**" is putting anything first, before God (**Col 3:5**).

10:16,17 When we observe "**communion**", we are actively fellowshiping with Jesus Christ and each other.

10:18 When the priests ate the meat sacrificed to Jehovah, they were actually "**partakers**" of the sacrifice.

10:19-22 Likewise, to knowingly partake of the meat sacrificed to "**idols**" at pagan feasts was actually identifying with the "**demons**" who had seduced the people into idolatry. To partake in paganism and Christianity is incompatible, which is why the New Age movement is an abomination to the Lord.

- 10:23,24** The question is not, ‘Is this right?’ but, ‘Is this edifying to me and other believers as well?’ The mind of Christ puts others first (**Phil 2:1-7**).
- 10:25-30** In these verses Paul gave them guidelines that they were to follow regarding meat sold publicly or offered to them at a dinner.
- 10:31** Whatever we do should be for **“the glory of God.”**
- 10:32** There are three groupings of people on earth today. From Adam to Abram all people were actually Gentiles. From Abraham to Pentecost all people were either Jews or Gentiles. But, from Pentecost until the Rapture of the Church there are three groups. It is important to understand that the Church is neither a continuation of, nor an extension to the nation of Israel (**Rev 7**); they are two distinct people groups (**Rev 21:12,14**).

Chapter 11

- 11:1** Paul exhorts these believers to follow him even as he followed Jesus Christ. They were gifted but carnal, saved but selfish. This verse actually belongs tied to **10:31-33**. A mature believer is not self-seeking, but rather seeking only to bring glory to God. (See also **Ephesians 5:1** and **Philippians 3:17**.)
- 11:2-16** These verse deal with issues and customs that are irrelevant to us, but in principle are very relevant to us. Paul is dealing here with areas concerning order in public worship and submission to authority. God has ordained chains of command, or submission, so to speak, among equals. This is to prevent chaos and rebellion, but it is also to maintain order and decency (**1 Cor 14:40**). Paul commended the Colossians’ order (**Col 2:5**). Whatever sphere of submission we find ourselves in, whether in a marriage, family, occupation, government, or church, the foundation passage for any side of the coin is **Ephesians 5:21**: “submitting to one another in the fear of God.”
- 11:3-16** These verses also address the principle of headship. It is immediately obvious that we are not dealing with superiority issues because Christ is the same nature as God (**Phil 2:5-8; Col 2:9**), despite the fact that in the incarnation (**Matt 1:23**) He willfully assumed a position of submission to the Father.

In the Middle East, even today, veils are worn by many women, especially in the Muslim cultures. In other parts of the world, women wear scarves or bonnets. These ‘coverings’ represent both submission to husband or father, and a pledge of modesty or chastity. To be veiled in public was actually a form of protection. Therefore, in the Middle East, and at Corinth, to be unveiled was a sign of immorality, looseness and disrespect. Many of the sisters at Corinth were literally ‘letting their hair down,’ rejoicing in their freedom through Jesus Christ. However, their ‘liberty’ actually gave the wrong

impression to the church and the community. Their ‘immoral appearance’ gave Christ ‘a black eye,’ so to speak.

As pertains to the male, the nature of things in Corinth was that long hair (which is a relative term) was a shame in that society. (But, in **Numbers 6:5**, long hair actually represented a vow to God.) Thus, the men at Corinth with long hair (in that culture and at that time) were dishonoring God.

The practical applications for us today are quite simple.

1. As Christians our dress, etc., must never send the wrong signal to the church, the world, the opposite sex, even the angels (**v 10**)!
2. We are to avoid every appearance of evil (**1 Thess 5:22**) so as not to damage the reputation of our Lord or the effectiveness of our testimony.
3. Both male and female are to display Christ-like behavior, attitudes, dress, and lifestyle (**Phil 1:27**).
4. **Deuteronomy 22:5** instructs us to maintain, as in creation’s order (**Gen 1:27**), sexual distinctions.

11:17-34 The remainder of this chapter addresses the issue of the abuse of the Lord’s table and the customary agape dinners.

11:18 Jesus breaks down racial, social, economic, and gender distinctions, but in Corinth divisions, even religious ones, were abounding.

11:20-22 At these agape feasts, which may have been the only decent meal all week for a poor saint, family, or slave, the ‘haves’ were actually devouring all the food before the ‘have-nots.’ This selfishness grieved God’s Spirit and actually built up bigger walls between the saints.

11:24-34 In this section on communion observe:

1. the significance of communion (**vv 24-26**);
2. the warning about unworthy, irreverent, sinful participation in communion (**v 27**);
3. the need to examine our hearts before partaking of communion (**vv 28, 29,31**)
4. the consequences of not discerning the Lord’s body (**v 30**);
5. the operation of the Holy Spirit’s conviction (**v 32**);
6. Paul’s instructions and closing comments (**vv 33,34**).

See also **Matthew 26:26-29** and **Luke 22:15-20**.

Chapter 12

12:1 This section deals with, literally, “things of the Spirit,” of which he did not want them to “**be ignorant**” (without understanding, or mistaken). Other areas of ignorance that were addressed in the New Testament are:

1. God’s righteousness through Jesus Christ – **Rom 10:3,4**;
2. Israel’s blindness until the fullness of the Gentiles – **Rom 11:25**;

3. God's dealing with Israel in the wilderness – **1 Cor 10:1-11**;
4. Satan's devices – **2 Cor 2:11**;
5. bodily resurrection of Christians to glory with Christ – **1 Thess 4:13-16**;
5. ignorance of God's timeless nature – **2 Peter 3:8**.

There are two extreme views concerning Spiritual things (“**spiritual gifts**”):

1. unbiblical manifestations – disorder, showmanship, unscriptural phenomenon;
2. unbiblical interpretation – rejection and dismissal of the validity of these gifts for today.

Calvary Chapel camps out right down the center on this issue. We believe that all of the gifts are for today, as God wills, but we acknowledge that not every experience posed as a gift of the Spirit is from the Lord or conducted in a biblical fashion.

12:2,3 There were those claiming to possess divine revelation who would proclaim, either by ‘prophesy’ or teaching, that Jesus was “**accursed**”, or anathema (cp. **1 Cor 16:22**). Anyone speaking by the Spirit of God will acknowledge Jesus’ deity and humanity (**Phil 2:6-11; John 1:1,14; Matt 1:23**). You must be “born again” (**John 3:3-7**) before you can say from your heart that “**Jesus is Lord**” (**Rom 10:8-13**). The word “Lord” in Greek means ‘supreme in authority, ruler.’

