

1 CORINTHIANS –

Quotes by Gary Wills from *What Paul Meant*, and NIB notes by Paul Sampley unless otherwise noted.

INTRO

Written in the period 55-57 when Paul was living in Ephesus. He had founded the church in Corinth in 51 on 2nd missionary journey. This letter was probably carried by Stephanus and Timothy from Ephesus to Corinth. See I Cor 4:17 and Acts 19:22. NIB: Corinth was an extremely wealthy city, known for its extreme abuse of the poor. Mostly Gentiles, some very rich, mostly poor. No tension between Gentiles and Jews. Also a very religious city with more than 2 dozen temples – to Greek, Roman, and Egyptian gods and goddesses – and a temple dedicated to “all gods.” It had Roman “colony” status, governed from Rome much like Palestine, paid taxes to Rome, Latin as the official language. Established in 44 BCE by Julius Caesar on the ruins of a city destroyed 100 years before. Populated by retired soldiers, sailors, freedmen from all of Roman lands, and excess population from Rome itself. Five times the size of Athens. Described by Alciphron as “persons without grace or charm and not the least bit convivial.”

Chronology of the letters to the Corinthians, and the order in which they should be read to make sense:

- 1) 2 Cor 6:14-7:1: This probably is the "previous letter" mentioned in 1 Cor 5:9.
 - 2) 1 Cor: Actually Paul's second letter, it was written in response to a letter **to** Paul from the Corinthian church, which answered Paul's "previous letter."
 - 3) 2 Cor 10-13: Paul is very disturbed by that letter and goes to Corinth. This visit is not recorded anywhere, but is deduced from 2 Cor 13:1-2, where he says he is coming for the **third time**. He returns to Ephesus and writes the "Severe Letter," carried by Titus. (Jerome Murphy O'Connor [M-O'C] believes that this “Painful Letter” may have been lost, as well as the “Previous Letter.”) This would mean that Paul wrote five letters (at least) to Corinth.
 - 4) 2 Cor:1-9: Unable to wait for an answer, Paul anxiously sets out to meet Titus, finds him in Macedonia, learns that all is well in Corinth, and writes this "letter of reconciliation." (See also notes at beginning of 2 Corinthians.)
 - 5) 2 Cor, chapters 14-16.
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- 1) 1:1 – Paul believed that all believers are called and everyone who is called by God is a saint. Sosthenes is the former president of the synagogue in Achaia, Acts 18:12, who converted to Christianity and went with Paul to Ephesus. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor: Sosthenes wrote 1:18-31 and 2:6-16, did such a complicated and subtle job that Paul in irritation abandoned him!
 - 2) 1:10-17 – Chloe -- a woman -- was probably a leader of a house church in Ephesus. A group of “her people” went to Corinth to study and help the church there. /// The divided loyalties may indicate early doctrinal differences: Peter, representing the more conservative element of Jewish origin, holding to the law. (Peter had nothing to do with the founding of the church in Corinth. He may have passed by there en route to Rome -- probably with his wife, see 9:5 – long enough to make his views known.) Paul, representing those with a liberal attitude de-

emphasizing ritual. Christ, representing those "fundamentalists" who wished to adhere only to the sayings of Jesus without added teachings of either Peter or Paul, and who acted as if Christ belonged to them and not they to Christ, a smugly self-righteous group. Apollos, one of John the Baptist's followers, who went to Ephesus after Paul left there on his second missionary journey, and was tutored and baptized as a Christ-follower by Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 24:25). He went to Corinth and labored well (I Cor 3:6), and so he also had his following. There apparently was no animosity between Paul and Apollos (see I Cor 16:12 and Titus 3:13) and there may not have been any difference in their teachings.

