

1 Corinthians

Chapter 1

We must go to Acts 18 to start our study of 1 Corinthians, when Paul first came to Corinth, in fear and weakness (1 Cor 2:1-3)
Acts 18:1-11

Paul spent more time in Corinth than anywhere but Ephesus

Now, near the end of his 3 year ministry in Ephesus during his 3rd missionary journey, Paul writes a corrective letter to the church he had planted because it was beset with problems

this is not his first communication with the church at Corinth

1 Cor 5:9

1 Cor 7:1

1 Cor 1:11 prompting this letter

The letter is as timely to the Church today as it was over 1900 years ago

Into comments 1:1-9 a remarkable passage of Scripture!

Unity vs Division 1:10 – 4:21 central issue: the gospel

Immorality 5:1 – 6:20

Marriage 7:1-40

Idolatry 8:1 – 11:2

Worship 11:3 – 14:39 central issue: God's love

Resurrection 15:1-58

Final thoughts 16:1-24

v1 called... thru the will of God

Paul is an apostle by God's will, certainly not his own, nor the will of other men (Acts 9:20-21)

being a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth and then being His evangelist to the Gentiles was not the brilliant idea of a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, a Jew's Jew!

But Paul was God's choice:

- Roman citizen
- Premier Jewish education
- Brilliant intellect
- Understood Hebrew, Roman, and Greek cultures
- Zealous

Saul of Tarsus was ideal for what God had in mind!

Paul only had several drawbacks – unbelief due to blinding pride
So the Lord had to knock him off his high horse in order to get his
complete attention. The Lord humbled Paul, completed his
education, and sent him out into the world to minister the gospel to
the Gentiles

Saul (= “destroyer, demander”) was supernaturally transformed into Paul
(= “little worker”)

Can you identify with Paul as much as I can?

The Lord has His ways of getting our attention and working the
pride out of our lives! Amen?

Sosthenes

During Paul’s first visit to Corinth he turns from the Jews to the Gentiles
(Acts 18:4-8).

The Lord told Paul that his ministry there would be fruitful and Paul
ministered in Corinth for 1½ years.

Then the Jews mounted an insurrection against him (v12-13).

The local judge had no interest in the issue and dismissed the case.

The Jews erupted and vented their anger by beating the new chief ruler of
their synagogue – Sosthenes (v17).

Obviously although not recorded, Paul went to him and ministered to him.

He probably dabbed the wounds of Sosthenes

Sosthenes was touched by the love of Jesus and professed Him as his
Messiah.

Once an enemy of Paul and Jesus, he was now friend and brother!

The Lord does wonderful things like this with every conversion

v2 the church of God at Corinth

Corinth:

- Major city in Greece 40 miles west of Athens, home of
200,000 – 400,000 people
- Busy trade center on a 4 mile wide isthmus between the
Aegean and Adriatic Seas; had 3 large ports
- Overflowing with idolatry and immorality – Sin city of the
Roman Empire
If called “corinthianized” considered to be hopelessly
corrupt
- Sex was a religion and the whole city was given over to
licentiousness and the pursuit of carnal pleasure
if called a “Corinthian girl” were called a prostitute
- The sea was worshipped (Isis of Egypt and Poseidon of
Greece)

Corinthian church

- Gentile church established by Paul on his 2nd missionary journey
- The Camouflaged Church: had blended into the world around them rather than standing out like a light on the hill
- Had become infected with the corruption and immorality around it, having lost their saltiness

this church has serious problems. What happened?

the Church had lost sight of their main objective, the person of Jesus Christ

Jesus is the answer to every one of their disorders

He is mentioned in each of the first 10 verses

the Church today NEEDS to read and heed this letter!

The Church is camouflaged today, blended right into our society

What about you and me as individual believers? Can our spouses, children, families, neighbors, co-workers see that we are a contrast to the world...or camouflaged and invisible?

Consider Prov 13:13

If you live what you believe, you will be a stark contrast

The Holy Spirit's purpose of this letter from Paul is to

- confront their sins of idolatry, sexual immorality (e.g. man sleeping with his father's wife, his step-mother), getting drunk at the communion table, etc
- address important issues like marriage, the role of women in the church, and proper worship of God
- emphatically communicate a message from God: do not blend into the world – you are new creatures in Christ

But notice Paul addresses his letter to the church of God...to those

- sanctified in Christ Jesus...
- saints...
- those who have called upon the name of Jesus Christ....

in spite of being infected with corruption and immorality!

