



Week of January 26, 2020

1 Corinthians 1:10-18 (NRSV)

¹⁰ Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.

¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters.

¹² What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."

¹³ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

¹⁵ so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name.

¹⁶ (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Note: It is important to remember that Paul is not casting Apollos as an opponent of his *per se*. In 16:12, Paul refers to communicating with him: ¹² *Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but he was not at all willing to come now. He will come when he has the opportunity.* But in fact the divisions Paul cites are in some ways like various "teams", with the primary division being Gentile Christians versus Jewish Christians.

Reminder: "Cephas" in verse 12 is simply Aramaic for Peter.



Group Leader

Remember: you don't need to use all of the questions. Go with what works. Give people a chance to think before answering, but if a question falls flat, move on. Let the discussion go where it needs to go, as long as it remains centered around the lesson. Give the participants page 1. Use this page for yourself.

Gathering questions:

- A. What was your "group" like when you were younger? (The people you hung with.) Were you the leader? What were other groups like and how did you relate?
- B. What are the distractions you are most vulnerable to? How do you rationalize being distracted by them?

Bible Study Questions:

1. Imagine the circumstances behind the writing of the letter. How does this affect the way you read whatever Paul writes?
2. How do you imagine the "quarrels" of verses 11 and 12 playing out in the life of the church at Corinth?
3. Why do you think Paul says in verse 17 that he was not sent to baptize but to proclaim the Gospel. How is that different?
4. In verse 18, how is the message of the cross seen as "foolishness"? What do you think it means for such persons to be "perishing"? What aspects of following Christ seem "foolish" to you?
5. Where do you see the church – the broader church, or our local church – not being of one purpose?
6. What gets in the way of your direct, personal devotion to Christ? How are your loyalties divided?
7. What is at the absolute core of your faith in Jesus Christ? What is at the absolute core of your life? How do they relate?

Closing prayer: particularly invite prayers about staying focused on the core of what is important