

Study Guide



*ADULT BIBLE STUDY
IN BASIC ENGLISH*

**1 CORINTHIANS:
THE CHURCH IN A
SECULAR WORLD**

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BAPTISTWAY

Dallas, Texas

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN BASIC ENGLISH
STUDY GUIDE
1 CORINTHIANS: THE CHURCH IN A SECULAR WORLD

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1 Corinthians: The Church in a Secular World

Paul started the church at Corinth on his second missionary journey. Corinth was a large seaport city. There he met Aquila and Priscilla. They were tent makers, and so was Paul. He stayed in their home and worked with them. Paul began preaching in the Jewish meeting place. For awhile the Jewish people listened. Some people in the Jewish meeting place became Christians. Then things changed. Most of the Jewish people began working against Paul. They were saying bad things about him. Paul left them to go to people who were not Jews. He worked in Corinth for at least eighteen months. Many people, Jews and non-Jews, became Christians and were baptized.

Paul wrote this letter to the church that was started while he was in Corinth. He was at Ephesus when he wrote 1 Corinthians. Paul did not start churches and forget them. He prayed for them. He visited them when he could. He wrote letters to help them. Our New Testament includes many of Paul's letters. They were written to different churches and friends. They have become a part of God's Word. Churches today are still helped by Paul's letters.

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1 Corinthians: The Church in a Secular World



Adult Bible Study in Basic English

UNIT 1: DEALING WITH DISHARMONY

Lesson 1

**Why Can't You People
Get Along?**

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

Lesson 2

Remember the Cross
1 Corinthians 1:18-2:2

Lesson 3

**Becoming Spiritually
Mature**
1 Corinthians 2:14-3:16

Lesson 4

Servant Leadership
1 Corinthians 4:1-14, 21

UNIT 1:

DEALING WITH DISHARMONY

Paul started the church at Corinth on his second missionary journey. Corinth was a large seaport city. Paul began preaching in the Jewish meeting place. At first, the Jewish people listened. Some became Christians. Then things changed. Most of the Jewish people began working against Paul. They were saying bad things about him. Paul left them to go to people who were not Jews.

Many people in the Corinthian church were idol worshipers before they met Paul. They had not heard about the one true God who created the earth and everything in it. They had not heard that God sent Jesus to save all people. Some of them had a hard time changing from their old ways. They were not sure what they should do. Their old ways were still in their minds.

Paul did not start churches and forget them. He prayed for them. He visited them when he could. He wrote letters to help them. Paul wrote this letter to the church that was started while he was in Corinth. In this letter, Paul warns about division in the church. He reminds the Corinthians to remember the cross. Paul urges them to keep growing in their faith. He tells them to serve Jesus and each other. Paul's letter teaches that these things will unify them.

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Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

Memory Verse

“God is faithful. He chose you to be joined together with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

—1 Corinthians 1:9

Word List

slum: a poor, run-down neighborhood

secular: worldly or non-Christian

bellows: a hand-held wind maker

tambourine: a small, round drum with metal discs that jingle

Why Can't You People Get Along?

Paul was at Ephesus when he received a letter from the church at Corinth. The letter contained many questions. Paul heard from friends that the church was divided into four groups. Paul wanted to help them.

Greeting, Blessing, Thanksgiving (1 Corinthians 1:1-9)

Paul usually began a letter by telling his name. Next he told who would receive the letter. Then he gave a blessing and expressed thanksgiving. As Paul told his name, he also told his life's work. Paul had been chosen by God to be “a missionary” (v. 1). Today, missionaries go and serve for the same reason. They feel that God has chosen them for that work. Paul also mentioned Sosthenes, his Christian brother and helper in God's work.

His letter is to God's church at Corinth. It also includes all Christians everywhere—all who call upon the name of Jesus. “He is our Lord and their Lord also...” (v. 2). That includes people who are Christians today. We worship the same Lord as Paul and the Corinthian church. Paul had no idea this letter would be read thousands of years later. He never dreamed that people all over the world would read it. Yet we are still reading his words to this church. And we still worship the same Lord!

Christianity is a very open religion. No one person or group has the right to claim that Christ is theirs alone. He reveals Himself in many ways to many peoples. He is our Lord and their Lord also. My husband and I attended a church in a **slum** in India. The church met in a small hut. The church members sat on the floor. They kindly provided three folding chairs for their guests. A young Indian boy played a box organ. Another young boy pumped the **bellows** to keep the organ playing.

**Things To
Think About**

1. Why did Paul often write letters to the churches he started?
2. Why did Paul want Christians to use plain and simple speech about Jesus?
3. Why should Christians be baptized?
4. Have you been baptized?

Tambourines kept the rhythm. The music and fellowship were heavenly. Jesus was their Lord as well as ours. All of us were blessed by our oneness in Christ. We have been called the family of God or the household of God. There is no limit to the size of the family. The family wants everyone to know Jesus Christ as their savior.

Next Paul blessed the people of Corinth. Paul asked that God's favor and peace come to them. This blessing would come through Jesus Christ. In the first nine verses of 1 Corinthians, the name "Jesus Christ" occurs many times. Paul did not want to call their attention to any man. Paul wanted them to focus on the Lord Jesus.

Then Paul gives thanks for God's loving favor. What has God done for them? He has:

.....made their lives rich in every way.

.....given them power to speak for Him.

.....given them good understanding.

.....given them the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

.....chosen them to be joined together with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

God will do the same for every believer today who seeks Him and His way.

Who Are You Following? (1 Corinthians 1:10-17)

Paul now turns his attention to a major problem in the church at Corinth. He deals gently with his fellow believers. He calls them "Christian brothers" (v. 10). He asks with all his heart. He asks in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants them to agree among themselves. Chloe's family told Paul that there are divisions in the church. He has learned that four groups have formed. One group claims to follow Paul. One group claims to follow Apollos. One group claims to follow Peter. And one group claims to follow Christ. This

disturbs Paul greatly.

Paul asks them a number of questions. All of the questions were to be answered negatively. Has Christ been divided? NO! Was Paul put on a cross to die for your sins? NO! Were you baptized in the name of Paul? NO!

Paul then listed the few people he had baptized. First, he remembered Crispus and Gaius. Then he recalled the family of Stephanas. Those were the only people he could remember baptizing. Christ had called Paul to preach the the gospel. Christ had not called him to baptize.

People must hear about Jesus and His saving power first. Paul was the missionary who told them. After they became Christians, any missionary or pastor could baptize them. Baptism is an act of obeying God. It is not a part of salvation. It comes after salvation. We are baptized because Christ has become our Lord. Christ Himself was baptized. We are following His example.

Paul reminded them that he had spoken plainly to them. Paul did not use big-sounding words. He wanted the gospel to be easily understood. The power of the gospel was not in words. The power was in Jesus' death on the cross.

Paul told this church not to be divided into small groups. They were to agree

with one another. They were to tell the good news of Jesus in a simple way. Then everyone would understand. This advice is still good today.

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

1: This letter is from Paul. I have been chosen by God to be a missionary of Jesus Christ. Sosthenes, a Christian brother, writes also.

2: I write to God's church in the city of Corinth. I write to those who belong to Christ Jesus and to those who are set apart by Him and made holy. I write to all the Christians everywhere who call on the name of Jesus Christ. He is our Lord and their Lord also.

3: May you have loving-favor and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

4: I am thankful to God all the time for you. I am thankful for the loving-favor God has given to you because you belong to Christ Jesus.

5: He has made your lives rich in every way. Now you have power to speak for Him. He gave you good understanding.

6: This shows that what I told you about Christ and what He could do for you has been done in your lives.

7: You have the gifts of the Holy Spirit that you need while you wait for the Lord Jesus Christ to come again.

8: Christ will keep you strong until He comes again. No blame will be held against you.

9: God is faithful. He chose you to be joined together with His Son, Jesus Christ

our Lord.

10: Christian brothers, I ask you with all my heart in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to agree among yourselves. Do not be divided into little groups. Think and act as if you all had the same mind.

11: My Christian brothers, I have heard from some of Chloe's family that you are arguing among yourselves.

12: I hear that some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul," and "I am a follower of Apollos," and "I am a follower of Peter," and "I am a follower of Christ."

13: Has Christ been divided? Was Paul put on a cross to die for your sins? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

14: I am thankful to God that I baptized Crispus and Gaius only.

15: No one can say that you were baptized in the name of Paul.

16: I remember I did baptize the family of Stephanas, but I do not remember baptizing any others.

17: Christ did not send me to baptize. He sent me to preach the Good News. I did not use big sounding words when I preached. If I had, the power of the cross of Christ would be taken away.



Lesson
2
Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:2

Memory Verse

“God Himself made the way so you can have new life through Christ Jesus.”

—1 Corinthians 1:30a

Word List

arrogant: being too proud or acting superior

Intently: giving close attention

simple: easy to understand

Things To

Think About

1. Can you recall the time you accepted

Remember the Cross

Paul's pleaded for agreement between the Christians at Corinth. The Corinthians were choosing people as their leaders instead of the Lord. Next, Paul points to the solution. He tells them to look to Christ and his death on the Cross.

God's Wisdom vs. Man's Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:18-21)

Paul was in Athens before he came to Corinth. When he spoke to the “wise” men there, they listened for a while. They liked to hear new things. They listened **intently** as he spoke of the God who made all things. Then he began to speak of Jesus' death and resurrection. They laughed at such an idea. They thought they were too wise to believe such foolishness.

The cross sounds foolish to those who are dying in sin. Some think God's plan is too **simple**. Salvation was always planned to be simple. An Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, lived many years before Jesus came. Isaiah predicted God would humble those who thought they were wise. Isaiah said God would destroy their wisdom.

The preaching of the cross sounds wise to those who are being saved. Believers are glad for a simple plan. Even children can accept it. No money is required. Social standing is not necessary. We could never work enough to earn salvation. God's wisdom comes from the preaching of the cross.

Most Jews have never believed that Jesus' death was God's plan for their salvation. Muslims believe in the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ. But they do not believe He died on the cross. To non-Christians, the preaching of the cross is foolish. They believe that there is no need for a sacrifice for sin. Christians see sacrifices for sin throughout the Old Testament. In the New Testament we learn that Jesus Himself became the sacrifice. His sacrifice was made one time. It was made for all of the sins of all

Jesus?

2. How did Jesus provide new life for believers?

3. What does the world find foolish?

4. What does God find foolish?

people. His sacrifice frees believers from punishment for sin.

What Are You Looking For? (1 Corinthians 1:22-25)

Believing does not depend upon miracles or signs. The Jews were looking for something special to *see*. They saw Jesus perform miracles. They wanted to see more and more miracles. When Jesus began to talk about being God's Son, they turned against Him. Many people today say that Jesus was only a good man. They also say He was a good teacher. They do not acknowledge Him as God's Son. They do not believe that He was sent to save people from their sins.

The Greeks were looking for something to *know*. They wanted worldly wisdom. They thought the answer to all problems could be found in knowledge. They believed getting great knowledge would give life. Any other way was foolishness to them. Some people today think like the Greeks. Getting great knowledge is the goal of their life. Some of them think they are too smart to believe there is a God. They think only foolish people believe God sent His Son to die for them.

Paul paid no attention to what others were thinking. He preached that Christ died on a cross to save people from their sins. Paul knew that God's plan was wiser than man's best plan. Paul knew that God's plan was stronger than people. People cannot say to God, "I know more than You." No man can say to God, "I am smarter than You." How **arrogant** that would be! We cannot know Jesus Christ through the wisdom of the world. True wisdom comes only from God.