M-O'C: In four places in 1 Corinthians (1:13, 6:15, 8:12, 12:12) the Body of Christ is not an **individual** Christ, but is a designation of **community**. He says that a distinction between the two "bodies" of Christ must be drawn -- the individual body which died and went to heaven is distinct from the community of believers, which is an ecclesiastical body consisting of the believers in which he dwells on earth through his Spirit. In 12:27 Paul states unequivocally that the community is the Body of Christ in the world -- Christ physically present in the world. (See also Romans 12:5). Therefore it follows that an autonomous Christian is as impossible as an independent arm or leg. If they are given independent status they are no longer an arm or a leg. /// Paul uses "brothers and sisters" 38 times, twice any other letter -- wants to remind them that their diversity should not keep them from being one in the body of Christ. Anything less is insecurity. V 17 represents a *synecdoche* -- a part representing the whole -- the cross is symbolic of the entire range of Christianity -- Jesus's life, death, and resurrection. As for baptism, it doesn't make any difference who does it -- it's God's baptism, not man's.

- 3):1-21-- God's decisive action in Christ's death and resurrection has inaugurated the apocalyptic end time. The "folly" of the cross is the ultimate shame and humiliation for unbelievers. Isaiah 29:13-14 says that God will "destroy the wisdom of the wise" (read it -- then go to Isaiah 6:10). /// v 1:20 makes it clear the Paul is talking about the "wisdom of the world." Then in v 21 he gets a little sarcastic by saying that God through foolish preaching was able to save those who believe. In v 23 the "stumbling block" means something that offends and elicits opposition. Here Paul is in accord with that in that identification with the gospel will bring opposition. V 24 shows that Paul has not given up on wisdom completely. V 25 shows that wisdom talk is about power and status, because it is actually happening in the Corinthian church. Wisdom and cultured speech earned status in Paul's time. But Paul sees that the gospel's power depends on nothing but God's own power, not on the social and cultural conventions of power. Some of gospels' claims clash with the status seekers.
- 4) 1:26-31 -- Paul shows his instinctive knowledge of the demography of social culture in the Greco-Roman world. There was no middle class -- a few rich, and therefore powerful, persons, at the top, and the rest poor. Erastus, Corinth's town treasurer, and Gaius, hosts of the house church, were probably at the top of the socio-economic pyramid. /// Note in v 30 in the NIV how Paul shifts from the Corinthian church to "our" (all believers) righteous, holiness, and redemption. In v 31, Paul quotes Jeremiah 9:24 to warn believers not to boast of their status with God. Boasting "in the Lord" is to credit the Lord as the source of life. Apparently some of the Corinthians had begun to boast about their accomplishments, in contrast to rejoicing in what the Lord accomplished *through* them.
- 5) 2:3 -- Paul wants to be sure that the Corinthians realize that it's not Paul's preaching, teaching, etc., that created their community, but God's Spirit working in them. Their faith is grounded on God's power, not human wisdom, performance or status associated with sophisticated

speech.