They are not called to be saints, they are saints that have been called

A child of God is saved by grace and stays saved by grace

The church is at Corinth but it is in Christ

we are not saints because of our behavior but because of our position in Christ

The church of God at Corinth...in Christ Jesus

Every Christian has 2 addresses

1. at Ahwatukee (this is the problem) temporary
2. in Christ (this is the praise) eternal

the miracle of salvation is God's work and Jesus' glory
perhaps if Jesus had not said Acts 18:9-10 Paul would have drop
kicked this city and its wild population

the church is called to be holy = separate (Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9)
vessels used in Temple worship were sanctified – they were not to used
for any other purpose than to worship God
The Church and every member of the Body is a vessel set aside for God's
exclusive purpose
do you live that way? I don't always...and it grieves me when I
don't
but our position in Jesus Christ does not change

v3 grace...and power
the Siamese twins of Paul's epistles –
Grace was a Greek greeting
Peace (shalom) was a Hebrew greeting
also, the order is paramount - first the grace of God, then peace
Know Jesus, know peace
No Jesus, no peace
You cannot know peace without first knowing grace
Peace with God...peace of God
Before grace, my religion never brought me any peace, only guilt and
condemnation
only by a personal relationship can I know God's grace, and then His
peace
grace is by which we grow in Christ, not that by which we indulge our
flesh
grace gives me a new nature and a new position

Lord	title
Jesus	name
Christ	mission

v4 I thank God for the grace
the man who hunted and murdered God's children is thankful for these
brothers and sisters – Paul always had God's eternal perspective
these brothers and sisters needed grace when they were dead in their sin
and they still needed God's grace after being saved by grace
our position in Christ is a position of blessing...because of what Christ did
Jesus rightfully gets all the glory

v5-7 enriched by him

the poor in spirit are made wealthy by Jesus Christ.

The world just does not understand true riches.

I would rather have no money and the grace of God than all the money in the world and have to face a holy God based on my own merit

Great

Riches

At

not the starting point, the only point

Christ's

it's all about Jesus

Expense

come behind in no gift

they have not been short-changed by God in any way.

He blesses His children abundantly (Eph 3:20)

However, they have abused their gifts.

There is very little demonstration of spiritual vitality in Corinth

More on this issue in Ch 12 – 14

Note: when people think of spiritual gifts, they normally think of the gift of tongues

some people think that since they speak in tongues they are more spiritual than those who do not – not necessarily true

the gift is not the indicator of spirituality, the heart is

and a proud heart is an indication of a spiritual void

Love is THE most excellent way – spiritual vitality springs from God's love (Ch 13)

Our Father does not want us kids to lack anything

Matt 7:7-11

Today's camouflaged church has also abused her gifts

neglect

self-glorification

waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

waiting: “waiting anxiously”

the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ is mentioned over 300 times in the NT – it is vitally important doctrine to the Christian

e.g. Paul was in Thessalonica only 3 Sabbaths before getting run out of town...but it was to this baby church that Paul wrote two letters that focus on what he had taught them - the return of the Lord

the Corinthians have heard about the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ from an apostle...but they are living like He is not returning at all

You probably know Christians like that...you may be one

It is God’s design that we live our lives with the expectancy of Jesus’ imminent return

the Church cannot cause Jesus to return, nor is Jesus waiting for the Church to accomplish something.

The Church is waiting for Jesus to accomplish His work of redemption (John 6:44) at the appointed time.

The imminent return of Jesus cannot be minimized – you must know it and you must live like it

the camouflaged church today is living like Jesus is not coming back

Calvary Chapel has been given a timeline: Jesus Christ is coming soon

And a message: discover God’s love in God’s Word

v8 confirm you...blameless

confirm: “setting in place (= blameless!) to not be removed”

the work of Jesus Christ is sufficient for this

Rom 16:25, Jude 24-25

this is not however a license to sin, to blend into the world around us

v9 yet this church had...this Body is not healthy...but is still blameless?

How does that work? How is this possible?

God is faithful...God is faithful

God not me, not you, not any man, God alone

Is continuous present tense

Faithful to His Word

To His nature

To His work

I am not faithful

If ever a little girl loved her daddy, it is Kathryn

I am her La-Z-Boy chair, her card playing partner, her ride-around-the-block buddy

sometimes I snap at her...because I am a wretch

“Oh, I’m so sorry, sweetheart!”

Consider Jonah....[background]

God loved the Ninevites, Jonah hated them
Fled the opposite direction, as far as he could go
When storm thwarted that plan, he would rather die
The whale is of God's grace!
1:17 Jonah is in a tight spot – hot, humid, stinky – for
3 days/nights
2:1 then he prays!! How stubborn can a man be?!
How long do I wait until I pray?
Why did he wait so long?