Scripture tells us that the wealthy unsaved tend to blaspheme Jesus’ worthy name (**James 2:6,7**), and in the last days blasphemers will abound (**2 Tim 3:1,2**). Also, the coming reign of “the man of sin”, “the son of perdition”, will be filled with blasphemy (**2 Thess 2:3,4; Rev 13:1-6**).

12:4-11 Although the dispenser of these gifts is the Holy Spirit, the origin or source of these gifts is the Trinity, as proclaimed in **verses 4-6** (compare to **Eph 4:4-6**). Also, this list of gifts must be studied along with **Romans 12:4-8** and **Ephesians 4:8,11**. Whatever gift or ministry we have been given, we must remember that according to **1 Peter 4:10,11** we are:

1. “stewards” of the gift that needs to be stirred up (**2 Tim 1:6**), not neglected (**1 Tim 4:14**);
2. to exercise the gift for God’s glory, not self-promotion.

Verses 4-6 clearly reveal that God has ordained variety or distinctions of ministry and expression of gifts. God has designed the individual personality of local churches, local church government, styles of worship and teaching, etc. The important elements to look for in teaching, worship, and gifts are:

1. the content of the message: is it Scripturally sound? – **Acts 17:11; 2 Tim 2:15**;
2. the lifting up of the name of Jesus – **Phil 2:9-11**;
3. the glory of God the Father – **1 Cor 10:31** (see **1 Cor 1:29**);
4. the witness of the Holy Spirit – **Rom 8:16**.

While there is much room for variety of expression in worship, for example, there is no room for doctrinal compromise of salvation-related issues. We must guard against ‘Pharisee-ism’ while preserving orthodoxy of belief.

12:7 Note that every born-again believer has been gifted by God in order that the Body of Christ might be profited, the only exception being tongues, which edifies the individual (**1 Cor 14:4**).

Here are some keys to the effective use of your gifts.

1. Cultivate a loving relationship with Jesus Christ – **Matt 22:35-40**.
2. Maintain a holy relationship with the Lord – **1 Peter 1:13-16**.
3. Continue in the Word of God – **John 8:31,32; Rom 10:17**.
4. Have a life of prayer, not merely a prayer life – **Phil 4:6**.
5. Acknowledge Christ in all your ways – **Prov 3:6**.
6. Live to please God – **Rev 4:11**.
7. Live for God’s glory – **1 Cor 10:31**.

12:8 Now let’s take a brief look at these gifts.

1. **“Word of wisdom”** – Jesus foretold this gift in **Luke 21:15**; Stephen exercised that gift in **Acts 6** and **7**, as did Paul in **Acts 23:1-10**. Jesus Himself, as Son of Man, operated in this word of wisdom often (**Matt 21:23-27; Luke 20:21-26**). James displayed this gift by the Spirit in **Acts 15:13-21**. This gift spontaneously manifests itself in specific instances whereby the Spirit’s wisdom grants explanation or clarification of knowledge. This wisdom differs from the practical, daily wisdom (**James 1:5**). Whenever the wisdom from above is operating, it will manifest itself according to **James 3:17**.
2. **“Word of knowledge”** – Jesus also manifested this gift; for example:
 - a. when He told Nathaniel about himself – **John 1:45-51**;
 - b. when He told Peter and John about Passover details– **Luke 22:7-13**;
 - c. when He told Peter to catch a fish for taxes – **Matt 17:24-27**.The Old Testament prophet Elisha was given this gift:
 - a. when he warned Israel of the king of Syria’s plans– **2 Kings 6:8-12**;
 - b. when he told Namaan that he would be healed – **2 Kings 5:9,10,14**.This gift reveals specific details.

Many of these gifts, it must be noted, are in operation when the Word of God is being taught. Quite often the Holy Spirit quickens us about individuals or circumstances; He will then direct us in how to use this information. Sometimes we will be led to intercede in prayer; other times we will be directed to go to the individual and share what God has revealed, as in the passages above. Often these works of the Holy Spirit function in such a natural way that we do not recognize it. These gifts are granted to people, as the Spirit directs, seven days a week, twenty-four hours each day. They are not merely given for spiritual exhibitionism in a ‘church setting’ or special event.

There are a couple of things we should take note of here.

1. Knowledge is the acquisition of facts or information, while wisdom tells me how to use that knowledge. For instance, knowledge tells me that the creature crawling on the path is a rattlesnake; wisdom tells me not to get in its way or pet it! Many brilliant people are not wise.
2. The “fear of the LORD” is the beginning of both wisdom and knowledge – **Psalm 111:10; Prov 1:7**.

One of the misunderstood teachings of this chapter is the necessity of the Holy Spirit (not charm, not raw talent, not human emotion or personality) within the body of Christ. These gifts are for the entire body, given by God to “the salt of the earth” (**Matt 5:13**), so that we might more effectively edify one another and evangelize the lost.

12:9 The gift of “**faith**” is special faith (for a lack of better definition) for special circumstances, as in **Acts 3:1-8**, where the gift of faith and the “miracle of healing” (**Acts 4:22**) operated together. **Acts 14:8-10** records how the gifts worked together in another healing. Many times the gifts flow together, even though distinct in nature. So this faith is not the same as saving faith (**Eph 2:8**), but is that which is exercised after we are saved. Salvation faith is the “one faith” listed in **Eph 4:5**, and comes by hearing the Word of God (**Rom 10:17**) and trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation (**Acts 16:31**).

It is important to understand that the object of this gift of faith is the Lord; it is not the individual’s faith in their own faith (**Matt 9:1-8; Luke 8:43-48**). Mountain-moving faith, apart from agape, is fruitless (**1 Cor 13:2**). This faith is evidence given from God about a certain situation, prior to the physical manifestation of the event (**Heb 11:1**). This faith is never placed in the wisdom or resources of man, but in “the power of God” (**1 Cor 2:5**). This faith is the faith to take steps in obedience to God’s word (**Joshua 3**). Remember, “without faith, it is impossible to please (God)” (**Heb 11:6**).

We must also realize that the spiritual gifts are not things that we can turn on and off at will, but they are controlled by the Spirit of God. There is much we don’t understand about faith and the working of miracles, but our faith has to accept what we don’t understand. We do, after all, “see through a glass darkly” (**1 Cor 13:12**), but our lack need not hinder the working of the Holy Spirit through us in the use of the spiritual gifts.