- 6) 2:4 – People who are reluctant to share their faith in whatever way, should take some solace in Paul’s self-portrait here.
- 7) 2:6-16 – Sampley applauds the Spirit-led people when God “marks their being saved.” Assumed, but not argued in detail here, is Pal’s conviction that all believers have received the Spirit of God, but he suggests that v 15 might leave the door open to some Corinthians to feel superior to others since they do not need “examination.” Jerome Murphy O’Connor is very concerned about this group who he calls the “spirit-people.” They claim to possess “the spirit which is from God” (2:12) and “filled with divine blessings,” are “wealthy” and are “kings,” (4:8), “wise,” “strong,” “honored,” (4:10). They looked down on the others who were not “heavenly” but “earthly.” /// This Spirit has been a struggle across the history of the church. In what sense is redemption a deliverance from the world? Carried to the extreme would be the Gnostics who believe that everything is spirit and there is no physical reality and only the soul, not the body, is redeemable– or the docetics who emphasized Chris’s divinity at the expense of his humanity. /// Compared to Paul’s Spirit people, many modern Christians are Spirit-poor.
- 8) 3:5-9 – Paul is referring to individual growth in the Spirit, not the church in numbers.
- 9) 3:10-15 – The “Day” is judgment when Christ returns – the stewardship of the grace given us will face the scrutiny of divine judgment. We *will* be judged according to our works. The foundation must be Jesus Christ but the building material is what one has at hand, not something to search for. This in contrast to Luther’s insistence that faith alone is enough. We have been reluctant to count on our works. But what Luther meant is that we must not regard rewards as being the motivation for seeking and doing good. And Paul makes it clear that works can make one right with God.
- 10) 3:18 – Let him humble himself enough to learn -- to admit he does not know everything.
- 11) 3:21-23 – Paul warns against boasting of status gained by association with certain high-placed people. Then he shows his knowledge of Cynic philosophy. A syllogistic argument runs like this: the wise are the friends of the gods, friends share what they own, gods own all things, therefore the wise have access to all things. But Paul turns it around: all things are yours, all belong to you, you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. Therefore, belonging to Christ and God means that all things belong to you and you don’t need to boast of human associations. *And* if every- thing already belongs to you, paradoxically the world, death, things present and things to come, take on less meaning.
- 12) 4:1 – In the original Greek: "huperetes" -- rowers in a trireme. V 4 –Note difference between NIV and NRSV. Sampley thinks that Paul is claiming too much, that he joins those who are self-deceived about their importance. V 5 -- (JB): Is there a hierarchy in heaven, determined by the good/bad deeds you did on earth? Is there some kind of gradient in how we are judged? What are the “greater rewards” for the better people, and if so, what are they? In Islam there is a great wall in the after-life upon which those whose good deeds equal their bad deeds, determined by an angel on your right shoulder and a devil on your left shoulder. On one side is Hell, on the other side is Paradise. There is no going from one side to the other.
- 13) 4:6 – “Nothing beyond what is written” means “Don’t paint outside the lines,” or “Don’t go beyond scripture,” or “beyond the rules used in training children.” Paul begins to elaborate in finite terms what he has used in indirect terms for the first four chapters. Now he says that nothing is more basic to the gospel than to realize that no matter how different we all are, we

are one in Christ. /// The second phrase in v 6 is reference to their divisiveness.

- 14) 4:7 – Sampley believes that Paul is referring to “grace” even though the word is not used. All Christians have a common ground of grace.
- 15) 5:1-15 – V 1-2 -- This was a marriage between a man and his father’s second wife, therefore not a blood relative. But Paul is still living under Jewish law, and in that law this is incest. Greek for immorality is “porneia” (add “graphos” and you get in English “pornography”). V. 5 – Turning him over to Satan for the “destruction of the flesh” – flesh to Paul not being the human body but the force that drives one to sin. This would result in excommunication so that the man’s soul could be saved at the parousia. (Got that?) Sampley explains: If handed over to Satan, he will see his mistake and repent, whereas if he remained in the community he might not ever come to that realization. Vv 6-7 – A proverb, meaning in this context, “a little evil can corrupt an entire society.” The immorality of the sinner could become like yeast in dough, permeating the entire community. V 9 – Portions of this letter may be combined in II Cor 6:14-7:1. The rest of it lost (see Intro). V 10 – It is only your brothers and sisters in the faith that you should shun. Avoiding all sinners would require you to “leave this world.” (Like those who fled to Qumran). V 13 – Probably the origin of excommunication and of shunning. See Deut 17:7, 24:7.

16) – REFLECTIONS 5:1-13

Raising questions about another’s behavior can be meddling, but at the other end of the spectrum it can be proper responsibility. Then there’s the grey area in between where one must be careful. Sometimes love is not “yes” but “no.” That can be called “tough love.” The old saying, “A way for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.” In a church setting there is excommunication at one end and passively tolerating bad behavior at the other. We mostly think today that holiness is a private affair, but Paul clearly treats it as a community responsibility. But note that he recommends turning the man over to Satan so that he might still be saved.