God's wonderful plan includes Jews, Greeks, and all people. How do we receive eternal life? We accept the Christ who died on the cross. We let Him be Lord of our lives. His death brings forgiveness of sin to all who believe. Peace, love, and assurance of eternal life are found in God's plan.

No plan of man can give these blessings.

Remember What God Has Done

(1 Corinthians 1:26-2:2)

Paul next asks the Christians to remember who they were before they became believers. The Corinthians had been part of an evil society. They worshiped idols. They practiced all kinds of wickedness. Then they became Christians. Paul understood this. Before he became a believer, Paul killed Christians. After he met the Lord, his life was completely changed.

God shows His power by saving the weak of the earth. He loves even those the world looks down upon. Three reasons are given for this. First, the strong of this world will be shamed. Second, things the world trusts—self, power, knowledge, money—will be destroyed. Third, no person will ever be able to boast before God. No person can ever say to God, "I deserve eternal life." Eternal life is an undeserved gift.

God's plan is for us to have new life in Jesus Christ. Christ is to be our wisdom. He makes us right with God. He sets us apart for God. He makes us holy. He bought us with His blood. He frees us from our sins. How can we boast of anything other than Christ?

Paul himself preached only of Jesus

Christ and his death on the cross. The Good News should always be presented this way.

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:2

18: Preaching about the cross sounds foolish to those who are dying in sin. But it is the power of God to those of us who are being saved from the punishment of sin.

19: The Holy Writings say, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise people. I will put aside the learning of those who think they know a lot." (Isaiah 29:14)

20: Where is the man who is wise? Where is the man who thinks he knows a lot? Where is the man who thinks he has all the answers? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish.

21: In His wisdom, He did not allow man to come to know Him through the wisdom of this world. It pleased God to save men from the punishment of their sins through preaching the Good News. This preaching sounds foolish.

22: The Jews are looking for something special to see. The Greek people are looking for the answer in wisdom.

23: But we preach that Christ died on a cross to save them from their sins. These words are hard for the Jews to listen to. The Greek people think it is foolish.

24: Christ is the power and wisdom of God to those who are chosen to be saved from the punishment of sin for both Jews and Greeks.

25: God's plan looked foolish to men, but it is wiser than the best plans of men. God's

plan which may look weak is stronger than the strongest plans of men.

26: Christian brothers, think who you were when the Lord called you. Not many of you were wise or powerful or born into the family of leaders of a country.

27: But God has chosen what the world calls foolish to shame the wise. He has chosen what the world calls weak to shame what is strong.

28: God has chosen what is weak and foolish of the world, what is hated and not known, to destroy the things the world trusts in.

29: In that way, no man can be proud as he stands before God.

30: God Himself made the way so you can have new life through Christ Jesus. God gave us Christ to be our wisdom. Christ made us right with God and set us apart for God and made us holy. Christ bought us with His blood and made us free from our sins.

31: It is as the Holy Writings say, "If anyone is going to be proud of any thing, he should be proud of the Lord."

1Corinthians 2:1: Christian brothers, when I came to you, I did not preach the secrets of God with big sounding words or make it sound as if I were so wise.

2: I made up my mind that while I was with you I would speak of nothing except Jesus Christ and of His death on the cross.



Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 2:14-
3:16

Memory Verse

“Do you not know
that you are a house of
God and that the Holy
Spirit lives in you?”
—1 Corinthians 2:16

Word List

mature: fully grown
or adult

spiritually minded:
thinking about God
and learning from the
Holy Spirit

zinnias: colorful
flowers

Becoming Spiritually Mature

Are you a growing Christian? Some believers remain baby Christians all of their lives. This is sad. Christians must grow in order to know the full joy and blessing of the Christian faith. A husband and wife in my hometown had a baby who did not grow normally. His mind never developed. His body did not grow. The parents loved their son unconditionally. But they could do nothing to help their son grow. God, our heavenly Father, has provided many ways for Christians to grow. We do not have to remain baby Christians. There were many in the church at Corinth who had not grown. Let’s see what Paul told them.

Only Those Who Are Spiritual Understand the Spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:14-16)

First, a person must be **spiritually minded** to grow in God’s ways. Christians have the Holy Spirit living in them. He is our teacher. The Holy Spirit told Paul what to say. He helped people to understand what Paul said. Some people did not listen to the Holy Spirit. They did not understand Paul’s preaching. They even said that Paul’s words were foolish. Every believer has the Holy Spirit as a helper.

Christianity is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As we grow in that relationship, we have better understanding. Our goal is to become full-grown Christians. We want to have Christ’s thoughts more and more.

Some of You Have Not Been Growing (1 Corinthians 3:1-5)

Babies need special foods as they grow. First they drink milk. Next they eat soft food. Finally they can eat solid food. This is natural. Newly born Christians begin a similar process. They must grow in order to become **mature** Christians. Some of the Corinthian Christians had remained babies. Paul could not speak

Things To
Think About

1. Who is deserving of worship? Preachers? Men? Leaders? God?
2. How should we build our lives in order to please God?
3. Who is responsible for our growth as Christians?
4. What are some things you can do to become more mature in Christ?

to them as growing Christians. He had to talk to them like babies. He had to continue giving them the very simple truths of the gospel. Because they were not growing, they were making many mistakes. They were very childish. They often argued. They were all following different leaders. Preachers are God's servants. God has given them the gift of preaching. The believers needed to stop arguing about their human leaders. They needed to continue learning and growing in God's way.

Planting, Watering, Growing (1 Corinthians 3:6-9a)

Growing in Christ is compared to the growth of plants. First, the seed must be put into the ground. That was Paul's God-given job. He moved from place to place preaching the gospel and starting churches. He was probably the first one to tell the Corinthians about Jesus Christ. Planted seeds must be watered in order to grow. Apollos was a gifted teacher. He "watered" the new Christians. He taught them more about Jesus and His love. Who caused the growth? God is the source of all Christian growth. My husband grows beautiful **zinnias**. He can plant and water. But he cannot make a zinnia seed. He cannot make the seed grow. The growth comes from God's provision. God provides the seed, the sun, and the soil. God, the Creator, is the important one. God planned for growth in all of His creation.

We must look to God for the growth in our lives. Preachers and Christian teachers can help us. It is most important that we let God speak to us. We must study His Word. We must stay in contact with Him through prayer. We should learn to trust Him and obey His commands. We should let His Holy Spirit direct our lives.

Building a Strong Building

(1 Corinthians 9b-16)

Next Paul compares Christians to a building. Every building needs a foundation. Paul was glad that God let him tell the Corinthians about Jesus. Jesus is the foundation stone. Every Christian's life is built on Jesus Christ. We must build carefully on this foundation. Our lives should be lived for the praise of God. Our good works should be done for the praise of God. Works done for the Lord are like gold, silver, and beautiful stones. These works are strong, pure, and beautiful. Works done for man's praise or works poorly done are like wood, grass, or straw. These works are weak and easily destroyed. Each man's work will become known. When the works are tested by fire, what will happen? The wood, grass and straw will burn. The gold, silver, and beautiful stones will survive the fire. Christians who build rightly on the foundation of Jesus Christ will receive blessings. They will hear the Lord say, "Well done." Those who build poorly will be saved, but there will be no blessing. Even though some works are burned, the Christian is saved. His trust in Jesus saves him even though he did a poor job building on the foundation. The foundation is sure. We are not saved by

our works. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

Christians need to remember that God's Spirit lives in them. God's Spirit will help them grow to be like Jesus. We want our works to be pleasing to God. All of us would like to hear God say, "Well done." What a wonderful thing to hear when we actually see our Lord!

1 Corinthians 2:14-3:16

14: But the person who is not a Christian does not understand these words from the Holy Spirit. He thinks they are foolish. He cannot understand them because he does not have the Holy Spirit to help him understand.

15: The full-grown Christian understands all things, and yet he is not understood.

16: For who has the thoughts of the Lord? Who can tell Him what to do? But we have the thoughts of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:1: Christian brothers, I could not speak to you as to full-grown Christians. I spoke to you as men who have not obeyed the things you have been taught. I spoke to you as if you were baby Christians.

2: My teaching was as if I were giving you milk to drink. I could not give you meat because you were not ready for it. Even yet you are not able to have anything but milk.

3: You still live as men who are not Christians. When you are jealous and fight with each other, you are still living in sin and acting like sinful men in the world.

4: When one says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I am a follower of Apollos," does not this sound like the talk of baby Christians?

5: Who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only servants owned by God. He gave us gifts to preach His Word. And because of that, you put your trust in Christ.

6: I planted the seed. Apollos watered it, but

it was God Who kept it growing.

7: This shows that the one who plants or the one who waters is not the important one. God is the important One. He makes it grow.

8: The one who plants and the one who waters are alike. Each one will get his own pay.

9: For we work together with God. You are God's field. You are God's building also.

10: Through God's loving-favor to me, I laid the stones on which the building was to be built. I did it like one who knew what he was doing. Now another person is building on it. Each person who builds must be careful how he builds on it.

11: Jesus Christ is the Stone on which other stones for the building must be laid. It can be only Christ.

12: Now if a man builds on the Stone with gold or silver or beautiful stones, or if he builds with wood or grass or straw,

13: each man's work will become known. There will be a day when it will be tested by fire. The fire will show what kind of work it is.

14: If a man builds on work that lasts, he will receive his pay.

15: If his work is burned up, he will lose it. Yet he himself will be saved as if he were going through a fire.

16: Do you not know that you are a house of God and that the Holy Spirit lives in you?



Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 4:1-14,

21

Memory Verse

“A servant must be faithful to his owner. This is expected of him.”

—1 Corinthians 4:2

Word List

fool (verb): to trick someone, to make something that is not true seem true

fool (noun): a silly or stupid person

foolish: acting like a silly or stupid person

meekness: humble or willing to serve without being noticed

Servant Leadership

Paul continues to talk about unity in the church. A divided church has troubles. When we all look to the death of Christ on the cross, problems can be solved. In Him we all become one. We become servants of Christ and servants of each other.

How Are We to Think of Christian Fellow Workers?

(1 Corinthians 4:1-2)

Paul advised the Christians that he was an equal with Peter and Apollos. They were each servants of God. One was not above the other. They were all sent to share the secrets of God. What were these secrets? One was that eternal life comes through Jesus' death on the cross. Another was that Jesus is the savior of all people. Jesus died for Jews and Gentiles alike. Very few people knew these truths at that time.

As servants, we are expected to be faithful to God. He has shown His love for us by giving His son. He is always faithful. We also need to be faithful.

God Alone Can Judge Correctly and Fairly

(1 Corinthians 4:3-6)

Are you concerned about what people think of you? Most of us are. But how important is this? Paul says that you can't trust the opinions of others. Only God knows the heart. Only God can judge correctly. God's judgment is the most important one.

Does it matter what we think of ourselves? Paul says that does not mean much. We can **fool** ourselves into thinking we are fairly good. Some people fool themselves into thinking they are really great! They think they are great because of their knowledge or their wealth. Perhaps their God-given talent makes them think they are great. Our hearts can fool us. Our hearts cannot fool God. He looks into our hearts. He sees what is right

sari: a piece of clothing for women

Things To Think About

1. How does criticism affect the church?
2. Read Proverbs 15:1. What advice can the church learn from this verse?
3. What kind of things keep us from serving God fully?
4. How should we respond to those who do evil to us?

and what is wrong.

Should we judge others? We should be very slow to do so. The Lord will do this when He comes. The hidden things in every heart will be brought to the light. The Lord will also know and reveal *why* we hid our thoughts and actions. He will give each person his share of praise. Only God can judge fairly. We should not set ourselves up as judges.