Perhaps he felt unworthy, having bought the lie of the enemy
(2:8)
In OT sacrificial system, a worshipper would bring his
sacrifice to the Temple, where it was inspected. If it
was found to be faultless and spotless, it was
accepted and he was allowed into the Temple to
worship
Heb 4:16 is possible because the Lamb of God was
inspected and proclaimed acceptable, I am not
inspected
He is spotless so I can go boldly unto the Throne of grace
God is faithful

Perhaps he didn't know what to say
2:2-9 every phrase of Jonah's prayer can be found in the
Psalms
Don't know what to pray? Pray the Psalms out loud!

2:10 now Jonah is barfed on the beach and has whale barf all over him
what a mess!
However, by the power of the omnipotent God, Jonah's mess
makes him a better mess-enger (3:1-5)
we mess up, God moves in
started in Gen 1:2 (confusion on the face of the earth)
happens every day...in my life and in yours

what are our messes? How do we camouflage ourselves?

- Lust of the flesh: Pornography, alcohol & drugs
- Heart disease: Anger & hatred, bitterness
- Pride of life: self-righteousness, judgmental
- Etc etc etc

We mess up, God moves in, cleans us up, makes the mess part of His message of grace, uses everything in our life for our good and His glory

Rom 8:28, Joel 2:25 become REAL

the mess makes us more “credible” messengers of God’s grace if I didn’t have a mess that God needed to clean up, the message of God’s grace falls on deaf ears of the messy person I am witnessing to
does this mean we can mess up with impunity?

Rom 6:1-2, 6-7, 13

1 John 1:6-9

God is faithful! He loves to work in the mess of our lives...we just have to let Him work

God is faithful to calm us and give us peace when we despair

Tuesday morning despair – the enormity of it all

- My wife is my first ministry
- My kids are second – got a bunch!
- The church is 3rd ministry
 - Sunday morning study
 - Men’s Study
 - Home Fellowship
 - Marriage
 - Counseling, ministering
- Full time job
- Then I remembered the Servanthood School class on Systematic Theology (17 weeks) and my eyes figuratively rolled in the back of my head and I “fainted”

I was determined to get started on Systematic Theology...so I woke up early to study the attributes of God...and was made at peace as I considered the nature of the sovereign God

I don't want my record of either before or after Jesus saved me to be read in heaven or to be with me for all eternity...it won't be!
I will be blameless!

With 1 Cor 3:10-15 in mind, we will arrive at the Throne of Christ faultless...maybe with smoking pants, but faultless!

I don't want to have smoking pants when I stand before my Lord
I don't want to be a rewards "lightweight"

He died for me that He would not have to live without me; I chose to die to self and live for Him now. How?:

- be ready
- be watching
- be working
- be wise – don't be living foolishly so are ashamed when He suddenly arrives
- be obedient and submissive
- be Spirit-led vs flesh-driven

were called unto the fellowship

were: past tense! It is finished

"called forth aloud, named"

we are called into an intimate relationship with God's Son

we are listed in the Lamb's Book of Life by God's faithfulness, not our own

fellowship = "*koinonia*"

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------------------|
| ▪ contribution (Rom 15:26) | \ | Jesus wants me |
| ▪ communion (1 Cor 10:16) | \ | to hang out with |
| ▪ partnership | / | Him! |

on every plane of our life, Jesus is our partner

and I am so thankful! I need His power and strength and gentleness and love in every decision I face

for every bad decision, Jesus is the solution to every problem we have

And Jesus our partner wants to work with us to do His work in the lives of others

me helping God do His work is like Matthew and Kathryn helping me paint the interior of our house

- they can't reach very high so I do most of the work...
just as I cannot reach very high and Jesus must do the work
- they don't do a very thorough job so I have to paint over what they painted...just as I am not very thorough and Jesus must go over what I have done to make it right
- they are very messy (floor, trim, fixtures, themselves) so I continually have to be cleaning up the messes they made...
just as Jesus must clean up all my messes

Yet He loves me and wants me to be involved in His work!

- To seek and save the lost
- Intercessory prayer

So, the above 9 verses are truly remarkable considering the condition of the church!

- He is thankful for them
- They will be blameless
- They are saints
- They are being sanctified
- They are the Church of God!

God's love and grace are mind boggling

v10 Now I beseech you

“implore, beg”

since the above is true (God is faithful, you have received grace upon grace even in your carnality), Paul issues a call to unity to heal the divisions hindering that ministry

Eph 4:1-6

The Church, the Body of Christ, would truly be a force in this world if we

- all put on the mind of Jesus
- judged all things against the word of God
- would just keep our eyes on Jesus
- loved as Jesus loved

notice that of all the things going wrong in this church (a man sleeping with his step-mother, people getting drunk at the communion table), #1 on Paul's hit list is divisions

he mentions this issue repeatedly...in most of his epistles

it has happened because they took their eyes off Jesus

Satan thinks that if he can divide us, then he can thwart the work of God

Note: Is that true? Consider 1 Cor 2:7-8, Rom 8:28, 31

divisions are caused by gossip, criticism, backbiting, fighting...pride

we are to “mark and avoid” those who engage in this work

Rom 16:17

In fact, we are to root out those who sow discord among us, the evil is so dangerous to the children of God

Prov 6:16-19

Divisions characterize the life of the flesh, not life in the Spirit

Marriages in trouble are because of fruit of the flesh

The Holy Spirit unifies in Truth, draws our eyes to the Truth

v11 contentions

“quarrels”...heated arguments

“I have it on good authority that you guys are always arguing with each other, almost to the point of coming to blows.”