- 17) 6:1-11 – See Jude v. 6 and note #4. In the Greco-Roman world only the wealthy and powerful went to court because it was well known that if a poor man went to court he *always* lost. Now Paul sarcastically chastises them for not judging themselves, not remembering that only “unbelievers” judge in civil courts, that they themselves will judge angels on the day of the Lord. (Note that v 4 in the NIV should be emended as suggested in the footnote. See NRSV.) /// Paul is brief in his reference to judging angels because he expects the Corinthians to know the story. In Jewish tradition as described very briefly in Genesis 6:1-5, the angels are the Nephilim, the “watchers,” who came to earth to have sex with mortal women. Their descendants were described by Moses’ spies, who returned from scouting Canaan, as being too huge to conquer, so Moses and the Israelites spent another 40 years in the desert. The Nephilim were cast into Hell – Tartarus in Greek mythology, the lowest part of the underworld. /// Paul’s eschatological vision...mocks the trifling insignificance of the disputes the Corinthians have dragged before public tribunals. Their end-time role of judging angels in so much more significant.
- 18) 6:12- 20 – *For the linguistically-minded, this section is “figured speech,” much valued in Paul’s time. See NIB, p 861 (little help for Christians on their journey, but interesting for those delving deep into scripture).*
- 19) 6:12-13a – Not known whether this is Paul’s maxim or if he’s quoting someone else. He compels the reader to ask, “Then what really matters?” Paul doesn’t reject these maxims even if they are not his but accepts them. The NRSV’s translation of “lawful” is erroneous,

because it has nothing to do with the law. The NIV's "permissible" is better. The maxim is in line with Augustine's "Love and do what you wilt" – a Christian who truly believes can do what he pleases because he wouldn't do anything that would prove contrary to the will of God. /// God has power over all things: stomachs and food are not of enduring value.

- 20) 6:13b-18a – From Paul's quite lengthy denunciation of fornication and prostitution, we deduce that that this was a real problem in Corinth.
- 21) 6:18b, c – Many interpretations of this difficult v. Sapley: (a) These vv show the divisiveness among the Corinthians even in understanding sin. b) Some say that if sin does not affect the body (self), that every body is the Lord's, then whatever sin one does (except fornication) has no bearing on the body's commitment to the Lord. c) Others say that an immoral act is against the body and is not a concern for the community. Both interpretations explain why the community is not concerned with the man married to his step-mother.
- 22) 6:19-20a – This v gathers together what Paul has written and lays the groundwork for what he will write. It also undercuts both maxims in 6:18b and c.
- 23) **Chapter 7 – Barclay: Paul was writing to new Christians in the most immoral city in the world. Furthermore, he thought that the Second Coming of Christ was imminent -- within his lifetime. Therefore these rules of love and marriage were meant to be for a temporary, not permanent, situation. So we must not expect a full exposition of Paul's understanding of marriage and sexuality – not a manual on the family. We can be sure they would have been different if Paul had known that even after 2000 years Christ had not returned as a living human.**
- 24) 7:1-3 -- Paul realized that the temptation was everywhere on the streets of Corinth. He immediately contradicts what is apparently a Corinthian maxim.
- 25) 7:8-9 – Biblical Greek has no word for "widower" so settles for "unmarried." (Should be understood here because Paul takes up single and unmarried later.
- 26) 7:10-16 – Paul had not read the gospels but he states what Jesus said in Matthew 5:31, Mark 10:1 and Luke 6:18. In Jewish law, a man could divorce his wife, but the wife couldn't divorce him. In Roman law, both could initiate divorce proceedings. In practice, most ended marriages never ended in legal divorce, they just married again -- Paul forbids divorce, as Jesus did in Mark 10:9, and Luke 16:18. This may seem harsh, but in the Corinth of the day, it was better to keep the standards so high that no taint of loose living could enter the church. One of the great complaints at the time, by rulers and others, was that Christianity broke up families (I Peter 4:15). But Paul believed that the unbelieving partner is consecrated by the believer, and furthermore might be saved by the believer. /// This is the only place in Paul's writings where salvation is directly applied to *human* agency, but we must also understand that it is God who ultimately saves.
- 27) 7:17-24 – Paul expects persons to live the gospel in the circumstances where they were called. He doesn't require them to leave their social setting. This does not mean that one needs to remain in a physically or emotionally abusive situation. It doesn't mean to do nothing to improve to better circumstances. As for Paul's apparent endorsement of slavery, this should not be transferred to modern times, such as during the Civil War. This is partly due to Paul's belief that the end of the age was near. /// As for slavery, true freedom is found in slavery to the Lord. But contrast slavery then with what we know of slavery in the present era. (Both the Cynics and the Stoics believed that the good life can be lived in any circumstances.) /// Paul's purpose in inserting this chapter between advice on sexuality is to make sure that the people understand that males and females have equal standing in Christ's baptism.