We are to give all of God's servants proper respect. We can recognize the different gifts that God gives His people. We should encourage people to develop the gifts God gives them. Choosing favorite teachers or pastors is immature. Being critical of others is wrong. Christians must give respect to all members of the church. The unity of the church is broken when this does not happen.

Boasting is Foolish (1 Corinthians 4:7-12a)

Paul reminds the Corinthians that God has given them everything they have. Since this is true, why do they boast? Why do they act like God did not give it to them? Evidently, some of them were rich and lived like kings. Paul knew that following Christ was not a way to become wealthy. He knew from experience. It certainly was not that way for him or his friends. He and his co-workers lived in great danger. The Corinthians lived in ease. The missionaries were considered **fools** for Christ. The Corinthians were considered wise and respected people. Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus. Even there, he and his friends were often hungry and thirsty. Their clothes were worn out. They had no home. Paul had never asked people for money. Paul reminded the Corinthians that he always worked to meet his needs.

Mother Teresa gave the world a splendid example of the servant spirit. She lived with great **meekness** before God. She wore a cheap **sari**. She walked among the poorest of the poor

in India. She rescued babies. She taught children. She helped the dying in the name of Jesus. She became known around the world. Still she stayed humble. She stayed dedicated to the work the Lord gave her. She was criticized for her beliefs against abortion and divorce. Yet she smiled and continued her work. When someone gave her an expensive car, she sold it. She used the money to start a colony for people with leprosy. She won the Nobel Peace Prize. Again, she used the money to help the poor.

Returning Good for Evil (1 Corinthians 4:12b-14, 21)

When people spoke against Paul and his friends, they gave kind words in return. When people hurt them, they said nothing. They continued God's work no matter what people said or did. Paul did not write this to shame the Corinthians. He wrote it to help them know what to do. It is not easy to return good for evil. We must depend upon the Lord to give us strength to do so.

Paul also wanted to assure the Corinthians of his love. He called them "much-loved children" (v.14). He wanted to show them the right way. They should not have divided the church into groups. They should be willing servants of the Lord. He was hoping to come to see them

soon. He didn't want to be angry about divisions. He didn't want them to have problems in their church. He hoped they would follow his advice. Then he would be able to come with "love and a gentle spirit"(v.21).

1 Corinthians 4:1-14, 21

1: Think of us as servants who are owned by Christ. It is our job to share the secrets of God.

2: A servant must be faithful to his owner. This is expected of him.

3: It is not the most important thing to me what you or any other people think of me. Even what I think of myself does not mean much.

4: As for me, my heart tells me I am not guilty of anything. But that does not prove I am free from guilt. It is the Lord Who looks into my life and says what is wrong.

5: Do not be quick to say who is right or wrong. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring into the light the things that are hidden in men's hearts. He will show why men have done these things. Every man will receive from God the thanks he should have.

6: Christian brothers, I have used Apollos and myself to show you what I am talking about. This is to help you so you will not think more of men than what God's Word will allow. Never think more of one of God's servants than another.

7: Who made you better than your brother? Or what do you have that has not been given to you? If God has given you everything, why do you have pride? Why do you act as if He did not give it to you?

8: You are full. You are rich. You live like

kings and we do not. I wish you were kings and we could be leaders with you.

9: I think that God has made a show of us missionaries. We are the last and the least among men. We are like men waiting to be put to death. The whole world, men and angels alike, are watching us.

10: We are thought of as fools because of Christ. But you are thought of as wise Christians! We are weak. You are strong. People respect you. They have no respect for us.

11: To this hour we are hungry and thirsty, and our clothes are worn out. People hurt us. We have no homes.

12: We work with our hands to make a living. We speak kind words to those who speak against us. When people hurt us, we say nothing.

13: When people say bad things about us, we answer with kind words. People think of us as dirt that is worth nothing and as the worst thing on earth to this day.

14: I do not write these things to shame you. I am doing this to help you know what you should do. You are my much-loved children.

1 Corinthians 4:21: What do you want? Do you want me to come with a stick to whip you? Or do you want me to come with love and a gentle spirit?

1 Corinthians: The Church in a Secular World

Unit 2

Adult Bible Study in Basic English

UNIT 2: LIFE IN THE WORLD

Lesson 5
Living as Christians
1 Corinthians 5:1-11,
6:9-20

Lesson 6
Marriage-Good?
Singleness-Good?
1 Corinthians 7:1-17,
25-35

Lesson 7
Wrestling with Life's
Gray Areas
1 Corinthians 8:1-13,
9:19-26, 10:14-33

UNIT 2: LIFE IN THE WORLD

People who know the one true God should live very differently. They should live differently than those who do not know God. Yet it is easy for Christians to follow the world's ways. We live in an evil world just as the Corinthian Christians did. Americans have seen much evil in the last fifty years. Today, many unmarried men and women live together. They think this is an honorable relationship. This is not God's plan. Here is another example of evil in the world. More and more marriages are ending in divorce. A famous movie star has married eight times. Again, this is not God's plan. People are abusing their bodies with alcohol and drugs. God surely does not want us to do that.

In this unit Paul talks about how Christians should live in an evil world. Christians in Corinth had accepted Jesus and received forgiveness for past sins. They still had many questions about how they should act now. They did not understand their freedom in Christ. Could they eat meat that had been offered to idols? Should they get married? What if a wife is a Christian and her husband is not? Could they be friends with idol worshippers?

Paul discusses the need for Christians to make their bodies holy. Our bodies should be a pure place for for God's Holy Spirit to live. Paul also answered questions about marriage. In this letter, he talked about wisely using our freedom in Christ. We are free to do all things. However, we should not do them if it causes a weak brother to sin. This advice helps us know how to live and act today.

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Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 5:1-11,
6:9-20

Memory Verse

“God bought you with
a great price. So honor
God with your body.
You belong to Him.”
—1 Corinthians 6:20

Word List

immature: not ma-
ture, like a baby or
child

unleavened: contain-
ing no yeast

Passover: a Jewish
holiday and celebra-
tion

gender: refers
whether one is male or
female, a person’s sex

Living as Christians

People from many countries lived in Corinth. It was a large city. Sailors, business men, and visitors often stopped there. Many people in Corinth worshiped Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. In Corinth, there was a great temple in honor of Aphrodite. The temple was a place of idol worship and sexual sins. Public drunkenness was common. The Corinthian Christians may have worshiped there before they became Christians. They may have taken part in this sinful worship. Remember that some of them were still **immature** Christians. This made it easier for them to return to sinful ways.

A Member’s Shameful Sin (1 Corinthians 5:1-5)

Paul had heard of a horrible sex sin being committed by a church member. This man was living with his father’s wife. He lived as though he were her husband. She was probably his step-mother. We suppose that his father was dead. Paul was very upset about this. He was also upset about the church’s attitude toward this sin. They were accepting it. Instead, they should feel sad about this sin. They should talk to the man.

Paul was very sure about what they should do. He was not there in body. He told the church he was very much there in spirit. They were to call a church meeting and send the man away. Let him live in the devil’s way. Perhaps he would repent of his sin. Then his spirit would be saved. The spirit is more important than the body. The spirit lives forever; the body dies and decays.

The Danger of Allowing Evil in the Church

(1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Paul next warned the Corinthians of their pride. How could

Things To Think About

1. Why should you make your body a living place for the Holy Spirit?
2. Do you see the same sins today as those in Corinth?
3. Why should we lovingly correct those who are sinning?
4. How does sin affect the whole church?

they be proud of their church? Shameful sins were being committed. Sin is like yeast. Just a little yeast makes a whole loaf of bread rise. Accepting sin in the church will affect the whole body. Some church members may think it is all right for them to sin also. Others may get disgusted and leave the group. Christians should greatly desire to be clean from sin. When David the king sinned, he prayed to God, "Wash me inside and out from my wrong-doing and make me clean from my sin...Make me hear joy and happiness" (Psalm 51:2, 8a). Continuing in sin sets a poor example. It also results in a loss of joy. Joy returns when sins are forgiven.

Yeast may have reminded Paul of the **Passover**. Every year Jews celebrate God's bringing them out of Egypt. Jewish women remove all yeast from their houses. Only **unleavened** bread is eaten. Perhaps Paul said to Christians, "You should celebrate also. The Lamb of God brought you out of sin. Let Him cleanse your heart." A cleansed heart is like unleavened bread. The yeast of sin is gone.

Relating to People Who Are Not Christians (1 Corinthians 5:9-11)

Christians should set an example to the world. Worldly people do not know the Lord. They may sin in many ways. Christians should not. Some people may worship false gods. Christians should not. We cannot avoid contact with worldly people. In fact, we should show them a better way to live. They need to know about forgiveness of sin. They must see something different in a Christian's life. Why would anyone desire Christianity if it is "like the world?" If sin is a part of a Christian's life, God's power is not shown. This causes the church to suffer. This makes outreach to non-Christians difficult.

The Body Is to Be Holy **(1 Corinthians 6:9-14)**

Paul lists people who have no place in in God's holy nation. He lists those who do sex sins. He lists those who worship false gods. He lists those who are not faithful in marriage. He lists men who act like women. He also lists people who have sex with their own **gender**. Then Paul lists those who steal. Paul adds those who always want more of everything. He lists those who get drunk. He lists those who say bad things about others. Finally, Paul lists those who take things that don't belong to them (1 Corinthians 6:9b-10).

These are exactly the sins that some of the Corinthians did before they became Christians. Now they are newborn believers. They need to learn to live God-like lives. They have great freedom in Christ. Christians should not use their freedom in a way that hurts themselves. They should not hurt the church or others.

Our Bodies Belong to the Lord **(1 Corinthians 6:15-20)**

Our bodies should be used in the way God intended. We should not use our bodies for sinning. When Christ lives within us, our bodies are a part of Christ. Sex sins are very damaging. Paul says that people who misuse sex are hurting themselves. Their own bodies are being

sinned against. We have seen this proven today with those who have AIDS. Others are also being hurt. Many innocent people are being infected. God made our bodies to be living places for the Holy Spirit. When we become Christians, we no longer belong to ourselves. We belong to God. God bought us with a great price—the death of His Son on the cross. We should honor God with our bodies.

Many Christians today are wearing wrist bands with the initials W.W.J.D. on them. These letters mean "What Would Jesus Do?" These bands remind us to act like Jesus. People who wear these bands want people to know that Jesus is their Lord. We show that we are a part of the body of Christ in many ways. Most importantly, our words and actions should show that we belong to Him.

1 Corinthians 5:1-11, 6:9-20

- 1:** Someone has told me about a sex sin among you. It is so bad that even the people who do not know God would not do it. I have been told that one of the men is living with his father's wife as if she were his wife.
- 2:** Instead of being sorry, you are proud of yourselves. The man who is living like that should be sent away from you.
- 3:** I am far from you. Even if I am not there, my spirit is with you. I have already said that the man is guilty of this sin. I am saying this as if I were there with you.
- 4:** Call a meeting of the church, I will be with you in spirit. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His power,
- 5:** hand this person over to the devil. His body is to be destroyed so his spirit may be

saved on the day the Lord comes again.

6: It is not good for you to be proud of the way things are going in your church. You know a little yeast makes the whole loaf of bread rise.

7: Clean out the old yeast. Then you will be new bread with none of the old yeast in you. The Jews killed lambs when they left Egypt. Christ is our lamb. He has already been killed as a gift on the altar to God for us.

8: Bread with yeast in it is like being full of sin and hate. Let us eat this supper together with bread that has no yeast in it. This bread is pure and true.