The area of “**gifts of healing**” is one in which there is much misunderstanding, as well as genuine lack of comprehension. One important thing to note is that nowhere in the Bible do we find ‘faith healers’; however, the “gifts of healing” are valid, and God does choose and use individuals today through whom He manifests these gifts. God is the only one who is genuinely able to heal. Whether it be miraculously, through our natural bodily defenses and processes, or with medical intervention, it is Jehovah Rapha who heals us (**Ex 15:26; Psalm 103:3**). The Hebrew word for “heal” (“rapha”) means to

restore or cure, and God still heals today because He is “the same yesterday, today and forever” (**Heb 13:8**). However, we must be careful and discerning, because the Bible warns us that Satan and his minions are capable of counterfeit miracles, including healings (**Rev 13:13,14, 16:14; 2 Thess 2:9**).

Another area of much misinterpretation is found regarding **Isaiah 53:4** and **5**. The many healings that Jesus performed while upon this earth were, as **Matthew 8:17** tells us, in fulfillment of **Isaiah 53:4**, and were signs given regarding His Messianic mission. In other words, **Isaiah 53:4** was a Messianic prophecy, fulfilled by Jesus as a proof of His identity, and is not a promise of healing for all today. Thus, to claim healing “by His stripes” is to take the verse out of Scriptural context and improperly apply it. Remember when John the Baptist was in prison and sent two of his disciples to question Jesus’ credentials? Jesus’ reply was both visible and verbal, proving His Messianic mission through miraculous signs, especially healings (**Luke 7:19-22**).

There are five other important points to note about healing:

1. Every person that Jesus healed was literally and undeniably healed. The blind did see; the lame did walk, etc. It was not ‘positive confession’.
2. There is the element of God’s sovereignty in healing, which we must accept by faith. **Ecclesiastes 3:3** says there is “a time to heal”. Whose time? God’s. For example, Jesus only healed one man (who had been ill 38 years) at the Bethesda Pool, even though there was “a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed” (**John 5:2-9**).
3. Whenever Jesus or any of His disciples performed a healing, never was there a collection taken. An offering for money was never included with the healing, as is often the case today.
4. God can heal in a variety of ways. For example, Jesus healed the blind in at least three different ways (**Matt 9:27-30; Mark 10:46-52; John 9:1-7**). Therefore, we can’t ‘put God in a box’ when it comes to healing.
5. In the Bible, gifts of healings were often manifested in conjunction with the preaching of the gospel to authenticate and verify the message and the messenger (**Mark 16:15-18**).

1 Peter 4:10,11 tells us that whatever spiritual gift each of us has received, we are to “minister it to one another, as good stewards...that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ”. The key points to remember are:

- 1) they are gifts; 2) we are stewards; 3) all glory belongs to God.

12:10 It’s important to understand what a miracle is and the purpose of “**miracles**”. What we call a “miracle” is something God does naturally, but is beyond human ability. It is, strictly speaking, a temporary supernatural suspension of the laws which govern this world, but God never does them to ‘show off’. In both Old and New Testaments we find that miracles confirm God’s truth; for example, the miracles performed by the prophets Elijah and Elisha, and, after 400 years of spiritual silence, by Jesus and His apostles. They also

serve to point people to the true and living God; for example, **Exodus 7:9, 4:1-5**. But not everyone who sees a miracle will believe (**Luke 16:31**). Miracles are also called “signs” or “wonders”. It is dangerous to get hung up on them, or seek after them, as Jesus warned (**Matt 12:38,39, 16:1,4**). We shouldn’t be suspicious, but we must be discerning, because not all miracles, signs and wonders come from God (**Deut 13:1-2; Rev 13:11-14, 16:13,14**). It is critically important to be rooted in God’s Word lest we be deceived by a supernatural occurrence that cannot be Biblically defined as a move of God.

There is a difference between the office of a prophet and the gift of “**prophecy**”, which the Holy Spirit can give to anyone at any time (**Acts 2:17**). Speaking a prophetic word does not make a person a prophet, but both the gift and the office are given to build up the Church (**Eph 4:11-12**). How interesting that the first Biblical prophecy was regarding Christ’s first coming (**Gen 3:15**), and the first prophet was Enoch who foretold of Christ’s second coming (**Jude 14**). The focus of Scripture (**John 5:39**) and prophecy (**Rev 19:10**) is Jesus. Rather than get all excited about Biblical prophecies and focused on them, we need to make practical application of God’s Word to our lives, or the gifts are worthless (**1 Cor 13:2**).

Prophecy is both fore-telling and forth-telling certain things, but not adding to God’s Word (**Rev 22:18**). There is no ‘new revelation’, as claimed by many cults. Such are false prophecies. In the Old Testament, false prophets were not to be heeded, but were sentenced to die (**Deut 18:20-22, 13:1-3,5, 10**). There is, however, prophesying of personal information today, revealed by God’s Spirit, which must come to pass. There is also the office of a prophet today, those called by God to speak forth in the name of the Lord strong messages to wake up the Church. And God speaks to His prophets today the same way as in the past, through visions and dreams, often to bring rebellious people to repentance; and this is sorely needed in today’s Church.

It is very important when studying the spiritual gifts, particularly with the “**discerning of spirits**,” that we have a balanced understanding. Remember: **2 Tim 2:15** Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman who needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing (*lit., dissecting correctly*) the word of truth. Many today assert that we are not to judge one another, and yet the basis of this gift of discerning of spirits means there are times when we are to make a judgment or come to a conclusion, based upon what is taught or prophesied, or even upon the motive involved. There is a time to judge. After Jesus taught about not being judgmental (**Matt 7:1-5**), He warned against “false prophets” (**Matt 7:15-20**). How could you conclude someone is a false prophet without making a judgment? But that judgment must be based upon the Word of God, i.e., “rightly dividing the word of truth.” There are many today, as in the past, who speak or prophesy in God’s name, but they are not proclaiming God’s Biblical truth.

There is an important difference between being discerning and being judgmental. The Old Testament word for “discern” means “to separate, or make a distinction; to consider; to mark or perceive.” For example, in **Genesis 31:32**, after Laban overtook the fleeing Jacob and accused him of stealing his gods, Jacob told him to “discern” or “identify” or “investigate” until he found what he sought. In **Genesis 38:25** Tamar sent items of identification to her father-in-law Judah, telling him to “discern” (or “determine”) “whose these are”. Discernment thus means to come to a conclusion, make a judgment, based upon facts. God ordained that His priests were to “teach (His) people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.” (**Ezekiel 44:23**)

In the New Testament Greek there are two words translated as “discern”; one meaning to “test” or “prove”, and the other meaning to “separate thoroughly” or “discriminate”. Thus, the basic meaning of these two Greek words describes the ability given to individuals by God’s Spirit to recognize the source or motivation of an utterance spoken in the name of the Lord. Christians are to be discerning; that is, we are to prove or test the spirits in order to validate them (**1 John 4:1**). We must come to a conclusion about them, whether or not they are from God. Discernment also means recognizing whether a message from God is being delivered in the right attitude or with a right motive.