- 28) **Summary of the biblical stand on divorce: Matthew 5:32 and 19:3-9: Jesus allows divorce only where unchastity is involved, then adds that this is the ideal but not everyone can accept this teaching... Let everyone accept this who can.** In Mark 10:2-11, Jesus advised that not to divorce is ideal but was allowed as an accommodation on account of “hard-heartedness.” Luke 16:18: “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.” Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:12-13: **If any believer has a wife who is not a believer, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. (Same for the woman.)**
- 29) 7:29-31a – Sampley: Don’t overvalue these aspects of your life and confuse them with what matters and are more important for a godly life. Don’t be entrapped by the world’s values.
- 30) 7:31b – The word translated “form” is in Greek *schēma*, from which we get “scheme, which can mean “a systematic plan of action.”
- 31) 7:32-34 – Paul doesn’t mean that dividing one’s loyalties between God and spouse is bad, but means that a marriage is “rich when both spouses place their obligation to please the other ahead of all completing responsibilities.”
- 32) 7:36-38 – JB: So obvious that one wonders why Paul even mentions it. Perhaps it wasn’t so obvious then?
- 33) 7:39, 40 – (I hope Margaret agrees with this!) The NIV’s “happier” may be a state without reference to God, whereas the NRSV’s “blessedness” is not. Blessedness in the face of stress, happiness never can. Happiness does not say anything positive or negative about one’s relationship to God. Blessedness does.
- 34) **REFLECTIONS, 7:1-40.** Paul recognizes that power of sexual passion; He realizes that sometimes persons need to divorce; slaves may wish freedom.
- 35) 8:1-6 – Paul counters a Corinthian maxim with three of his own. The Corinthians’ maxim on its face is one that Paul can appreciate, but his quick response suggests that he finds problems theirs. He thinks he has detected in some people that think they have *more* knowledge than others. They are making moral decisions (like eating idol’s food) from what they know, without concern for those who don’t have the same knowledge. They have knowledge but not love. He critiques their placing knowledge, which puffs up, above love, which builds up and keeps things in proportion. Knowledge without love is sure to come to harm. Knowledge is linked to status, love to service. At stake for Paul is proper self-assessment, which for him can never be knowledge because that leads to boasting. Placing God in its proper place results in our needing God’s love and engages us in love for one another. To turn this around, when love is properly in place, then what believers know can serve as navigational markers for travel along the road to faith. Love is not just a sentiment. It acts, it works, it does things, and the chief thing is to edify, to build up, to cause growth, it restores, enlarges, makes life whole. /// But idolatry is not simply worshiping an object as if it were God. Idolatry is having many gods that bid for our allegiance which can take over our lives.
- 36) 7:18 – Some Jews who wanted to appear as if they hadn’t been circumcised – in order to participate in Greco-Roman games where athletes performed naked – did what is called “epispasm,” stretching what was left of the prepuce over the glans.
- 37) 8:5 -- Paul and his Gentile readers do not doubt the existence of many gods. They just do not worship them.
- 38) 8:7 – The Greek word translated “conscience” is better rendered “consciousness,” more likely to be

weak and easily defiled. Paul is clear that God is indifferent to what we eat – including meat offered to idols. But if people who are still weak in the faith sees more mature Christians eating that meat, they may believe that that person still believes that the idol still has some power, so they eat it also. Remember that almost all of them have believed that those idols did have power. So do not think of these weak as sinners against Christ – they are saved by him as you are – but bolster them so that you don't sin against Christ. For Paul, sin is never simply a private act between an individual and God. A wrong relation with God inevitably spills over and harms others.