9: I told you in my letter not to keep on being with people who do any kind of sex sins.

10: I was not talking about people doing sex sins who are bad people of this world. I was not talking about people of this world who always want to get more or those who get things in a wrong way or those who worship false gods. To get away from people like that you would have to leave this world!

11: What I wrote was that you should not keep on being with a person who calls himself a Christian if he does any kind of sex sins. You should not even eat with a person who says he is a Christian but always wants to get more of everything or uses bad language or who gets drunk or gets things in a wrong way.

1 Corinthians 6:9: Do you not know that sinful men will have no place in the holy nation of God? Do not be fooled. A person who does sex sins, or who worships false gods, or who is not faithful in marriage, or men who act like women, or people who do sex sins with their own sex, will have no place in the holy nation of God.

10: Also those who steal, or those who always want to get more of everything, or who get drunk, or who say bad things about

others, or take things that are not theirs, will have no place in the holy nation of God.

11: Some of you were like that. But now your sins are washed away. You were set apart for God-like living to do His work. You were made right with God through our Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of our God.

12: I am allowed to do all things, but not everything is good for me to do! Even if I am free to do all things, I will not do them if I think it would be hard for me to stop when I know I should.

13: Food was meant for the stomach. The stomach needs food, but God will bring to an end both food and the stomach. The body was not meant for sex sins. It was meant to work for the Lord. The Lord is for our body.

14: God raised the Lord from death. He will raise us from death by His power also.

15: Do you not know that your bodies are a part of Christ Himself? Am I to take a part of Christ and make it a part of a woman who sells the use of her body? No! Never!

16: Do you not know that a man who joins himself to a woman who sells the use of her body becomes a part of her? The Holy Writings say, "The two will become one."

17: But if you join yourself to the Lord, you are one with Him in spirit.

18: Have nothing to do with sex sins! Any other sin that a man does, does not hurt his own body. But the man who does a sex sin sins against his own body.

19: Do you not know that your body is a house of God where the Holy Spirit lives? God gave you His Holy Spirit. Now you belong to God. You do not belong to yourselves.

20: God bought you with a great price. So honor God with your body. You belong to Him.



Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 7:1-17,
25-35

Memory Verse

“While you live in this world, live as if the world has no hold on you.”

—1 Corinthians 7:31a

Word List

opinion: someone’s personal belief, not a provable fact

companionship: friendship

single: not married

spouse: a husband or wife

stressed: having much to do, hurried, worried

Marriage-Good? Singleness-Good?

As we study this lesson, we need to remember two things. First, Jesus said that He would return. The early followers thought He might return in their lifetime. Human time is very different from God’s time. “With the Lord one day is as 1,000 years, and 1,000 years are as one day” (2 Peter 3:8). God will keep His promise in His time. Jesus will return. No person knows when. Only God the Father knows.

Second, Paul admits that much of his advice is his **opinion**. Only when he talked about divorce did he use God’s words (v. 10). Jesus said, “The two [husband and wife] will become one...Let no man divide what God has put together” (Mark 10:8a, 9). On most questions Paul expresses his **opinion**.

Should We Marry or Not? (1 Corinthians 7:1-9)

The first question Paul answered was about marriage. The Corinthians believed Jesus would return soon. If He was returning soon, should they get married? Almost everyone in the Jewish culture married. They were probably surprised when Paul praised those who did not marry.

He quickly added that marriage was acceptable. He knew that most people wanted the **companionship** of married life. Paul said that staying unmarried may lead them to commit sex sins. If that was true, it would be better for them to marry.

If believers choose to marry, they should seek to please their mate. The wife’s body belongs to the husband. The husband’s body belongs to the wife. They should live together as husband and wife. The husband and wife could agree to stop sexual relations for a period of time. This would be only if they felt the Lord wanted them to set aside special time for prayer. Then they

widows: women whose husbands have died

widowers: men whose wives have died

Things To Think About

1. How can you serve the members of your family?

2. If God should will singleness for your life, would you be willing to accept it?

3. What does it mean to live in expectation of Jesus' return?

should resume sexual relations in their marriage..

Paul was a **single** man. We do not know whether he had ever married or not. Some think that he might have. They think his wife may have died. Perhaps she left him when he became a Christian. He felt that single people could better serve the Lord *if* God gives them the gift of singleness. He reminded them that, "...this is what I think"(v. 6). He is not telling them what they must do. He knew that married people also have God-given gifts. Yet he advises the unmarried, **widows**, and **widowers** to stay unmarried. Still they should remarry if being unmarried caused them to sin.

What About Those Who Are Already Married?

(1 Corinthians 7:10-17)

Paul speaks to the married with the authority of the Lord. Jesus spoke about marriage and divorce. Paul knew what Jesus had said. Paul says a wife should not leave her husband. If she does, she should not remarry. Women could not legally divorce their husbands in Paul's time. She must stay unmarried or return to her husband. Paul said the husband should not divorce his wife either. Men could legally do so. Paul says they should not.

What about a Christian whose **spouse** is not a Christian? Paul thinks there should be no divorce if the non-Christian **spouse** wants to stay married. The Christian **spouse** can have a godly influence upon the home. Keeping the home together will bless the children, too. Perhaps the entire family may become Christians.

The unbelieving **spouse** who wants to leave should leave. If the unbelieving **spouse** stayed, the home would not be peaceful.

Stay as You Are (1 Corinthians 7:25-35)

Paul gives advice to both the married and unmarried. He tells them he thinks they should stay as they are now. The married should stay married. The unmarried should stay single. Getting married will add problems he says. He returns to the idea that the time is short. They should live like the world had no power over them.

Paul wanted all Christians to put the Lord first in everything. The things of the world should not take the place of the Lord. Paul thought that single people had more time to do God's work. They did not have to worry about pleasing a husband or wife.

Amy Carmichael was a missionary. When she was young, several men asked her to marry them. After prayer, she decided it was God's will for her to stay single. Because she stayed single she was available to do God's work. She served as a missionary in India for fifty-five years. She helped hundreds of children.

Bill Wallace felt called to stay single. He served for seventeen years as a missionary doctor in China. When the Chinese Communists came, they falsely charged him with spying. They killed him. God gave both of these missionaries the gift of singleness. They used the gift to fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

Husbands and wives also contribute greatly to the Lord's work. The

husband and wife can minister together in many ways. They have companionship. They share the work of living and ministering. God can be glorified in their service, their marriage, and their family.

Paul says many times that people who want to marry should marry. Singleness or married life—both are gifts from God. Both should be used to glorify Him.

1 Corinthians 7:1-17, 25-35

1: You asked me some questions in your letter. This is my answer. It is good if a man does not get married.

2: But because of being tempted to sex sins, each man should get married and have his own wife. Each woman should get married and have her own husband.

3: The husband should please his wife as a husband. The wife should please her husband as a wife.

4: The wife is not the boss of her own body. It belongs to the husband. And in the same way, the husband is not the boss of his own body. It belongs to the wife.

5: Do not keep from each other that which belongs to each other in marriage unless you agree for awhile so you can use your time to pray. Then come together again or the devil will tempt you to do that which you know you should not do.

6: This is what I think. I am not saying you must do it.

7: I wish every one were as I am, but each has his own gift from God. One has one gift. Another has another gift.

8: This is what I say to those who are not married and to women whose husbands have died. It is good if you do not get married. I am not married.

9: But if you are not able to keep from doing

that which you know is wrong, get married. It is better to get married than to have such strong sex desires.

10: I have this to say to those who are married. These words are from the Lord. A wife should not leave her husband,

11: but if she does leave him, she should not get married to another man. It would be better for her to go back to her husband. The husband should not divorce his wife.

12: I have this to say. These words are not from the Lord. If a Christian husband has a wife who is not a Christian, and she wants to live with him, he must not divorce her.

13: If a Christian wife has a husband who is not a Christian, and he wants to live with her, she must not divorce him.

14: The husband who is not a Christian is set apart from the sin of the world because of his Christian wife. The wife who is not a Christian is set apart from the sin of the world because of her Christian husband. In this way, the lives of the children are not unclean because of sin, they are clean.

15: If the one who is not a Christian wants to leave, let that one go. The Christian husband or wife should not try to make the other one stay. God wants you to live in peace.

16: Christian wife, how do you know you will not help your husband to become a Christian? Or Christian husband, how do you know you will not help your wife to become a Christian?

17: Everyone should live the life the Lord gave to him. He should live as he was when he became a Christian. This is what I teach in all the churches.

1 Corinthians 7:25: I have no word from the Lord about women or men who have never been married. I will tell you what I think. You can trust me because the Lord has given me His loving-kindness.

26: I think, because of the troubles that are coming, it is a good thing for a person not to get married.

27: Are you married to a wife? Do not try to get a divorce. If you are not married, do not look for a wife.

28: If you do get married, you have not sinned. If a woman who is not married gets married, it is no sin. But being married will add problems. I would like to have you free from such problems.

29: I mean this, Christian brothers. The time is short. A married man should use his time as if he did not have a wife.

30: Those who have sorrow should keep on working as if they had no sorrow. Those who have joy should keep on working as if there was no time for joy. Those who buy should have no time to get joy from what they have.

31: While you live in this world, live as if the world has no hold on you. The way of this world will soon be gone.

32: I want you to be free from the cares of this world. The man who is not married can spend his time working for the Lord and pleasing Him.

33: The man who is married cares for the things of the world. He wants to please his wife.

34: Married women and women who have never been married are different. The woman who has never been married can spend her time working for the Lord. She wants to please the Lord with her body and spirit. The woman who is married cares for the things of the world. She wants to please her husband.

35: I am saying these things to help you. I am not trying to keep you from getting married. I want you to do what is best. You should work for Him without other things taking your time.



Lesson
7
Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 8:1-13,
9:19-26, 10:14-33

Memory Verse

“So if you eat or drink
or whatever you do,
do everything to
honor God.”

—1 Corinthians 10:31

Word List

pagans: people who
worship idols or false
gods

Things To Think About

1. Would you be
willing to give up
something you like to
do in order to keep
from offending a
weaker Christian?

Wrestling with Life's Gray Areas

A gray area is an idea or action that is confusing. It may seem right or wrong. In Corinth, sacrifices to idols were common. The Corinthians were confused about meat that was sacrificed to idols. Should they eat such meats? Some did and some didn't. This was a gray area for them.

Knowledge: Is That All There Is? (1 Corinthians 8:1-13)

Paul warns the Corinthians that they must not be proud of their knowledge. What did they know? They knew that an idol was not a god at all. They also knew that the Greek and Roman gods were imaginary. These gods did not exist. Most importantly, they knew that there was one true God. This one true God made everything. Everything He made was good.

Corinthian Christians knew these idols were not alive. Nothing was wrong with the sacrificed meat. In fact, the best meat was offered to these idols. There was one problem though. Baby Christians might be confused. They might feel eating this meat was wrong. The weak Christian might think the Lord did not want him to eat the meat. If he ate, it became a sin to him.

Paul says we should love weaker Christian brothers. This is the most important thing. Paul said there is nothing wrong with meat offered to idols. However, you should not eat it if it causes your brother to sin. Paul did not want to hurt his brother. He said he would give up meat to protect his brother.

Free People are Slave People (1 Corinthians 9:19-26)

Paul was a free Roman citizen. Even so, he called himself a slave to everyone. How can you be both free and slave? When we make Jesus the Lord of our lives, we become slaves to Him. Yet in being His slave, there is great freedom. We are freed from the penalty of sin. Our spirits are freed from guilt. God gives us

2. Why do we observe the Lord's supper?

3. What makes the Christian life a race like no other?

forgiveness, joy, peace, and the abundant life.

