



## DEVOTIONAL FOR ACTS 18-19; 1 CORINTHIANS 1-4

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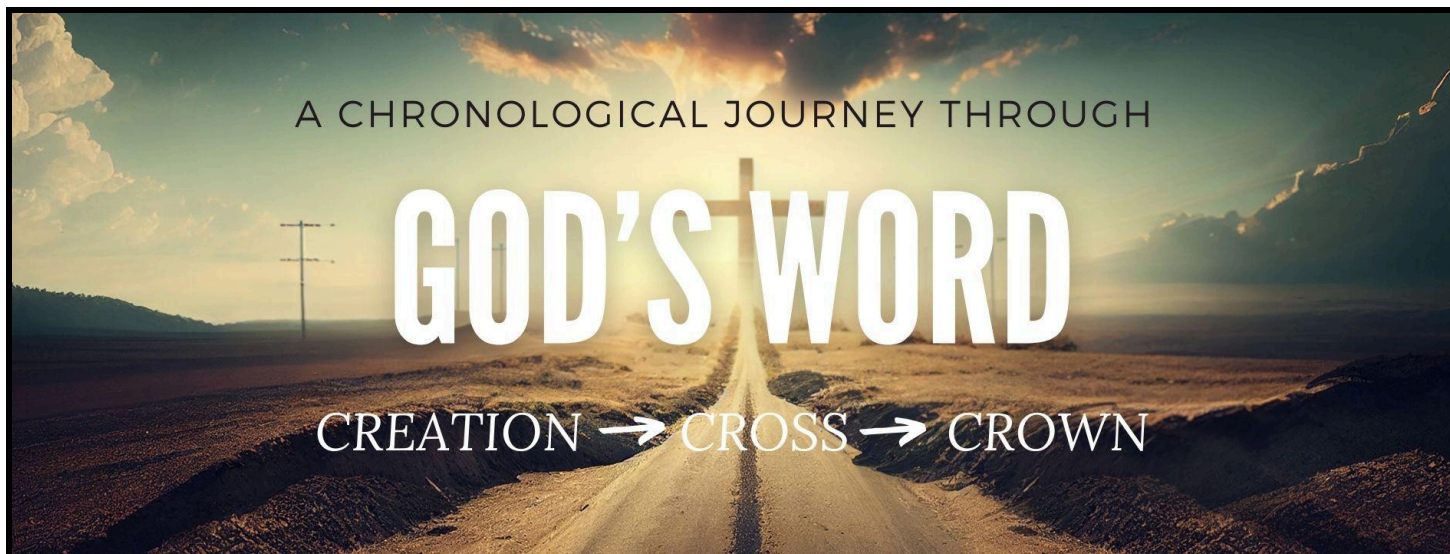
I had a good friend tell me years ago, if you truly want to try to understand the Bible, you have to take your shoes off and get your feet in the sand. He said until you understand the culture and the times you are reading about, we can have a false narrative.

Several years ago, my son-in-law came home on leave from his third tour of duty in Iraq. He made a video of what a typical day was like for him while he was there. That video changed my life. It did two things for me: it made me fully aware of the danger he was in on a daily basis. It also made me aware of how faithful my God had been in answering the prayers I prayed for him daily. It was an eye-opening experience. I think we can all have those types of experiences in reading our Bible if we ask the Lord for his discernment and understanding of what we read. Psalm 119:125 says "I am your servant, give me your understanding, that I may know your testimonies."

Paul is one of the greatest warriors for Christ Jesus and the greatest missionary. To try to understand Paul's journey you have to look back. He had been stoned and left for dead, beaten, put in prison, and ran out of town, and yet he was faithful and continued moving forward to Corinth. Corinth was not only the leading political and commercial center in Greece, it also housed the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. There were a thousand temple priestesses, ritual prostitutes, who came every evening into the city to practice their trade. So what does Paul do when he gets into town? He goes to the synagogue on every Sabbath and tries to persuade the Jews first, then the Greeks, that Jesus was the Christ. The Jews resisted him and he shook off his garment and said, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6). The Lord came to Paul in a night vision and said "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people" (Acts 18:9-10). Paul stayed there a year and a half.

As normal, when the Jews wouldn't accept Jesus as the Christ, they didn't want anyone else to accept him either. So the leader of the synagogue, Sosthenes, brought false charges to Gallio, the proconsul for Achaia, and he wouldn't hear the case. The Greeks then beat Sosthenes. In 1 Corinthians 1, we see Paul introduce Sosthenes as "our brother" (verse 1). He came to know the Lord! This just shows how God can change the heart of his enemies.

A few verses into 1 Corinthians 1, Paul goes right into the problems in the Corinthian church. They had taken their eyes off of Jesus and had put them on men. This problem is still happening today in churches all over America. The people



can become more devout to a preacher than to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am thankful even though we are one church body with two campuses, we stay united. The moment we start those divisions, we are doomed as a body of Christ. I sometimes think that Paul would have rather taken one of the beatings he got instead of having to deal with the divisions in the church. Thank God we are still preaching Jesus crucified today, as Paul was then. "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:31).

Paul goes on to tell these foolish men in Chapter 3:1-2, "I could not speak to you as spiritual men, but as men of flesh as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. (NASB95)" This should challenge us all to abide in God's word daily, so we can have discernment to know what we are being taught is true and make sure we build our foundation on the solid rock of Jesus Christ and not in sinking sand.

Paul goes from correcting the Corinthians to giving them examples in chapter 4 of being servants of Christ, as were the three men they were wanting to be a part of, Paul, Apollos, and Peter (1 Corinthians 4:1). That should include each one of us, whether you're the preacher, on the praise team, in the sound booth, a Journey Group leader or members, the door greeter, to the parking attendant, and any other place you serve in the body of Christ.

As I sit here writing this devotional, I am recovering from gallbladder surgery and I am so thankful to have had an outpouring of friends and family that have shown me love and comfort. I know most of us can isolate ourselves if we're not careful. When I read that Paul met up with his friends Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, he had a support system with him too. We need each other in life to encourage and share life together.

I know this has been a tough year trying to keep up with reading the Bible in chronological order in a year. But I hope you have enjoyed it as much as I have. Try to always take a little extra time to meditate on what you've read and ask the Lord to help you apply it in your Life. I love you, and Jesus loves you too. Be thankful for what God's doing for you and through you. Have a blessed Thanksgiving.

#### Questions:

1. Are you abiding in God's Word daily? Why or why not? Share this with your Journey Group.
2. Do you have a good support system in your life? If not, please consider a Journey Group. Email [pastoraloffice@stonepointchurch.com](mailto:pastoraloffice@stonepointchurch.com) for more information.
3. Are you still on the milk of God's Word and not the meat? Why or why not?