- 39) 9:1 – His claim to have seen Jesus (repeated in 15:1) is the appearance of Jesus in a vision on the road to Damascus.
- 40) 9:3 – Paul claims the right to have a wife accompany him as do Jesus's brothers, Jude, Simon, and Joses, as well as Peter, though nowhere do we get any clue that Paul had a wife. Though Gary Wills believes that he probably married at about age 20, as all Pharisees did, but was single at the time of his conversion. This passage seems to indicate that Jesus' brothers were active in the itinerant ministry of the church.
- 41) 9:12b – Sampley translates this: "But we pass over all things in silence lest we obscure the gospel of Christ." Paul, who has unexcelled rights, has chosen not to employ them because of love.
- 42) 9:15-18 – A reiteration of Paul's paradox: A slave is a freedman of the Lord and a free person is a slave of Christ. There is almost a playfulness in Paul's images. /// In Paul's day, about a third of the total population in the Roman empire were slaves, mostly born into slavery, descendents of people captured by Greek and Roman armies. Were well-treated for the most part, especially house-hold slaves, who sometimes rose to important positions.
- 43) 9:19-23 – The evangelistic techniques described here inform Paul's ministry: the gospel engages people where they are, where they live, in their social matrix, nourishes them where they are.
- 44) 9:24-27 – Corinthians were very familiar with athletic games because the Isthmian games had just been held a year before only eight miles from Corinth. /// Sampley paraphrases v 27: Paul asks, "Would it not be ironic if after preaching to others I failed to practice what I preach and at the judgment was disqualified?" This is radical stuff for the Corinthians. It's in line with the prophets and Jesus. Nothing can stand in the way or separate a person from God, not human institutions, ethnicity, gender, religious practices (keeping certain days or rituals), nothing can hinder the communication that God cares passionately about. (See Romans 8:38-39.)
- 45) 10:1-13 – When Paul says "our ancestors" to a predominately Gentile congregation is an illustration of what the creeds now call the "communion of saints" – the entire biblical story is now the story of *God's people* – and now should be woven into that story /// Paul tells the Exodus story twice: once to remind his readers that their ancestors all went through the same experience, led by Christ (Paul clearly thinks of Jesus as having been with God from the very beginning [Philippians 2:5-11]. The rock they drank from (Exodus 17:6) was Christ. /// 10:8 – Paul has confused Numbers 26:62, which says that 23,000 male Levites were registered, with Exodus 32:28, which says that 3,000 fell that day at the hands of the Levites.
- 46) 10:14-22 – Apparently many were continuing to join in the cultic festivals with their idol-worshiping neighbors, even those who no longer worshiped them. (V. 20 – JB – the idols are "demons?")
- 47) 11:2-16 – Note that Paul accepts that women are praying and prophesying in the church. The early church obeyed this instruction, prompting the rabbis to begin **covering** their heads, a tradition still maintained by Jews. But it is still theologically sexist because men could be

uncovered because they were created in the direct image of God whereas women were created in man's image after him. "It was impossible for a man in that culture...to shed every remnant of sexism." /// For Paul it is this simple: God is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of men, who are head of women. But Paul contradicts himself by trying to enforce the tradition when he has already stressed the equality of men and women in Christ. And then in v 13a he apparently reverses himself again by asking the Corinthians to judge for themselves about the matter!

- 48) 11:17-34 – Gary Wills: a closer rendition of the Last Supper than any of the gospels because earned by Paul in Antioch and/or Damascus decades before any of the gospels were written. Sampley points out that if the Corinthians had not made a mockery of the Last Supper, we would not have known the traditions as Paul knew them. /// Early custom was that the entire congregation met periodically for a full meal at a home that was large enough. The early arrivals fed and drank until they were full and drunk. Late arrivals drank and ate the left-overs. /// Matt 26:26 – bread and cup before the meal. Mark 14:22 – both while they were eating. Luke 22:17 – cup and bread before, cup after eating.. /// v. 19 – Oddly Paul admits that there “must be factions within the church” despite his pleas throughout his letters that there shouldn't be. /// v. 26 –“proclaims” here means more than just preaching. The life that they live – stimulated by the eucharist – is infectious and makes an impact on the people they deal with. Every time they partake, they “rehearse” the whole story of redemption and their lives show it. /// V, 29 – “discerning the body” evaluating how well one's life relates to Christ, and how well one's love ties one to others who, though many, are one in the body of Christ. If you don't do this when you take the bread, you're bringing judgment on yourself (maybe the *last* judgment?)