Paul became a slave to everyone for a purpose. He wanted to lead them to the Lord. He became like a Jew to tell the Jews about Jesus. He became like a Gentile to tell the Gentiles about Jesus. To the weak, he became weak. We need to relate to people as they are. Then they will better receive what we have to say. All must be done in love. In some cases, this may not be easy.

Our lives are like a race, Paul says. It takes effort and much training to run a race. The Christian may have a hard race. However, there is great gain. In an earthly race only one person gets a prize. The Christian's prize is available to all believers. The earthly prize has little value. The Christian's prize has great value. We become like Jesus. We live an abundant life on earth. What wonderful prizes!

Pagan Feast or the Lord's Supper?

(1 Corinthians 10:14-22)

Early Christians ate the Lord's supper in their homes. Christians today eat the Lord's supper in church. We use the fruit of the vine (grape juice) to represent Jesus' blood. We use the bread to represent His broken body. We do this to remember Jesus' great sacrifice. We do this to remember the price of our forgiveness. In the Old Testament, animals were sacrificed to gain forgiveness. Today, animals do not need to be killed on an altar. God Himself provided the highest sacrifice on the cross.

The pagans brought their animal sacrifices. They offered them to demons, not the one true God. To share in this practice would hurt the Christians. They could not take part in pagan practices and be a true follower of the Lord. Paul said, "You cannot eat at the Lord's table and at the demon's table" (v. 21b).

Shall We Accept the Invitation of a Non-Christian to Dinner?

(1 Corinthians 10:23-33)

Paul had already said the Corinthians could eat meat offered to idols. Only if a weak brother expressed fear about eating it should they not do so. The same was true if they were guests in a non-Christian home. They could eat the meat set before them. But, they should still be considerate of the weak Christian. Let all eating and drinking be done for the glory of the Lord.

Paul was willing to give up all of his rights. This might help others to become believers. He wanted good relationships with all people. He wanted everyone to be saved from the punishment of sin.

1 Corinthians 8:1-13, 9:19-26, 10:14-33

1: I want to write about food that has been given as a gift in worship to a false god. We all know something about it. Knowing about it makes one feel important. But love makes one strong.

2: The person who thinks he knows all the answers still has a lot to learn.

3: But if he loves God, he is known by God also.

4: What about food that has been given as a gift to a false god in worship? Is it right? We know that a false god is not a god at all. There is only one God! There is no other.

5: Men have thought there are many such gods and lords in the sky and on the earth.

6: But we know there is only one God. He is the Father. All things are from Him. He made us for Himself. There is one Lord. He is Jesus. Christ. He made all things. He

keeps us alive.

7: Not all men know this. They have given food as a gift in worship to a god as if the god were alive. Some men have done this all their lives. If they eat such food, their hearts tell them it is wrong.

8: Food will not, bring us near to God. We are rid worse if we do not eat it, or we are no better if we eat it.

9: Since you are free to do as you please, be careful that this does not hurt a weak Christian.

10: A Christian who is weak may see you eat food in a place where it has been given as a gift to false god in worship. Since he sees you eat it, he will eat it also.

11: You may make the weak Christian fall into sin by what you have done. Remember, he is a Christian brother for whom Christ died.

12: When you sin against a weak Christian by making him do what is wrong, you sin against Christ.

13: So then, if eating meat makes my Christian brother trip and fall, I will never eat it again. I do not want to make my Christian brother sin.

1 Corinthians 9:19: No man has any hold on me, but I have made myself a workman owned by all. I do this so I might lead more people to Christ.

20: I became as a Jew to the Jews so I might lead them to Christ. There are some who live by obeying the Jewish Law. I became as one who lives by obeying the Jewish Law so I might lead them to Christ.

21: There are some who live by not obeying the Jewish law. I became as one who lives by not obeying the Jewish law so I might lead them to Christ. This does not mean that I do not obey God's Law. I obey the teachings of Christ.

22: Some are weak. I have become weak so I might lead them to Christ. I have become like every person so in every way I might lead some to Christ.

23: Everything I do, I do to get the Good News to men. I want to have a part in this work.

24: You know that only one person gets a prize for being in a race even if many people run. You must run so you will win the prize.

25: Everyone who runs in a race does many things so his body will be strong. He does it to get a prize that will soon be worth nothing, but we work for a prize that will last forever.

26: In the same way, I run straight for the place at the end of the race. I fight to win. I do not beat the air.

1 Corinthians 10:14: My dear friends, keep away from the worship of false gods.

15: I am speaking to you who are able to understand. See if what I am saying is true.

16: When we give thanks for the fruit of the vine at the Lord's supper, are we not sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread we eat at the Lord's supper, are we not sharing in the body of Christ?

17: There is one bread, and many of us Christians make up the body of Christ. All of us eat from that bread.

18: Look at the Jews. They ate the animals that were brought to God as gifts in worship and put on the altar. Did this not show they were sharing with God?

19: What do I mean? Am I saying that a false god or the food brought to it in worship is worth anything?

20: No, not at all! I am saying that the people who do not know God bring gifts of animals in worship. But they have given them to demons, not to God. You do not want to have any share with demons.

21: You cannot drink from the cup of the

Lord and from the cup of demons. You cannot eat at the Lord's table and at the demon's table.

22: Are we trying to make the Lord jealous? Do we think we are stronger than the Lord?

23: We are allowed to do anything but not everything is good for us to do. We are allowed to do anything but not all things help us grow strong as Christians.

24: Do not work only for your own good. Think of what you can do for others.

25: Eat any meat that is sold in the stores. Ask no questions about it. Then your heart will not say it is wrong.

26: The Holy Writings say, "The earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord (Psalm 24:1)

27: If a person who is not a Christian wants you to eat with him, and you want to go, eat anything that is on the table. Ask no questions about the food. Then your heart will not say it is wrong.

28: But if someone says, "This meat has been given as a gift to false gods in worship," do not eat it. In that way, it will not hurt the faith of the one who told you and his heart will have peace.

29: How the other person feels is important. We are not free to do things that will hurt another person.

30: If I can give thanks to God for my food, why should anyone say that I am wrong about eating food I can give thanks for?

31: So if you eat or drink or whatever you do, do every thing to honor God.

32: Do nothing that would make trouble for a Greek or for a Jew or for the church of God.

33: I want to please everyone in all that I do. I am not thinking of myself. I want to do what is best for them so they may be saved from the punishment of sin.

◊ 1 Corinthians: The Church in a Secular World ◊

Unit 3

Adult Bible Study in Basic English

**UNIT 3:
LIFE IN THE
CHURCH**

Lesson 8

**What Our Worship Says
1 Corinthians 11:2-16**

Lesson 9

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Supper?
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1 Corinthians 15:3-
20,35-44, 50-57**

**UNIT 3:
LIFE IN THE CHURCH**

Paul's letter to the Corinthians reveals conditions in the early church. They had no pastors. Paul and his helpers visited them whenever they could. They had no church buildings. They met in houses or in available buildings. Most of the church members were Gentiles. They had not grown up hearing about the one true God. Paul had stayed with them eighteen months. He gave them much instruction. Then he left them. There were probably new believers coming into the church. They had not heard Paul's instructions. Paul wrote this letter to help all of them.

Paul's letter addresses many issues about life in the church. He discusses men and women in the church and in the home. Paul also discusses the proper way to take part in the Lord's supper. The last part of this letter discusses the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some of the Corinthians thought their gifts were better than others' gifts. Paul uses the body as an example to show them that even a small gift is important. Paul says that love is more important than gifts. It is the greatest characteristic of a Christian.

Paul finishes by talking about the resurrection of Christ and believers. His letter ends on an encouraging note. He reminds us that the resurrection gives hope to all believers.

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Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Memory Verse

“Woman was made from man, but man is born of woman. God made all things.”
—1 Corinthians 11:12

Word List

controversial: much disputed, something that is argued about

horizontal: going from left to right or right to left

parallel: never intersecting or crossing each other

theologians: people who study and teach Biblical truths

What Our Worship Says

We are studying part of a very **controversial** chapter. Many people disagree about its meaning. Paul talks about God’s order of headship. Then he discusses a problem in the Corinthian worship services.

A Word of Praise (1 Corinthians 11:2)

Before discussing the problem, Paul praises the Corinthians. They had remembered Paul. They put their faith in Jesus. They tried hard to follow Paul’s teachings. The church members were trying to know what they should do.

God Is the Supreme Head (1 Corinthians 11:3)

This is one of the **controversial** verses. “Now I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man. The husband is the head of his wife. God is the head of Christ” (v. 3). Paul talks about God’s order. Paul says God is first. Christ is next. The husband is next. The wife is next. Picture these four persons on two **horizontal parallel** lines. The top line would represent God and Christ, who are one. Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30)! The bottom line would be the husband and wife who are one. When God created Adam and Eve, He said, “...they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24b). So husband and wife as one stand together under God and Christ who are one.

Some **theologians** think that the word head means **source**. Our human minds cannot understand some truths. We think everything has a beginning and an end. God always has been. He always will be. God has no source. He has forever been. Christ came to earth as the Son of God. God was his source. He had no earthly father. He said, “I came down from heaven...I came to do what my Father wanted Me to do” (John 6:38). Man was created in God’s image. Woman was created from man. Man was her

source: the beginning; the place from which something comes

authority: someone who has power over another

Things To Think About

1. Must Christians agree completely about everything?
2. Why is fellowship with other Christians important?
3. How does our outward appearance affect our witness?

head. Man was the source of her body. Man was created first. However, they are equal in God's sight.

Other theologians think the word head means leader or **authority**. God is not a god of confusion. If there is no leader, very little gets done. Progress will be slow. God is the supreme leader. Christ is the Savior leader. Man is the family leader. Woman is man's helper. This is an orderly plan for people. God made each man and woman. Christ died for them. They are to follow the Lord's will for their lives. If they do not do this in oneness, there will be problems.

To Wear or Not Wear a Veil? (1 Corinthians 11:4-6)

Some women in the church at Corinth were not wearing veils. The women had freedom in Christ. Perhaps this caused them to decide that veils were not necessary. The women were allowed to pray and prophesy. However, they had to cover their heads. They could take part in the worship service, but they must do it properly. Failing to wear the veil was creating problems.

In Corinth the only women who did not wear veils were the temple prostitutes. People who were not Christians saw the church women without veils. They thought they were prostitutes. They would have bad thoughts about Christians. Because of this, the Christian women needed to wear the veil. Paul said they might as well cut their hair off if they refused to cover their head. No Christian woman wanted to cut her hair at that time.

There was a second reason for wearing the veil. The women were not showing their husbands proper respect. They were embarrassing their husbands. No man wanted his wife to be considered a prostitute. That would reflect badly on him. It would reflect badly on his Christian witness.

Here is a lesson in giving up freedoms we have in Christ

for others' sake. Yes, Christians have freedom. However, not all things are good for us. Not all things help us to grow as Christians. And we are not to think of ourselves only. Paul said, "Think of what you can do for others" (1 Corinthians 10:24b). Christians should conduct themselves in worship in a way that will give a good witness to non-Christians.

Women wear head coverings in many mid-Eastern countries today. Missionaries to these countries may wear head coverings. This helps them relate to the people. They do this so they can better tell them about Jesus. Hudson Taylor was founder of China Inland Mission. He adopted Chinese dress while serving in China. Our dress and worship are to be pleasing to the Lord Jesus.