When it comes to the gift of “**tongues**,” there are two extreme views:

1. the charismatic view, which believes that speaking in tongues is a necessary proof of being Spirit-filled;
2. the fundamentalist position, which claims that any and all speaking in tongues is of the devil.

Calvary Chapel does not believe in either extreme, but does believe the spiritual gifts (**1 Cor 12:8-10, 28; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11**) were given by God to the Church, including believers today. And we need these spiritual gifts in order to walk in the power of God.

When it comes to studying any of the spiritual gifts, it is good to keep in mind what God declared through Paul:

Rom 11:29 The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

But the proof of being saved and Spirit-filled is love (**1 John 4:7,8; Gal 5:22-23**), not speaking in tongues or any of the spiritual gifts. The greatest and most powerful gift is agape love (**1 Cor 13**), and that is to be the motivation behind the use of all the other gifts, because love seeks to edify others.

The giving of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, including tongues, is spontaneous and in God’s timing, without previous instruction or preparation by the recipient, as on Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**) and with the Gentiles (**Acts 10:44-46**). Note that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the giving of the gifts were (and are) to men and women, young and old (**Acts 2:14-18**), Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, without partiality (**Gal 3:28**).

Jesus said: “And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues” (**Matt 16:17**). And **Matthew 16:20** states that these signs were manifested by God to confirm the preaching of His word, and that pattern is consistently seen throughout the book of Acts. The Spirit of God works with the word of God. But not all will speak in tongues (**1 Cor 12:30** - implied answer is no). And Jesus did not limit the signs to only believers contemporary to Him.

The initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost came with the visible sign of “cloven” (or, “divided”) “tongues” (**Acts 2:3**), the picture being of separate split tongues, each having two parts. The gift of “**tongues**” has two meanings coming from two different Greek words:

1. “dialektos” - the ability to speak in a foreign language or dialect (without previous study) in order to convey the word of God to those who would otherwise not understand what they heard, as in **Acts 2:6-11**; and
2. “glossa” - to respond to the experience of the Holy Spirit by uttering ecstatic sounds, which would require interpretation in order to be understood (**1 Cor 14:2,10-14**). This is often referred to as ‘prayer language’ and speaks to God, only edifying the person speaking it (**14:4**) unless someone has the gift of “**interpretation of tongues**” (**12:10**) to convey the meaning to others.

12:11 Notice, it is the Holy Spirit who distributes the gifts “**as He wills**”, and each saint receives at least one gift, for the benefit of all (v 7). And they are gifts; we don’t earn or deserve them; nor do we get to pick and choose them. Our part is to learn what gift(s) we have, and then to use it/them to bless others. And it is the Holy Spirit who operates the gifts through us, giving us both the gifts and the ability to use them. Make no mistake, saints. These gifts are for the Church today! God still operates by the same principle of “hearing by faith” in the Lord Jesus, which He proclaimed through our brother Paul: **Eph 3:5** Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? God has placed these spiritual gifts in His universal Church, covering the entire Church age, for His people that we might serve Him, not in our own strength and power, but by His Spirit (**Zech 4:6**). **We need these gifts!**

12:12-31 In this section of his letter Paul compares the Church to the human body. Remember, one of the reasons Paul wrote to the Corinthians was because of their divisiveness (**1:10-12**). Although they were spiritually gifted, they competed in the use of the gifts, rather than being edified and united through them. They even failed to recognize the oneness they were to have in observing communion, resulting in the Lord’s judgment upon them (**11:18-34**).

It is important to realize that the Church, the Body of Christ, consists of more than just a local gathering of believers, more than any one denomination. It is not limited by any geographical boundaries, but encompasses all who have been born again of God’s Spirit (**John 3:5-7**), wherever they are. And the

true Christian Church is not the same as the visible church, because every congregation has non-believers in it (**Luke 13:19**).

Every believer has been given at least one gift, but, as in our physical body, some gifts in the church are more visible than others, and those parts which are the most important are not readily apparent (**v 22**). Intercessory prayer warriors, for example, are generally not as well known as the worship team, but their ministry is vital to the congregation. Also, in the day-to-day operations of the ministry, or when something breaks down, a brother exercising the gift of helps (**v 28**) is more necessary and appreciated than the use of tongues. But, as we'll see in the next chapter, love is an essential ingredient with any and all the gifts.

12:12,14 There is only one Body of Christ on this earth (**Eph 4:4**), but there are many parts (such as denominations) to it, just as there are many differing parts to a human body. Also, a local congregation can be viewed as part of the Body of Christ with different members (**v 27**), just as a leg has individual bones and tissues comprising it. But all the parts are necessary for the body to function properly. If a body part is not functioning properly, it has a disability. Part of the reason some churches may not be doing all that God intends for them is that so many of their parts are disabled or negligent or careless in using their gifts.

God's beautiful design is evident in the different ways various denominations minister to people, because we're not all alike. It is important to realize, however, that while there is room for diversity of expression and operation, there is no room for heresy or false teaching. Your physical body must reject poison, or it will become seriously sick!

12:13 At the moment of salvation, you were "**baptized into (this) one body**". This is the "one baptism" of **Ephesians 4:5**, not water or Spirit baptism. Likewise, all believers have been made "**to drink into one Spirit**."

John 7:37 ...Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

:38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

:39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...

The picture here is of Niagara Falls, not a little trickle of water! And the evidence of this overflow of the Spirit's working in your life is God's agape love (**Rom 5:5; Gal 5:22**).

12:15-17 Just because a part is unsatisfied with its role, it does not stop belonging to the body. The body could not function properly without the diversity.

12:18 This truth applies both to the Church around the world and to every local church. God designed the body; Jesus builds His Church (**Matt 16:18**).

And the strength of Christ's Church, universally and locally, lies in each individual's personal commitment to Christ.