49) REFLECTIONS 11:17-34

The Lord's supper is the ideal place for this self-assessment to take place. Be careful not to confuse “deserving” God's grace and feeling “worthy” to partake. For Paul, communion is both personal and communal -- discerning (checking out) one's self and sharing with other believers in Christ.

- 50) 12:1-3 – The “spirit-people” (see note at 2:12) apparently found the idea of a crucified savior repugnant, preferred to think of him in terms of the “Lord of Glory” (2:8). They were not able to integrate a horrible death into any philosophical approach to religion. Paul resorts to shock language to remind the Corinthians that if you have the Spirit, you can't curse Jesus – and without the Spirit you can't say “Jesus is Lord.” That basic affirmation is made possible by divine assistance and is present in everyday life, in every decision, in every facet of life.
- 51) 12:4-11 – All attributes *are* gifts, none of them more important than others. Since glossolalia is the most dramatic and isoteric, those practitioners had begun to think they were “better” than others. (Paul comes back to this in greater detail in chapter 14 where it is mentioned 17 times.) Paul mentions it last here because some of his members seem to think that their gift is the most important. Paul's point is that all the diverse gifts are equal in importance. They are given so they may be amplified by the Spirit. /// V. 10 -- First phrase: not foretelling, but preaching; rebuke and advice. Second phrase: ability to distinguish between real and hysterical manifestations.
- 52) 12:14-31 – Paul's metaphor is in direct response to the problem of some people openly acting and saying that they are more important than others. This is Paul's best-known image of the church as the body of Christ. But it is also directed at those who have *low* esteem, that by the grace of God they in their way as just as important as anyone.

53 – REFLECTIONS ON CHAPTER 12

We must not “check ourselves” with the list in hand to see if we are included. We should not consider this to be an exhaustive list of gifts. We should not assume that all gifts need to be spiritual -- they may be service-related (e.g. Mary and Martha). /// Note that glossolalia is not listed here!

- 54) **Chaps 13-16** thought to be written **after** his **second** visit to Corinth. See *Introduction* and chapter 7, 2 Cor.
- 55) 13:1– 14:1a – **Encomium** (Formal expression of praise) **on Love**. 1-13 --The Greek word translated here as “love” is “agape,” **divine love**, in contrast to brotherly (**philo**) or erotic (**eros**) love. Vv. 13-18 – cf Romans 5:1-5, Galatians 5:5-6, Colossians 1:4-5, Thessalonians 1:5, 5:8. Paul’s auditors here are expected to attribute all these gifts to Paul. Paul uses a negative way to show he is nothing even if he has these gifts, if he has not love.
- 56) 14:1b-12 – In stressing the need for interpreters of glossolalia, Paul lists three sounds that are meaningless without interpretation: musical instruments, bugle call to battle, and foreign languages. “Prophecy” is better translated as “forthtelling” the will and message of God, or “edifying others,” or “instruction,” or “helping someone with suffering or loss.” Not according to Paul, foreseeing the future; we know this from other of his writings.
- 57) 14:13-19 – Paul prays in tongues when alone but never in church – he wants to integrate with them, leaving no one out. People who compartmentalize their lives into secular and non-secular like most moderns is anathema to Paul: the connection between worship and all of life is important. Faith without community may not be “all bogus,” but is not the real thing according to Paul.
- 58) 14:20-25 – The NIV’s “some who do not understand” is better than the NRSV’s “outsider” because the Greek word used is “idiotes,” which means “one who is untrained,” or “novice,” so this can apply to beginners in the faith, not only to outsiders. Paul reminds the Corinthians that an outsider or novice should see God reflected in their communal and worship life, reflect the orderliness of God’s peace.
- 59) 14:32 – What Paul means is that prophetic edification and inspiration must be under the control of the prophet – must exercise self-discipline and not over-ride the needs of others. (JB: So why didn’t he say that?) (Advice to leaders in the church today: “Put a restraining harness on yourselves and have the patience to wait for others.”)
- 60) 14:34-35 – M-O’C: Not written by Paul. Completely at odds with Paul’s relationship with women in other churches, and also what he has said earlier in 1 Corinthians (11:5) and Galatians 3:28. Added later to bring these passages into line with the non-Pauline references to subordination of women in Ephesus, Colossians and 1-2 Timothy and were written a generation after Paul’s.
- 61) 14:37-40 – Those who don’t grant authority to what Paul has said will not be recognized. /// From “tongues and prophecy” Paul leads to an all-encompassing assertion: “Let all things be done exemplarily and in order.”
- 62) 15:3-11 – An example of “pre-Pauline formula.” There was a type of writing extant in the Christian church before Paul started writing. But he used that writing (formula) in his own writing. In this passage the following clues can be found: 1) The words “received” and “delivered” (or in this bible, “handed on”) are rabbinic terms. 2) Certain phrases are very Jewish: “the twelve,” “the third day,” “for our sins,” etc. 3) Poetic style is Hebraic. 4) Cephas is Aramaic for Peter.
- 63) 15:12-34 – The resurrection of Jesus is not disputed in Corinth, but the resurrection of the dead