Man and Woman (1 Corinthians 11:7-16)

God made Adam in His image. Because of this Paul said that men should not cover their head. They were to show God's glory. Adam was made by God from the dust of the earth. Eve was made from a part of Adam. "The Lord God made woman from the bone which He had taken from the man. And He brought her unto the man" (Genesis 2:22). He gave her the high honor of having

children. Every person born since Adam has been born of a woman. Woman can not bear children alone. Every child, except for Christ, has an earthly father. As Paul said, "In God's plan women need men and men need women" (v. 11). You know—that's a very good plan!

Paul knew there might be an argument about his instructions. He assured the Corinthians that this was what he taught. He let them know all of the other churches agreed.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

2: I think you have done well because you always remember me and have followed the things I taught you.

3: I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man. The husband is the head of his wife. God is the head of Christ.

4: If any man prays or preaches with his head covered, he does not give honor to Christ.

5: Every woman who prays or preaches without her head covered does not respect her head. It is the same as if she had her hair cut off.

6: If a woman does not cover her head, she might as well cut off her hair also. If a woman is ashamed to have her hair cut off, she should cover her head.

7: Man is made like God and His shining-greatness. For this reason a man should not have his head covered when he prays or preaches, but the woman respects the man.

8: Man was not made from woman. Woman was made from man,

9: and man was not made for woman. Woman was made for man.

10: For this reason a woman should have a covering on her head. This shows she respects man. This is for the angels to see also.

11: In God's plan women need men and men need women.

12: Woman was made from man, but man

is born of woman. God made all things.

13: Think this over yourselves. Does it look right for a woman to pray with no covering on her head?

14: Have we not already learned that it is a shame for a man to have long hair?

15: But a woman can be proud to have long hair. Her hair is given to her for a covering.

16: If anyone wants to argue about this, my answer is that this is what we teach, and all the churches agree with me.



Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 11:17-
34

Memory Verse

“Every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup you are telling of the Lord’s death until He comes again.”

—1 Corinthians 11:26

Word List

corruption: going from good to bad

Passover: a Jewish holiday or celebration

Things To Think About

1. Would you be willing to give up something you like to

Is This the *Lord's* Supper?

The Holy Spirit came upon the believers in Jerusalem. They began to share all things with each other. People sold things they owned. They brought the money to those who were in need. Believers brought food to share. All were welcomed. It was a voluntary expression of love. Something went wrong with all these good things. Today’s lesson deals with **corruption** in the Corinthian church.

The church at Corinth was a very early church. 1 Corinthians contains the earliest account of the Lord’s supper. Paul wrote this letter before Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote their gospels. How did Paul know about it? He was not a disciple. He said, "I have given you the teaching I received from the Lord" (v. 23). Some think that Jesus spoke these words to Paul. Some think he had learned them from the disciples. However he received them, we know they are from the Lord.

More Problems at Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:17-19)

Paul was very unhappy about reports coming from Corinth. They were dividing into groups and arguing. Paul tells them that nothing good can come from that. People can think differently without arguing. In fact, Paul says that the discussion of differences is good. It can help to determine what is right.

A group in a small church wanted to establish a nearby mission. A devoted Christian spoke against the plan. After much discussion, the church voted to accept the plan. There was discussion without anger. The church asked a very unlikely man to oversee the project. Yes, it was the man who did not want the plan! He accepted the leadership in good spirit. Because the church thought it was a good idea, he cooperated. He did a good job for the good of his church.

do in order to keep from offending a weaker Christian?

2. Why do we observe the Lord's supper?

3. What makes the Christian life a race like no other?

A Meal Together and the Lord's Supper

(1 Corinthians 11: 20-22)

Part of the arguing at Corinth was about the Lord's supper. They were all sharing a common meal. Some brought a lot of food. Some brought very little. After the meal, they took part in the Lord's supper. Problems from this meal corrupted the Lord's supper.

First, some groups ate their own meal without sharing. They did not wait for everyone to arrive. Some poor people found no food when they came. They remained hungry. Others drank too much wine and became drunk. This was supposed to be a meal to bring the believers together. It became one that was dividing them. It was also an insult to the church. Paul asked them, "Do you hate the church of God and shame those who are poor?" (v. 22b). Can you imagine them eating the Lord's supper after such a dinner? Paul clearly told them they were not right in this.

The First Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Jesus and his disciples ate a **Passover** meal the night he was arrested. After dinner, He took some bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He told the disciples to eat it. He said to remember his broken body. Then he took the cup. They gave thanks. All of them drank from the cup. Jesus told them the cup was His blood. His blood would be given for many. This would be the last time He would eat and drink with them on earth. The next time would be in the kingdom of God. This was the first Lord's supper. He asked us to do this to remember Him until He comes again.

How to Eat the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

Paul warns that we must take the Lord's supper in the right spirit. Sometimes people eat the bread and drink the cup

wrongly. They do it with no thought of the Lord's death. This is not the right spirit. We are told to "examine our hearts" (v. 28) before we eat and drink. No one of us deserves the life Christ gives us. We should remember that. We should confess our sins. We should thank the Lord for His gift of eternal life. We should ask Him for help in living rightly. We should praise Him for His many blessings. We should remember and praise Jesus because He died for us.

Those Who Eat without Understanding (I Corinthians 11:30-34)

Paul says taking the Lord's supper in a wrong spirit is dangerous. It may cause weakness and sickness. Some Corinthians had even died. Does the Lord take a believer to Heaven instead of letting him sin continually? Perhaps. We do know that a wrong spirit is harmful to the body. We should look into our hearts. We should admit our guilt if we have sinned in this way. Then we can receive forgiveness.

Paul again calls the Corinthians Christian brothers. He encourages them to think of others. He also advises them to eat their meals at home. The Lord's supper has an entirely different purpose than a normal meal.

Today the Lord's supper is a worship

service. It is no longer connected to any other meal. Each church decides how often it will be observed. Jesus gave no set time. He said, "Whenever you drink it, do it to remember Me" (v.25b). Our concern is that we do it in remembrance of Jesus' death. We should always do it in the right spirit.

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

17: While writing about these things, let me tell you what I think. Nothing good is coming from your meeting together.

18: First of all, I hear that when you meet together in the church you are divided into groups and you argue. I almost believe this is true.

19: For there must be different groups among you. In that way, those who are right will be seen from those who are wrong.

20: When you gather together for your meetings, it is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21: Each one is in a hurry to eat his own food first. He does not wait for others. In this way, one does not get enough food and drink. Others get too much and get drunk.

22: You have your own homes to eat and drink in. Or do you hate the church of God and shame those who are poor? What am I to say to you? Am I to say you are right? No! I cannot say you are right in this.

23: I have given you the teaching I received from the Lord. The night Jesus was handed over to the soldiers, He took bread.

24: When He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take this bread and eat it. This is My body which is broken for you. Do this to remember Me.:

25: In the same way after supper, He took the cup. He said, "This cup is the New Way of Worship made between God and you by My blood. Whenever you drink it, do it to

remember Me."

26: Every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup you are telling of the Lord's death until He comes again.

27: Anyone who eats the bread or drinks from the cup, if his spirit is not right with the Lord, will be guilty of sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord.

28: This is why a man should look into his own heart and life before eating the bread and drinking from the cup.

29: Anyone who eats the bread and drinks from the cup, if his spirit is not right with the Lord, will be guilty as he eats and drinks. He does not understand the meaning of the Lord's body.

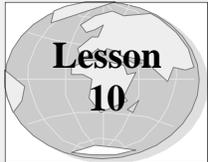
30: This is why some of you are sick and weak, and some have died.

31: But if we would look into our own lives and see if we are guilty, then God would not have to say we are guilty.

32: When we are guilty, we are punished by the Lord so we will not be told we are guilty with the rest of the world.

33: Christian brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.

34: If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home. Then he will not be guilty as you meet together. I will talk about the other things when I come.



Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 12:4-31

Memory Verse

“You are all a part of
the body of Christ.”
—1 Corinthians 12:27

Word List

Trinity: the three-in-one God; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

gospel songs: a special way of singing God’s good news

Things To Think About

1. How can you help others discover their spiritual gifts?
2. How can you discover your own

You Are Gifted

Everyone likes to get gifts. God has a special gift for each one of us. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to Christians. Who is the Holy Spirit? What are spiritual gifts?

The Holy Spirit is God. God has come to man through Himself. God has come to man through His Son. God has also come to man through the Holy Spirit. This is called the Trinity. There is only one God. How can one be three? How can three be one? Our limited minds cannot understand this. Some have used water as an illustration. We drink water. Water can become ice. Steam is another form of water. We can see water in three ways. They are all water in some form. God has shown Himself in three ways. Those ways are the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. Still there is just one God.

The Holy Spirit lives in each believer’s heart. He is the giver of spiritual gifts. Giving gifts is just one of His many works. He makes us want to know Jesus. He helps us understand the Bible. He helps us to pray as we should. He lets us know when we have sinned. He helps us to know what we should do. He is an ever-present helper for the Christian

There Are Many Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

Spiritual gifts are given at the time we become a Christian. Every believer receives one or more gifts. Gifts are given to honor God. They are for the good of the church. God’s Holy Spirit gives many different kinds of gifts. There are many different kinds of work. God’s work is done in many different ways.

Paul lists nine spiritual gifts in these verses. Other spiritual gifts are listed in the books of Romans, Ephesians, and 1 Peter. If we put them all together, there would be eighteen to twenty gifts mentioned. All of them are given by the same Spirit. They are

spiritual gifts?

3. Why is every gift important to the body?

4. What other gifts are listed in Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:10-11?

not talents with which we are born. They are gifts given when we become Christians. Natural talents can be used along with spiritual gifts. Mahalia Jackson was a talented singer. She began singing **gospel songs** at church when she was five years old. She became a world-famous gospel singer. People offered Mahalia lots of money to sing other songs also. She refused to do so. She praised the Lord with gospel songs as long as she lived. Her songs encouraged and uplifted many people.

The first two gifts Paul mentioned are speaking gifts. These gifts are used in teaching. Knowledge is knowing the Bible and knowing God. Wisdom is using knowledge in the right way. These two gifts help spread spiritual truth. The next gift is faith. We become a Christian by having faith in Jesus Christ. The spiritual gift of faith is extra faith. Some people receive a vision of great works for the Lord. Billy Graham seems to have this gift. He also has the gift of speaking God's Word. Missionaries receive this gift. The Holy Spirit supplies the faith they need to leave home. Their faith takes them all over the world. Six other gifts are listed. Healing is doing powerful works. Another gift is speaking God's word. Knowing when false spirits are present is called discernment. Speaking in special sounds (also called "speaking in tongues") is another gift. There is also the gift of interpretation. This is telling what special sounds mean. Paul often reminds us that these gifts are given by the same Holy Spirit. The Corinthians thought some gifts were more important than others. Paul wanted to show them that each one is important.

Our Bodies Have Many Parts (1 Corinthians 12:12-26)

Our human body has many parts, and yet it is one body. Paul pictures this unity of the human body in a humorous

way. He imagines the foot, ear, eye, and head talking to the body. He does this to show a truth. No part of the body can say it doesn't need the other parts. Even the parts of our body that aren't beautiful have a work to do. We must take good care of them as well.

When one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. When one part of the body is honored, the whole body is honored. The whole body works together. That is the wonderful way God created us.

The Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27-31)

Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that this was also true in the church. The Holy Spirit baptizes us into one body, the body of Christ. All spiritual gifts are necessary for the body of Christ to work as it should. No matter what our gift is, it is important to the working of the body.

No one in the church should say to another one, "I don't need you." Nor should it be said, "My gift is better than yours." All are important.