12:19-21 Again, every part of the body is important and necessary, or the body would be incomplete. For various parts of the Body of Christ to speak against and reject one another is just as ridiculous as if our various body parts were to do that. We need one another! Scripture exhorts us to not forsake "the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some," especially as the time of Christ's return draws near (**Heb 10:25**). Those who claim they don't need to be in fellowship, don't need to belong to the body, are like cancer cells – doing their own thing to their detriment and that of the body. God knows all about our differences and how we annoy and irritate one another. That's why He tells us to be long-suffering and forgiving (**Col 3:12-13; Eph 4:32**), because those very differences are opportunities for us to grow in the Lord, to become more like Jesus.

12:22 Even the "weaker" parts of the body are necessary because they draw us out of our comfort zones and selfishness to minister to them (**Matt 25:34-40**).

12:23 In other words, there's a beauty to be seen with the eye of the Spirit in those who are lacking, hurting, or needy. They need to be loved and helped, and the other body parts need to minister to it, just as your hands put food into your mouth when your stomach sends a signal to your brain that you are hungry. Be obedient to the promptings of the Spirit; reach out to whomever the Lord brings across your path or puts on your heart. Reaching out to one another is the true Spirit of Christ, and overcoming the flesh will make you feel great!

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

If we claim to be Christians, how can we ignore each other's needs (**James 2:15-17**)? A healthy church body is not one free of problems, but one where the Spirit of God is moving and ministering among them. When the stronger parts ignore or refuse to help the weaker ones, that's when the body is unhealthy.

12:24-25 God is troubled by division. His plan is that we "care for one another." **Psalm 133:1** Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! There are no 'walls' of division around the cross or in God's Kingdom or in the Body of Christ. ALL believers will worship the Lord together around His throne in glory!

12:26 A Christian is no longer independent; we affect one another. Remember how Achan's sinfulness brought God's judgment on the nation of Israel because

He viewed them as a single unit (**Joshua 7:1-12**)? Likewise, God looks at Christians as a single body, and thus we're to remove any member who persists in sin because "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (**1 Cor 5:1-7**).

- 12:27** A healthy body has many needs, among them are the following:
1. It needs good food, and the Body of Christ needs to feed upon the Word of God. Remember what Jesus told Peter to do after every time Peter affirmed his love for the Lord? "Feed My sheep." (**John 21:15-17**)
What believers need when we gather together is a balanced diet of worship of God and instruction in God's Word.
Rom 10:17 So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 2. A healthy body also needs exercise, and as part of the Body of Christ you and I need to be exercising the gift(s) the Spirit has given us.
1 Tim 4:7 ...and exercise yourself unto godliness.
 3. To remain healthy a body also needs proper rest. We need to learn how to turn our cares into prayers so that we may rest in Christ.
Matt 11:28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
 4. A body needs harmony amongst its members, each cheerfully doing its part in obedience to the head.
Eph 5:21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.
- God still recognizes and relates to us "**individually**" in the Body of Christ.

12:28 Have you ever thought of praying for the gift of "**helps**"? It's a powerful gift!
The gift of "**administrations**" ("**governments**") is the ability to guide an organization, such as the local church.

12:29,30 Even though some teach that in order to be Spirit-filled one must speak in tongues, the obvious implied answer to all these questions is "No." Speaking in tongues is one evidence of being Spirit-filled, but not the only one.

12:31 We're to "**desire the best gifts**", but in the next chapter we'll study the "**more excellent way**."

Chapter 13

This chapter focuses on "**love**" within the Church.

Rev 2:2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

:3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

:4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

The Ephesian church to which Christ's letter, written by the Apostle John, was sent had everything except one critical thing, love. Consider some facts about this church:

1. They were well taught, having been founded by Paul, and later served by Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos, Timothy, and John the beloved.
2. They were strong in doctrinal faith and notorious for their tight orthodoxy.
3. They were energetic.
4. They were patient.
5. They were discerning.

‘What was wrong?’ you might ask. In **verse 4**, the term “left” means “to release, let go, leave behind.” A process is involved here, not occurring overnight but something more slowly, like erosion. The Ephesians’ love for one another wasn’t questioned, but their pure, simple devotion to God was gone. They were outwardly functioning, but not motivated by agape. Jesus will not stay in a loveless church (**Rev 2:5**).

- We are to be functioning as a fellowship in love with God Almighty. All deeds, all giving, all praying, all teaching are to be done out of love for Him. Let’s not be Ephesians!

“God is love” (**1 John 4:8**), so when we are motivated by agape, as defined in **1 Corinthians 13**, we are truly following God!

13:1-3 A characterization of heathen worship (esp. Dionysus of Cybele) was the clanging of cymbals and the braying of brass trumpets. Thus, to “**speak** (in **tongues**” with no love is no better than pagan worship. To “**understand all mysteries**” refers to something that was hidden, but now revealed, related to God’s redemptive or ultimate plan for history. If you knew it all with no love, score 0.

“**All knowledge**” relates to facts ascertained by investigation.

Love is superior to intellectual eminence.

Knowledge without love kills, but with love gives life.

Knowledge without love is ugly, but with love is beautiful.

Knowledge without love is impotent, but with love is powerful.

Knowledge by itself can produce pride (**1 Cor 8:1**). It can also produce sorrow (**Ecc 1:18**).

Love is superior to knowledge, but they must be kept in perfect balance (**Phil 1:9**). We perish without knowledge (**Hosea 4:6**); we destroy without love!

“**All faith**” means the gift of faith (**1 Cor 12:9**), not saving faith.

Even sacrificial giving to the poor or martyrdom “**profits me nothing**” without love.

What is the conclusion? Life minus love = zero. This local fellowship minus love = zero.

There are many misunderstandings about love.

1. Love is not leniency, or the denial of problems and conflicts. This is a weakness in charismatic circles where no doctrine is questioned. But love rebukes (**Gal 2:11-14**); “iron sharpens iron” (**Prov 27:17**). Love chastens (**Heb 12:6**).
2. Agape is the opposite of self-seeking and selfishness; therefore love pro-

fects (**Acts 20:27-31**), acts responsibly, and shares (**Acts 20:33-35**).

Love “feeds” (nurtures, supports, encourages) others (**John 21:15-17**).

3. Love is not just emotion; love acts (**1 John 3:16-18; James 2:8,15-17**).

13:4-7 These verses give a perfect description of Jesus! This is the image that God is working in you and me day by day.

Here are some interesting points to ponder about “love” :

The first Biblical mention of both love and worship is in **Genesis 22:1-5**.

Love and the cross are always connected. God’s love for us cost Him dearly!