is. But Paul shocks his readers with, “If Jesus was not raised from the dead...” Apparently there are people who deny that Jesus was resurrected and believe that his salvation is in the present. Paul argues that *all* believers share in Jesus’s resurrection after their death (See 4:8-11), not just a “newness of life” in this life. Paul argues in 12:19 that not believing in the resurrection is to believe in vain and to continue to live in one’s sins. (See Romans 5:14-21 for his Adam/Christ typology.) V. 26 – The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Sin – as a power – is death’s sting. Sin leads to death. If it were not for God’s grace in Jesus, death *would* have the last word. Sin as a power maneuvering to take advantage of us is one of Paul’s great insights. Sin is not just a wrong deed, an action one should not do. Rather, sin is a crafty power that tries to take control of our lives and entice us away from dependence on God. V. 29 – Vicarious baptism for someone who died unsaved. V. 31 – “I die daily.” “Day by day my close identification with Christ’s death and my service to him is in hourly and daily danger.” V. 32 – No consensus on who these “beasts” might be. Probably a metaphor for his enemies there. He’s writing from Ephesus.

- 64) 15:35-57 – Paul never quite answers the questions that the ignorant “someone” asks. He does say that whatever dies will be recognized as a fish or animal or bird or man (v 38). It seems clear that there are two kinds of body, spiritual and unspiritual, possibly indicating that this arthly body will not be the heavenly body.

Classification of types (typology)

<u>First Adam</u>	<u>Second Adam</u>
Living body	Life-giving spirit
The physical	The spiritual
Made of earth	From heaven
Those who are of the earth	Those who are of heaven
The “stamp” of the earth	The “stamp” of heaven

Note that in v. 46 he says that the physical is first, not the spiritual. In vv 51-57, he explains: man in this world cannot have access to the kingdom, not yet, not without radical change. V 51 – We will not all die before this happens but we will *all be changed* – the parousia is imminent. V 53 – There is continuity between one side of the chart and the other – e.g., the corruptible will have been clothed in incorruptibility, etc. – The resurrection does not consist of a soul being snatched from the soon-to-be-discarded body.

- 65) 16:8-9 – Paul sees “many who oppose me” as an opening door! But we must distinguish between opposition of those opposed to our mission from those opposed to our own greed and/or self-centeredness.
- 66) 16:15 – See 1:16
- 67) 16:15ff – We know the names of 16 people in the Corinthian church. Two were women: Prisca (Priscilla) and Phoebe. Six were Jews: Aquila, Prisca, Crispus, Sosthenes, Jason, Sosipater. Two were Gentiles: Erastus, Justus. The church was predominately middle class. Jews were a minority. Prisca and Aquila were Jewish Christians banned from Rome in 49 CE by Claudius (Romans 16:3-4, Acts 18:2) and established a house church in Ephesus.