Helping others who are in need is a spiritual gift. Romans 12:8 tells about more spiritual gifts. Sharing, showing kindness, and speaking words of comfort are also spiritual gifts. We must not use spiritual gifts to draw attention to ourselves. If we do, they become works

of the flesh. This does not help the body of Christ.

We need to ask the Spirit to show us our gifts. Study the Bible. Read about the spiritual gifts. This may help you to discover yours. What do you really like to do in the Lord's work? Perhaps that is an indication of your gift. What opportunities are coming to you? Examine them carefully. They may be ways for you to use your spiritual gifts. Remember: Every believer has at least one gift.

1 Corinthians 12:4-31

4: There are different kinds of gifts. But it is the same Holy Spirit Who gives them.

5: There are different kinds of work to be done for Him. But the work is for the same Lord.

6: There are different ways of doing His work. But it is the same God who uses all these ways in all people.

7: The Holy Spirit works in each person in one way or another for the good of all.

8: One person is given the gift of teaching what he has learned and knows. These gifts are by the same Holy Spirit.

9: One person received the gift of faith. Another person receives the gifts of healing. These gifts are given by the same Holy Spirit.

10: One person is given the gift of doing powerful works. Another person is given the gift of speaking God's Word. Another person is given the gift of telling the difference between the Holy Spirit and false spirits. Another person is given the

gift of speaking in special sounds. Another person is given the gift of telling what these special sounds mean.

11: But it is the same Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, Who does all these things. He gives to each person as He wants to give.

12: Our own body has many parts. When all these many parts are put together, they are only one body. The body of Christ is like this.

13: It is the same way with us. Jews or those who are not Jews, men who are owned by someone or men who are free to do what they want to do, have all been baptized into the one body by the same Holy Spirit. We have all received the one Spirit.

14: The body is not one part, but many parts.

15: If the foot should say, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that would not stop it from being a part of the body.

16: If the ear should say, "I am not a part of the body because I am not an eye," that would not stop it from being a part of the body.

17: If the whole body were an eye how would it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how would it smell?

18: But God has put all the parts into the body just as He wants to have them.

19: If all the parts were the same, it could not be a body.

20: But now there are many parts, but one body.

21: The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you." Or the head cannot say to the

feet, "I do not need you."

22: Some of the parts we think are weak and not important are very important.

23: We take good care of and cover with clothes the parts of the body that look less important. The parts which do not look beautiful have an important work to do.

24: The parts that can be seen do not need as much care. God has made the body so more care is given to the parts that need it most.

25: This is so the body will not be divided into parts. All the parts care for each other.

26: If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it. If one part is given special care, the other parts are happy.

27: You are all a part of the body of Christ.

28: God has chosen different ones in the church to do His work. First, there are missionaries. Second, there are preachers or those who speak for God. And third, there are teacher. He has also chosen those who do powerful works and those who have the gifts of healing. And He has chosen those who help others who are in need and those who are able to lead others in work and those who speak in special sounds.

29: Are they all missionaries? No. Are they all preachers or those who speak for God? No. Do they all do powerful works? No.

30: Do they all have the gifts of healing? No. Do they all speak in special sounds? No. Are they all able to tell what the special sounds mean? No.

31: But from your heart you should want the best gifts. Now I will show you an even better way.



Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Memory Verse

“And now we have these three: faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.”

—1 Corinthians 13:13

Word List

agape: the love God has for all people, the highest form of love

jealous: wanting someone else's success

penalty: a punishment for doing wrong

The Greatest Way to Live

Spiritual gifts are good. However, there is something even better. In the last verse of 1 Corinthians 12, Paul told the Corinthians that he would show them a better way. That better way is discussed in 1 Corinthians 13. This is one of the most beautiful chapters in the Bible. It is often called “the love chapter.”

The Corinthian church was having problems. They were abusing the Lord's supper. They were misusing their spiritual gifts. The gift of speaking in tongues was causing trouble. Those who spoke in tongues thought they were better than those who did not. Paul wanted these Christians to work together without problems.

A special kind of love is needed. It is called **agape** love. Agape love is the kind of love that God gives us. God loves us regardless of what we have done. He will never stop loving us. We need to learn to love others this way. Jesus taught the law of love. He said, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. This is the first law” (Mark 12:30). Then He added, “The second Law is this: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other Law is greater than these” (Mark 12:31).

I Am Nothing If I Do Not Have Love (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

Paul taught that anything we do without God's love is meaningless. What if we could speak the languages of men and angels? It means nothing if we do so without God's love. How about speaking God's word with great understanding? We are nothing if we do so without God's love. It would take tremendous faith to move mountains. It would not matter if we did so without God's love. Suppose we give everything we have to feed the poor. What if we give our bodies to be burned? Still it

**Things To
Think About**

1. Why is it important for non-Christians to see God's love in us?
2. How can you show God's love to others in your life?
3. Why is love better than spiritual gifts?
4. What will it mean to see God face to face?

would be nothing without God's love. The greatest need of Christians is to love God and others. Only God can give this kind of love. We must first love Him in order to have agape love. Then what we do will come from a loving heart.

Christians can have different spiritual gifts. The love of God must live in every Christian's heart. Love can't be divided up like spiritual gifts. Agape love is the Holy Spirit's working in our lives. It makes us more like Jesus.

What Love Is and Is Not (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Paul describes agape love in these verses. First, it does not give up. It is patient and understanding. Next, it is kind to all people. Love is not **jealous**. Agape love doesn't boast and brag. It has no pride. It does not get angry. It forgets and forgives any hurts. Agape love does not insist on its own way. It is glad when things are done in the right way. It thinks of others. It is sad when wrong is done. It rejoices in truth and right. Agape love does not give up. It believes in God. It trusts Him to provide for us. It keeps hoping for the best in all things. This love just keeps going on and on!

The wonderful qualities of agape love should remind us of Jesus. The Jews were His own people. They would not accept Him. They broke His heart. He still loved them. They were going to kill Him. He still loved them. He cried over Jerusalem. He said, "How many times I wanted to gather your children around Me, as a chicken gathers her young ones under her wings. But you would not let me" (Matthew 23:37). The Holy Spirit wants us to show Jesus' kind of love.

Agape Love Never Ends (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)

Paul compares God's love to some of the spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are given for a period of time. Spiritual gifts are for earthly time. They are to lead us to the love of God. At

this time we know only a part of God's great plan. When the Lord comes, everything will be perfect. We will not need the spiritual gifts. They will pass away. But love will still exist. Agape love is *forever!*

We are like children growing spiritually. We want to grow to adulthood as Christians. Our human minds are not capable of understanding all of God's wonderful love. Paul compares it to looking into a broken mirror. A broken mirror does not reveal a clear image. Another version of this verse reads, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face" (RSV). Won't it be wonderful to see God face to face? Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. Otherwise we could never see God face to face. God knows us perfectly right now. Some day we will know Him perfectly, too. Then we will see ourselves and others in a perfect way. What a blessed hope that is!

Paul closes with the three most important blessings in our Christian lives. We have them now. Faith, hope and love have been given to all believers. Faith and hope are wonderful. But love is the greatest blessing. It is love that gives us faith and hope.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1: I may be able to speak the languages of men and even of angels, but if I do not have love, it will sound like noisy brass.

2: If I have the gift of speaking God's Word and if I understand all secrets, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I know all things and have the gift of faith so I can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3: If I give everything I have to feed poor people and if I give my body to be burned, but do not have love, it will not help me.

4: Love does not give up. Love is kind. Love is not jealous. Love does not put itself up as being important. Love has no pride.

5: Love never thinks of itself. Love does not get angry. Love does not remember the suffering that comes from being hurt by someone.

6: Love is not happy with sin. Love is happy with the truth.

7: Love takes everything that comes without giving up. Love believes all things. Love hopes for all things. Love keeps on in all things.

8: Love never comes to an end. The gift of speaking God's Word will come to an end. The gift of speaking in special sounds will be stopped. The gift of understanding will come to an end.

9: For we only know a part now, and we speak only a part.

10: When everything is perfect, then we will not need these gifts that are not perfect.

11: When I was a child, I spoke like a child. I thought like a child. I understood like a child. Now I am a man. I do not act like a child anymore.

12: Now that which we see is as if we were looking in a broken mirror. But then we will see everything. Now I know only a part. But then I will know everything in a perfect way. That is how God knows me right now.

13: And now we have these three: faith and hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.



Adult Bible Study in
Basic English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Memory Verse

“Since you want gifts from the Holy Spirit, ask for those that will build up the whole church.”

—1 Corinthians 14:12

Word List

comfort: help when you are sad; to cheer up

intelligible words: words that can be understood and make sense

Things To Think About

1. How can tongues be used to honor God?

Proclaiming Jesus

Paul has responded to the questions asked by the Corinthian Christians. He has told them about God’s agape love. Now he talks to them about the spiritual gift of tongues. This also must be done in love. “I may be able to speak the languages of men and even of angels, but if I do not have love, it will sound like noisy brass” (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Many disagree about this gift. Some think this is the ability to speak a foreign language that you do not know. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit helped Jesus’ followers to speak other languages. Many people were in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. They asked, “How is it that each one of us can hear his own language?” (Acts 2:8). The disciples were speaking the languages of the many different people visiting Jerusalem. This gift was given so people could hear about Jesus. Peter preached to them and about 3,000 people became believers.

Another group believes that the gift of tongues is a spiritual experience. They believe that all Christians should want this experience. They think the gift of tongues is a spiritual language. It may or may not be a known language. Some call it a prayer language. Some practice it privately. Others use it in worship services. This is what the Corinthians were doing. Paul has some advice for them in this chapter.

Speaking God’s Word Is a More Important Gift

(1 Corinthians 14:1-5)

Paul immediately tells them that the gift of speaking God’s word should be the most desired. This gift helps people to learn and understand about Jesus. It also gives them **comfort**. Accepting Jesus as Savior brings great comfort. It brings hope into our lives. Eternal life is also ours. Speaking God’s Word is a way to let others know what we know. Speaking God’s Word

2. Which gifts help the church the most?

3. Why do many disagree about the gift of tongues?

4. Why should we speak in intelligible word?

also gives strength to the church. It helps all believers.

Speaking in these tongues ("special sounds" NLV) is not speaking to men. God can understand it, but others will not. It may strengthen the speaker. However, it does not strengthen the church. Paul said that the speaker of special sounds should pray for interpretation. Interpretation is the gift to explain what the sounds mean. Then it would be helpful to the church.

Paul does not criticize the right use of this gift. However, Paul lists it last on his list of spiritual gifts. God does choose to give this gift to some. We are not the giver of spiritual gifts. God's Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts. Paul gives some guidelines for its use. However, Paul says it is not the most helpful gift.

Speak Words That Can Be Understood

(1 Corinthians 14:6-12)

Paul compares meaningless words to a poorly played flute or harp. Can you hear the tune if the notes are unclear? Even a trumpet needed to give a clear call. Then soldiers could understand it. In those days they depended on the trumpet sound for instructions. A certain tune told them to go forward. Another one told them to turn around and go back.

Paul told the Corinthians, "Unless you speak **intelligible words** with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air (v. 9). My husband and I have been in places where we did not know the language. It was very confusing. We were at a Wednesday night church service in Korea. An English-speaking Korean soldier sat in front of us. He jotted down notes about the message in English. Then he passed the notes back to us. We were glad for this understanding.

The Corinthian church was eager to have spiritual gifts.

Paul encouraged them to want the gifts that would build up the church.