Love is a verb – something you do. John differentiated between what we merely say and actual reality or deeds in **1 John**:

1. regarding fellowship with God – **1:6**;
2. relating to sin – **1:8,10**;
3. regarding obedience and abiding in Christ – **2:4-6**;
4. relating to loving God – **4:20,21**.

Let’s look at this definition of love.

“**Love suffers long**”; that is, love is patient, not with regards to circumstances or events, but love is patient with people. It is long-tempered.

There are to be no short fuses in God’s kingdom of love! Since God displays this longsuffering towards us (**Rom 2:4; Luke 18:7**), this is the way we should be with each other in order to walk worthy of His call (**Eph 4:2**).

Christ was longsuffering to Paul as an example (**1 Tim 1:16**).

Longsuffering is evidence of our election (**Col 3:12**), and of Spiritual fruit in our lives (**Gal 5:22**).

With whom are we to be patient? **1 Thessalonians 5:14** tells us, “with all.”

Peter asked how many times he needed to forgive a brother who sinned against him. Jesus’ reply indicated that it was not a matter of mathematics, but rather having a longsuffering, forgiving spirit (**Matt 18:21,22**).

“**Love... is kind**”. The Greek word means gracious, good, seeks to be useful.

Kindness is another facet of the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal 5:22**). The concept is literally, ‘I will do anything that will be of use to another, even my enemy.’

God displays this kindness “to the unthankful and the evil” (**Luke 6:35**); so should we (**Gal 6:10**).

Proverbs 31:26 says of the Godly woman, “on her tongue is the law of kindness.”

We are Biblically commanded to be kind (**Eph 4:32**), and to add “brotherly kindness” to our faith (**2 Peter 1:7**).

- Do others characterize you as being kind? Are you useful to others, or merely a Scripture amplifier?

“**Love does not envy**”; i.e., it is not jealous.

Prov 14:30 ...envy is rottenness to the bones.

Song 8:6 Jealousy is as cruel as the grave.

The Greek word for “envy” means to boil inside, to seethe, to steam over something that someone else has (prosperity, popularity, good looks, talents, anointing, etc.). We envy when our perspective is not right. See **Psalm 73:1-17**, and note the word “until” in **verse 17**. In God’s presence we get the right perspective.

God promised retribution to Israel’s enemy because of their anger and envy (**Ezek 35:11**).

The human reason for Jesus’ crucifixion was envy (**Matt 27:18**).

Some people even preach Christ out of envy (**Phil 1:15**).

Where envy is, there is contention and every evil work (**James 3:16**).

- You may need to ask yourself the following:
 1. Do you admire someone who is better than you at what you both do, or are you jealous?
 2. Are you jealous because someone:
 - a. owns more than you?
 - b. is more attractive than you?
 - c. has a better job than you?
 - d. is smarter than you?
 - e. has more friends than you?

All jealousy is wrong and must be confessed as sin. We should be as Paul: **Phil 4:11** ...I have learned in whatever state I am to be content (*self-contained*);

:12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Love rejoices in the blessings of others, rather than muttering, ‘Why them and not me, God; I deserve it.’

If man were God, grace (undeserved favor) would go right out the window!

“Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up”. Love doesn’t create class distinction. That is, love is not boastful or conceited; neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

To “parade” or “vaunt” or “boast” about self is the verbalizing of pride, the actual action of pride. This is not agape. Love is not being a windbag, where ‘you’ are the center of a conversation.

To be “puffed up” is the attitude of pride, conceit that is inside.

C. S. Lewis called boasting pride, “*the utmost evil, the greatest sin, the essential vice*”.

The original sin of pride was found in Lucifer (**Isaiah 14:12-14** – i.e., “I will be like [God]”, or better!).

Pride is among the seven abominations to the Lord (**Prov 6:16-17**).

Prov 8:13 Pride and arrogance ... I hate.

Prov 21:4 A haughty look, a proud heart ... are sin.

Pride produces negative and unwanted consequences.

1. One such outcome of pride is “shame” (**Prov 11:2**). The Hebrew for “shame” means “disgrace, confusion, reproach.” To refuse to obey Scripture is pride; i.e., my way, my feelings, my ideas are right; God is wrong. The outcome will be “poverty and shame” (**Prov 13:18**).
2. Pride stirs up contention and “strife” (**Prov 13:10, 28:25**). The Hebrew word for “strife” means a quarrel or debate. In contrast, love does not ‘add fuel to the fire.’
3. Pride precedes destruction or a fall (**Prov 16:18**).
Prov 29:23 A man’s pride will bring him low...

Pride is the backbone of the ‘positive confession’ teaching, those who claim, “With our tongue we will prevail” (**Psalms 12:3,4**). God does not produce proud children; the world system does (**1 John 2:16**)! Consider:

1. **1 Cor 1:29** ...no flesh should glory in His presence.
2. **Gal 6:3** If a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
3. **Phil 2:3** Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit...

Scripture also specifically tells us what we are to boast or glory in:

1. **Jer 9:23** Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches;
:24 but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD...”
2. **Gal 6:14** But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

There are other Scriptural insights regarding pride:

1. Hebrew scribes were all ‘show’ (**Mark 12:38,39; Luke 20:45-47**).
2. Pride is a sign of the last days (**2 Tim 3:1,2**).
3. The revelation of God, His glory, beauty, power, love, destroys pride (**Isaiah 6:1,5; Luke 5:3-8**).
4. **James 4:6** ...“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Love “**does not behave unseemly**”. This means love has good manners and is not rude; it does not act without grace, but is courteous, polite, respectful (**1 Peter 2:17; Heb 13:17**).

To be “**unseemly**” also means to act indecently. For example, **Romans 1:27** states that two men or two women having a physical relationship is “unseemly” (KJV), “shameful” (NKJV), or indecent. It is sinful, not true love! The Greek meaning describes a person who doesn’t have the ability to discipline his behavior with others in mind, but is self-centered.

- Are you a habitually rude person? (Rudeness is not boldness!) Are you rude towards the unsaved, or toward any established authority?

- Are you aware that your words and actions stemming from rudeness affect others and destroy your witness?

2 Thess 3:7 ...we were not disorderly among you;

Love **“does not seek its own”**. It does not pursue selfish advantage, nor does it insist on its own way; it is not selfish. Remember Jesus’ example.

Matt 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve... It has been rightly said: “Cure selfishness, and you plant a garden of Eden.” The Body of Christ is not supposed to be a self-centered organism!

