

Small Group Guide: *Different But Not Divided* - 1 Corinthians 1:1-17
The Gospel Centered Life - Part 1, 06/14/26

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you were part of a team (sports, work, ministry, etc.) where different people had different roles. What made it work well? What caused problems?

Recap:

Paul wrote to the Corinthian church—a diverse group living in a cosmopolitan city much like our world today. Despite their spiritual gifts and knowledge, they were divided over which leaders to follow. Paul reminds them that Christians are united by the death and resurrection of Jesus, not by human leaders. When we live gospel-centered lives, our differences complement rather than divide us.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:2 and Romans 6:9-14. What does it mean to be "sanctified in Christ Jesus"? a) Why does Paul ground correction in identity rather than merely giving commands? b) What dangers arise when Christians focus only on behavior modification?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-12. Why do you think the Corinthians were dividing over different leaders (Paul, Apollos, Peter)? What were they really looking for?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:13. Paul asks, 'Is Christ divided?' What does this question reveal about what was happening in the Corinthian church? How does it apply to us today?
4. Read James 4:1-2 and Galatians 5:13-23. James identifies desires, coveting, and fighting for our own way as sources of conflict. Can you think of examples (without naming names) where you've seen this play out in church settings? a) How does Paul's description of the fruit of the Spirit contrast with the desires James describes?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 1:7-9. What three things does Paul say God provides for us in verse 7, 8 and 9? a) How does remembering who we are in Christ help us fight sin and division?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-7 and Romans 12:3-8. Why does God intentionally give different gifts to different people? a) What is lost when everyone tries to serve in the same way? b) Why do differences sometimes become sources of competition rather than cooperation?
7. Read Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15. These are clear directives from God about pursuing reconciliation and unity and addressing wrongs. Why do we find these commands so difficult to obey—even resisting them? What fears or excuses hold us back?
8. Read 1 Corinthians 1:17 and 2 Corinthians 4:5-7. What did Paul mean when he said the cross could be emptied of its power? a) What modern substitutes can compete with the gospel's power (charismatic personalities, political influence, entertainment, self-help, success, etc.)? b) How can a church ensure that Jesus remains the center rather than the methods, personalities, or programs?

Key Takeaways:

- Jesus is our leader, not human pastors or teachers. We follow Christ, and He provides what we need (spiritual gifts, protection, and fellowship with Him).
- God made us different, not divided. Our diversity of gifts should make us complementary, not competitive.
- Division comes from our sinful nature when we desire our own way more than God's way.
- Living a gospel-centered life means being motivated by devotion to Christ rather than by our feelings and fears.
- When we make it about us instead of Jesus, we empty the Cross of its power.

Prayer:

- Thank God that He is our leader and that Jesus unites us.
- Confess areas where we've allowed division or elevated human leaders above Christ.
- Ask for courage to pursue reconciliation where needed.
- Pray for our church to be 'perfectly united in mind and thought' around the gospel.