Don't Let Tongues Destroy Church Unity (1 Corinthians 14:13-25)

Paul encouraged the Corinthians to have unity in the church. There is no unity if one person speaks in language no one else understands. Paul says he speaks in more languages (or tongues) than any of them. In church though, he would rather speak five words that would be helpful to people. That would be better than 1,000 words people could not understand. Tongues (languages) were given to Jesus' disciples on Pentecost. With this gift all of the people in Jerusalem could understand them. Everyone was amazed that they understood these people from Galilee.

Tongues were spoken often in the Corinthian church. If unbelievers entered the Corinthian church, they would be confused. They might think the people were crazy! Teaching God's word would help non-believers. They might receive understanding of God's plan. They may become believers and fall down and worship Him.

This problem is still in existence today. Some sincere Christians find great joy in speaking or praying in unknown tongues. That does not mean that everyone should have this gift. Paul said,

"Do all speak in special sounds? No" (1 Corinthians 12:30). First, desire spiritual gifts that will build up the church. Be sure to use any gift that the Holy Spirit gives you.

1 Corinthians 14:1-25

1: You should want to have this love. You should want the gifts of the Holy Spirit and most of all to be able to speak God's Word.

2: The man who speaks in special sounds speaks to God. He is not speaking to men. No one understands. He is speaking secret things through the power of the Holy Spirit.

3: The man who speaks God's Word speaks to men. It helps them to learn and understand. It gives them comfort.

4: The man who speaks in special sounds receives strength. The man who speaks God's Word gives strength to the church.

5: I wish all of you spoke in special sounds. But more than that, I wish all of you spoke God's Word. The one who speaks God's Word has a more important gift than the one who speaks in special sounds. But if he can tell what he is speaking, the church will be helped.

6: Christian brothers, if I come to you speaking in special sounds, what good it to you? But if I tell you something God has shown me or something I have learned or what God's Word says will happen in the future or teach you God's

Word, it will be for your good.

7: There are things on which people play music. If strange sounds are made on these, how will others know which one is played?

8: If a horn does not make a good sound, how will men know they are to get ready to fight?

9: It is the same if you speak to a person in special sounds. How will he know what you say? Your sounds will be lost in the air.

10: There are many languages in the world. All of them have meaning to the people who understand them.

11: But if I do not understand the language someone uses to speak to me, the man who speaks is a stranger to me. I am a stranger to him.

12: Since you want gifts from the Holy Spirit, ask for those that will build up the whole church.

13: So the man who speaks in special sounds should pray for the gift to be able to tell what they mean.

14: If I pray in special sounds, my spirit is doing the praying. My mind does not understand.

15: What should I do? I will pray with my spirit and I will pray with my mind also. I will sing with my spirit and I will sing with my mind also.

16: If you honor and give thanks to God with your spirit in sounds nobody understands, how can others honor and give thanks also if they do not know what you are saying?

17: You are honoring and giving thanks to God, but it is not helping other people.

18: I thank God that I speak in special sounds more than all of you.

19: But in a meeting of the church, it is better if I say five words that others can understand and be helped by than 10,000 words in special sounds.

20: Christian brothers, do not be like children in your thinking. Be full-grown, but be like children in not knowing how to sin.

21: God says in the Holy Writings, "I will speak to My people. I will speak through men from other lands in other languages. Even then My people will not listen to Me." (Isaiah 28:11-22)

22: So then speaking in special sounds is for those who do not believe. It is not for those who believe. But speaking God's Word is for those who believe. It is not for those who do not believe.

23: If some people who are not Christians come to your church meeting while all the people are speaking in special sounds, they will think you are crazy.

24: But if a man who is not a Christian comes to your church meeting while you are all speaking God's Word, he will understand that he is a sinner by what he hears. He will know he is guilty.

25: The secrets of his heart will be brought into the open. He will get on his knees and worship God. He will say, "For sure, God is here with you!"



*Adult Bible Study in
Basic English*

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 15:3-
20,35-44, 50-57

Memory Verse

“Our human bodies
that can die must be
changed into bodies
that will never die.”

—1 Corinthians
15:53b

Word List

crucifixion: being
nailed to a cross

miserable: much
sadness or pain

humorist: a person
who makes people
laugh

calligraphy: a fancy
and beautiful style of
handwriting

Resurrection Hope

Most of Paul’s letter was written about church divisions and problems. Part of the letter discussed spiritual gifts and their use. Paul included a beautiful chapter on love. Now he discusses the great hope of the resurrection.

Death is sure. Everyone of us is growing older. None of us knows when death will come. Paul tells us that the resurrection is an important part of the good news.

Jesus Was Raised from the Dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-11)

The good news is that Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He was raised from the dead on the third day. The resurrection proved that Jesus was God. Many people witnessed His death and resurrection. His followers watched Him die. They saw Him buried. They saw Him after His resurrection. Many others saw Him after the resurrection. More than five hundred of His followers saw Him. Paul wrote this letter about twenty years after Christ’s **crucifixion**. Many of those five hundred were still living. They could tell what they saw.

Paul had his own personal experience with the risen Christ. Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul had persecuted the Christians. When Paul met Christ, Paul became a Christian! Paul preached the raising of the dead wherever he went.

Believers Will Also Be Raised from the Dead (1 Corinthians 15:12-20)

Some of the Corinthians questioned people being raised from the dead. They were probably not questioning Jesus’ resurrection. They questioned the resurrection of people. Paul shows them that both are real.

If the dead are not raised, then Christ was not raised. If Christ was not raised, the gospel is worth nothing. It is a lie. Our faith is

prominent: important or well-known

Things To Think About

1. How can tongues be used to honor God?
2. Which gifts help the church the most?
3. Why do many disagree about the gift of tongues?
4. Why should we speak in intelligible word?

worth nothing . We would still be guilty of our sins. We would be "more sad than anyone else" (v. 19). The King James Version says, we would be "most **miserable**." Our only hope would be in this earthly life. That would mean Jesus did not give us *eternal* life. To be eternal, it must never end. He promised us eternal, everlasting life. We trust Him to keep that promise.

Paul insists it is true! You can believe in the resurrection of Jesus. And you can believe in the resurrection of those who believe in Him.

How Can This Happen and What Kind of Body Will It Be? (1 Corinthians 15:35-44)

Paul says this is a foolish question. Earthly minds asks many questions that are beyond our understanding. Remember what Paul told us in the love chapter. Here on the earth we only know in part. We see things as in a broken mirror. We don't get a clear picture. In God's presence we will know in a perfect way.

Paul gives some examples. A seed is put into the earth. From it comes a plant that in no way looks like the seed. From each kind of seed comes a different plant.

All flesh is not the same. Men have one kind. Animals have another kind. Fish and birds have still different kinds. Suppose you order beef at a restaurant. Suppose the waitress brings you fish. You will know the difference immediately. They do not look nor taste the same.

Look at the sky. The sun, moon, and stars have their own greatness. Each is different from the other. God is the creator of so many different life forms. Giving us a new body will be no problem at all for Him.

Our earthly bodies return to dust after death. The resurrected body will never do that. It will live eternally. Our

earthly bodies have no greatness in death. They are weak. We can neither move nor speak after our human body dies. Our bodies are raised with glory and power. Then our bodies will be God-like bodies. The God who created our human bodies will create our eternal bodies.

A devoted, talented woman in our church died a few months ago. She taught **calligraphy** in our Neighbors International program. Our pastor was overseas when she died. A **prominent** Christian **humorist** came to conduct the funeral. It was a joyous service. Her life was lovingly remembered. There were no jokes, but there was much laughter. There was joy in knowing that this friend possessed eternal life. God would supply whatever body she needs to live in His presence. Believers have this assurance.

What If Christ Returns Before We Die? (1 Corinthians 15:50-57)

Even if we should live until Christ returns, our bodies must be changed. Our fleshly bodies can never have a part in the kingdom of God. We must have a God-like body that lasts forever. Paul says that the dead will rise. Those who are alive will be changed. It will happen very quickly. We will all rejoice that death has no more power. Death will bring no more pain. God has given us power over sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. What a

blessed hope we have!

1 Corinthians 15:3-20, 35-44, 50-57

3: First of all, I taught you what I had received. It was this: Christ died for our sins as the Holy Writings said He would. (Isaiah 53:5-12)

4: Christ was buried. He was raised from the dead three days later as the Holy Writings said He would. (Psalm 16:9-10)

5: Christ was seen by Peter. After that, the twelve followers saw Him.

6: After that, more than 500 of His followers say Him at one time. Most of them are still here, but some have died.

7: After that, James saw Christ. Then all the missionaries saw Him.

8: Last of all, Christ showed Himself to me as if I had been born too late.

9: For I am the least important of all the missionaries. I should not be called a missionary because I made it so hard for God's church.

10: I am different now. It is all because of what God did for me by His loving-favor. His loving-favor was not wasted. I worked harder than all the other missionaries. But it was not I who worked. It was God's loving-favor working through me.

11: It makes no difference how you heard the Good News. It could have been through the other missionaries or through me. The important thing is this: We preached the Good News to you and you believed it.

12: We preached to you that Christ has been raised from the dead. But some of you say that people are not raised from the dead. Why do you say this?

13: If the dead are not raised, then Christ was not raised from the dead.

14: If Christ was not raised from the dead, then what we preach to you is worth nothing.

Your faith in Christ is worth nothing.

15: That makes us all liars because we said that God raised Christ from the dead. But God did not raise Christ from the dead if the dead do not come to life again.

16: If the dead are not raised, then not even Christ was raised from the dead.

17: If Christ was not raised from the dead, your faith is worth nothing and you are still living in your sins.

18: Then the Christians who have already died are lost in sin.

19: If we have hope in Christ in this life only, we are more sad than anyone else.

20: But it is true! Christ has been raised from the dead! He was the first One to be raised from the dead and all those who are in graves will follow.

1 Corinthians 15:35: Someone will say, "How are the dead raised? What kind of bodies will they have?"

36: What a foolish question! When you plant a seed, it must die before it starts new life.

37: When you put it in the earth, you are not planting the body which it will become. You put in only a seed.

38: It is God Who gives it a body just as He wants it to have. Each kind of seed becomes a different kind of body.

39: All flesh is not the same. Men have one kind of flesh. Animals have another kind. Fish have another kind, and birds have another kind.

40: There are bodies in the heavens. There are bodies on earth. Their greatness is not the same.

41: The sun has its greatness. The moon has its greatness. Stars have their greatness. One star is different from another star in greatness.

42: It is the same with people who are

raised from the dead. The body will turn back to dust when it is put in a grave. When the body is raised from the grave, it will never die.

43: It has no greatness when it is put in a grave, but it is raised with shining-greatness. It is weak when it is put in a grave, but it is raised with power.

44: It is a human body when it dies, but it is a God-like body when it is raised from the dead. There are human bodies and there are God-like bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:50: Christian brothers, our bodies which are made of flesh and blood will not go into the holy nation of God. That which dies can have no part in that which will never die.

51: For sure, I am telling you a secret. We will not all die, but we will all be changed.

52: In a very short time, no longer than it takes for the eye to close and open, the Christians who have died will be raised. It will happen when the last horn sounds. The dead will be raised never to die again. Then the rest of us who are alive will be changed.

53: Our human bodies made from dust must be changed into a body that cannot be destroyed. Our human bodies that can die must be changed into bodies that will never die.

54: When this that can be destroyed has been changed into that which cannot die, then it will happen as the Holy Writings said it would happen. They said, "Death has no more power over life."

55: O death, where is your power? O death, where are your pains?

56: The pain in death is sin. Sin has power over those under the Law.

57: But God is the One Who gives us power over sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. We give thanks to Him for this.