1. Spiritually, financially, emotionally, etc., we are to look out for others’ interests, not just our own (**Phil 2:3,4; 1 Cor 10:24; Rom 15:1-3**).
Gal 5:13 ...through love serve one another.
 2. When we bear one another’s burdens, we fulfill the law of Christ (**Gal 6:2**).
 3. One divine purpose for employment is to give to him who is in need (**Eph 4:28**).
- Does Christ get your first fruits, or last fruits, or no fruits (**Malachi 3:8**)?

Love **“is not (easily) provoked”**; it is not touchy, irritable or resentful, not quick to take offense. Literally this means, “never exasperated with people”, and the Greek implies “a sudden outburst”. This defines self-centered anger.

Prov 14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly...

Prov 15:18 A wrathful man stirs up strife...

Prov 19:19 A man of great wrath will suffer punishment...

Prov 27:4 ...anger is outrageous...

Ecc 7:9 Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.

James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

:20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Scripture exhorts us to “put off” and “put away from” us anger and wrath (**Col 3:8; Eph 4:31**). What is anger? It is the emotional reaction of extreme displeasure, and it is of the flesh. We try to excuse it as being ‘my temperament’ when in reality it is the undisciplined self. You may rationalize it: ‘I lose my temper, but it’s over in a minute.’ So is the atom bomb!

There is a place in the Christian life for ‘righteous anger.’ However, self-centered anger that isn’t dealt with gives Satan victory in your life.

Prov 25:28 Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.

In other words, there is no defense; your armor is down (**Eph 6:11-13**).

The solution? Confess your unrighteous anger, and repent.

Love **“thinks no evil”**. The Greek term translated here as **“thinks”** is an accounting term which literally means ‘to keep a mathematical calculation; to write something in a bookkeeping ledger so that it won’t be forgotten.’

But love doesn't keep account of evil; it keeps no score of wrongs. Instead, love drowns all offenses and wrongs of others in a sea of love (agape). For example, because of His love God is “not imputing” (same Greek word) our sins to us (**2 Cor 5:19**). That is, God does not keep an account of our trespasses, but He removed them through Christ.

Rom 4:8 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

:2 Blessed is the man to whom to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity. We who are saved by grace are blessed. God keeps no record of our sins.

Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

In exchange God imputes to us His righteousness (**Rom 4:6; James 2:23**)!

Since love never makes memories out of wrongs, takes no inventory, keeps no ledger, we must choose to think according to **Philippians 4:8**.

- Have you said, ‘I forgive you’ to someone, but brought up their offense at a later time, either directly or in your mind?

Eph 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Jesus was clear in His teaching on forgiveness (**Matt 18:21-35**). Rabbinic teaching was that an offended person needed to forgive a person three times. Jesus said 490 times – i.e., no limits should be set on the giving of forgiveness; rather, forgiveness ought to be in direct proportion to the amount forgiven. And we have all been forgiven an immensely impossible amount!

Love “**does not rejoice in iniquity**”; it does not gloat over other men’s sins. “**Iniquity**” equals unrighteousness of heart and life. For example:

1. The scribes and Pharisees, although appearing clean and righteous outwardly, within were “full of extortion and self-indulgence”, “full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (or “lawlessness”) (**Matt 23:25,28**).
 2. Simon was “bound by iniquity.” (**Acts 8:18-23**)
 3. This iniquity is universal, for “all unrighteousness is sin.” (**1 John 5:17**)
- But love hates sin and recognizes it isn’t right. Love doesn’t tolerate iniquity because sin affronts God. And there’s one area where we all need to beware:

James 3:6: And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

- Do you rejoice when your tongue cuts someone down? When it brags?
- Do you brag about your past (before you were saved.), how bad you were? That’s rejoicing in iniquity.
- Do you rejoice when someone else sins, because it makes you look holy? That’s rejoicing in iniquity.

Saints of God, we to depart from iniquity, not rejoice in it (**2 Tim 2:19c**).

13:7 Agape enables us to bear, believe, hope and endure “**all things**.” Since Jesus IS agape (**1 John 4:8**), we can do all things through His strength (**Phil 4:13**).

- 13:8** “**Love never fails.**” Since God is love (**1 John 4:16**), we know that He will never fail us. All other gifts will fade away and no longer be necessary, but God’s love is eternal.
- 13:9-12** These verses tell us when the gifts of the Holy Spirit will be done away with, and that is when “**that which is perfect has come**”. This does not refer to the completion of the Bible, as some have taught, but to the consummation of the Church at Christ’s return for her.
“We “**see through a glass darkly**” (or, “**in a mirror, dimly**”) because our walk of faith (**2 Cor 5:7**) includes many mysteries; but when we see Jesus “**face to face**”, all the imperfections of this life will be removed (**Rev 21:4**).
- 13:13** Faith, hope, and love are the trinity of virtues, with the greatest being agape.

Chapter 14

- 14:1** “**Pursue love**” (**Col 3:14; 1 Tim 1:5**), and desire those gifts that God has given to the church, especially prophecy. To “**prophecy**” means to foretell (predict future) or forth-tell (speak out) Scripture by the Spirit of God.
- 14:2** This “**tongue**” is “glossa,” meaning ecstatic utterances, and it’s found elsewhere in **verses 4, 13, 19, 23, 26, 27**. To operate this gift to edify others, there must be someone with the gift of interpretation of tongues (**1 Cor 12:10**). This gift of tongues is not to be confused with tongues (“dialektos” – “dialect”) as on Pentecost, where it is obvious that unsaved people were able to understand what was being said (**Acts 2:5-11**). The validity of the gift of tongues is not the issue in this chapter, but the abuse and misuse of this gift.
- 14:3** This is the purpose of the teaching ministry: to edify, exhort, and comfort the saints.
- 14:4** The gift of tongues (“glossa”) is personally edifying; the gift of prophecy “**edifies**” the entire church. We know “love edifies” (**1 Cor 8:1**). Edification is a theme of **chapter 14**; see also **verses 5, 12, and 26**.
- 14:5** The Greek word for “**tongues**” here (“dialektos”) refers to another language foreign to my native one, and is found in **verses 9, 18, 21, and 22**.
- 14:6-11** The message here is clear. What good is any gift, including tongues, if another person is unable to understand what is being said?
- 14:12** Use whatever spiritual gifts you have to strengthen your local church.
- 14:13-16** These verses give the proper, private use of the gift of tongues if there is no interpreter within the church.

14:16-19 The focus, when the saints are gathered together, is to be on the edification of others, not self interests.

Phil 2:4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interest of others.

14:20 In other words, it is time to start maturing in the things of the Lord.

14:21,22 The prophecy was given in **Isaiah 28:11,12**, and was fulfilled on Pentecost. The “**tongues**” were a “**sign**” (“mark”) against the people for rejecting their Messiah, but the only true sign given to mankind regarding the validity of Christ’s claims is His resurrection (**Matt 12:38,39**).

14:23 Disorder and confusion are not compatible with the fruit of the Spirit.

14:24,25 When the Holy Spirit anoints the messenger and message of God, we will see people coming to Christ for salvation, as in **Acts 2:37-41**.

14:26 Again, the purpose is for edification, not exhibitionism.

14:27,28 No gift of tongues (“glossa” – ‘prayer language’) is to be exercised publicly unless there is an interpreter for that gift.

14:29-32 These are guidelines for the ministry or operation of the gift of prophecy.

14:33 “**Confusion**” is never from God, but results from self-seeking (**James 3:16**).

14:34,35 This is not chauvinism, but a matter of order and proper ministry (**1 Tim 2:11-14; Titus 2:3-5**).

14:39 But remember the restriction in **verses 27 and 28**.

14:40 This is how God desires our services to be held.

Chapter 15

15:1-4 This is the gospel in a nutshell. There is only one gospel (**Gal 1:6-9**) and this is it. It is not a mixture of grace plus works, grace plus ritual, but is solely faith in the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (**John 1:29; Rev 5:6, 13:8**).

15:5-8 These verses chronicle the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ.

15:9,10 Paul testified to others of the grace of God in his life. Do you?

15:11 Since “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (**Rom 11:17**), preaching God’s word is essential (**Phil 1:15-18**).

15:12-19 Some were denying the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. If that were so, that Jesus did not rise from the dead, Paul then concluded that:

1. our preaching and faith is **“vain”** (or **“empty”**) (v 14);
2. the apostles were frauds (v 15);
3. the debt of sin remains (v 17);
5. there is no hope beyond the grave (v 18);
6. we are **“most miserable”** (or **“pitiable”**) creatures (v 19).

15:20-22 Jesus actually rose from the dead, becoming the **“firstfruits”** offering (v 23; Col 1:18b). Although God had raised others from the dead before Jesus (such as Lazarus), they all died again. Not so with Christ (Rom 6:9). For a detailed contrast of the two **“Adam”**s, see **Romans 5:12-19**.

15:23-25 We will be gathered to Christ (1 Thess 4:13-17) and reign with Him during the 1,000-year reign (Rev 20:6).

15:26 **“Death”** is an **“enemy”** that Jesus has defeated (Heb 2:14; Rev 21:4).

15:27,28 The quote is from **Psalm 8:6**. Although Jesus has authority over all things (Matt 28:18), and He is equal to the Father (John 10:30), He willingly subjects Himself to the Father (Phil 2:5-8).

15:29 Baptism **“for the dead”** is unbiblical. Nowhere does Scripture teach that water baptism saves anybody. This is a pagan, occultic practice not to be practiced by Bible-believing Christians. Paul’s point is that even these pagans believe in resurrection.

15:30 Paul and his cohorts were being persecuted for preaching Christ’s resurrection, because that proved His claims as God and Messiah (Matt 12:38-41).

15:31 Paul obviously was referring to dying to self (Luke 9:23; Gal 2:20).

15:32 The quote in the second half of this verse (also found in **Isaiah 22:13**) expresses a common humanistic philosophy. People with this attitude need to be reminded that after death there is judgment (Heb 9:27).

15:33,34 Bad teaching will produce corrupt, unrighteous living and is to be avoided at all costs. Be like the Bereans (Acts 17:10,11). Check what you are taught with your Bible; you need to know **“the whole counsel of God”** (Acts 20:27).

15:35-51 How the resurrection occurs is developed by using the example of nature (vv 36-38).

Evolution is soundly refuted in **verse 39**.

Reincarnation is unfounded in Scripture. Moses and Elijah appeared on the mount with Jesus as Moses and Elijah (Matt 17:1-3).

Physical death (**“sleep”**) is a vital part of the gospel message (vv 50,51).

15:52 This transformation, or “**mystery**” (v 51), will take place in an atom of time at the rapture of the church (**1 Thess 4:15-17**).

15:54,55 When believers receive their glorified bodies, then these prophecies from **Isaiah 25:8** and **Hosea 13:14** will be fulfilled.

15:57 Our “**victory**” is in Jesus!

1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.

15:58 The knowledge of our glorious destiny should motivate us to continue serving the Lord, “in season and out” (**2 Tim 4:2**). Keep on keeping on, saints!! **Heb 6:10** For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love, which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Chapter 16

16:1 This “**collection**” was for the impoverished church in Jerusalem. (For the basis and principles of giving see **2 Corinthians, chapters 8** and **9**).

16:2 To summarize the principles of giving, it should be done: 1) systematically; 2) personally before the Lord; 3) proportionately; 4) not out of necessity, but willingly. Paul wrote in advance about their offering so that there would be no pressure or embarrassment about their gift when he arrived.

16:3 Paul planned to send the gift along with appointed brothers because he did not handle the finances.

16:8 He desired to be in Ephesus for Pentecost because of the many souls there who needed to hear the gospel.

16:9 Open doors and opposition are both very common. An open door does not remove difficulties. See **Acts, chapters 16** and **17** for example.

16:13,14 Here Paul gave a five-fold exhortation:

1. “**Watch**” – **Matt 26:41; Mark 13:33; 1 Peter 4:7;**
2. “**stand fast**” – **Gal 5:1; Eph 6:11,14;**
3. “**be brave**” – **2 Tim 2:3,4;**
4. “**be strong**” – **Rom 4:20; 2 Tim 2:1;**
5. “**love**” – **John 13:34,35; 1 John 4:7,11.**

16:15 Those in the “**household of Stephanas**” were sold out for Jesus Christ and His people. So should we be.

Joshua 24:15 “But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD!”

16:16-21 These verses give some final greetings and comments, and Paul's encouragement to all the church to acknowledge each other in Christ.

16:22 Either you love Jesus Christ supremely, or you don't (**Matt 22:37, 12:30**). All who hate Jesus love death (**Prov 8:36**) because they have rejected His gospel (**Gal 1:6-9**), and in so doing sentenced themselves to eternal punishment (**Rev 20:11-15**).

"O Lord, come!" in the Greek is "Maranatha!" This should be the cry of our heart.

16:23,24 Paul ended this letter to the Corinthians by bestowing the grace of Christ upon them and sending them His love.

May the **"grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you"** as well! Amen!

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