This letter is in response to this report

Paul is not acting on a rumor or hearsay but on a detailed account of a careful investigation...because...

a knee-jerk accusation, or any other action based on rumor, is as damaging as dissensions

we are to avoid bickering with each other, especially over non-essentials (Titus 3:9) because they result in bitterness and division

Rom 12:18

This is a tried and true strategy of the enemy: divide and conquer (since a direct frontal assault will not work)

In so doing, satan ruins the testimony of Christians and gives unbelievers cause to blaspheme God

division in the Body of Christ is sin, contrary to the will of God

sin in the Church is like a cancer and must be cut out

the Holy Spirit is the surgeon (Num 32:23) – I am not the Holy Spirit!

Monica and I prayer regarding CCA: Lord, please

- Strengthen the weak
- Add those who will strengthen this body
- Subtract those who weaken and divide the body

God has faithfully answered that prayer! All 3 counts!

It is far better to have a small body, one that is strong and healthy and hungry and available to be used, than a huge body that is weak and sickly and complacent

one of life's more important learned behaviors – biting your tongue

talk is “cheap” because supply exceeds demand

but action/obedience is expensive because demand exceeds supply

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help us

we need a personal relationship with God the Holy Spirit as much as we do with God the Father and God the Son

v12 I am of Paul...Apllos...Peter...Christ

members have formed cliques around certain men of God

ala "I am of Doug...I am of Chuck...I am of Greg..."

a senseless argument! Who died on the Cross to save men from their sin?

That's obvious and indisputable

So why the argument and division? Spiritual pride

"I am of Paul, who is superior to Apollos because he is an Apostle.

So I am superior to you."

"I am of Apollos because he is a more polished and more powerful and more persuasive orator than Paul so I am superior to you."

"We are of Peter, and he was the first Pope after all so our church is the only true church."

"I am of Jesus. You see, I go to a more spiritual church than you so I am more saved than you."

We need to be very careful...it is too easy for the flesh to hold onto the wrong standard

other people are not God's standard, Jesus is

Matt 5:48 is the standard...which will keep us humble

(This argument is as revolting to Paul as was the episode in Acts 14:6-15)

Paul whole heartedly agreed with John the Baptist...so must we

- I am unworthy to untie His sandals
- I must decrease that He may increase

In church history, this thinking has resulted in the formation of denominations, divisions based on personalities and "pet" doctrines, which are non-essential

in reality, not one church can minister effectively to every type of person

- Emotional
- Casual
- Formal
- Liturgical

The church = people, people are different

So, in that sense, denominations are OK

Your question should be: Where am I:

- Ministered to by God
- Strengthened
- Encouraged
- Comforted
- Stretched/challenged

When you find such a place:

- Fellowship there
- Take lost and backslidden loved ones there
- Go consistently
- Participate in that ministry

But walls between denominations are NOT OK

Walls are man-made and is based on self-righteousness

There will be no denominations in heaven

Jesus breaks down the walls built by man

We need to have God's perspective

2 powerful admonitions for us in Jonah 4:1-11

1. We cannot care more about our church (Jonah's church was Israel) than we do the kingdom of God

God's view is broader than ours

When we pray, "Lord move in a mighty way in

Ahwatukee", it may not mean in Calvary Chapel pray for the lost to be found before Jesus comes for His Bride, regardless of which "denomination" they fellowship at

in Matt 3 John the Baptist said the kingdom of heaven was at hand...not the Church at Rome or the Protestants are coming...

Matt 28:19-20 is the Great Commission, not the Great Competition

in God's perspective, I am not the pastor of CCA, I am a pastor in His kingdom – there is only one Church!

There is no "Who's Who" in heaven, only a "Who's *he*?"

It's all about Jesus, not us

Let's seek to catch the Wind, not control it

2. May we never get to a place where the plant is more important than true fruit

v6 is the only time in the entire book that Jonah is happy many times it is the plant (building, campus...your house) that makes the preacher happy

Matt 24:1-2

But that plant does not bear fruit, the Vine does

Abide in the Vine, not in a building or in your house in order to be fruitful – because He is coming soon!

Learn from Jonah – keep God's perspective

Beware self-righteousness and spiritual pride – churches are destroyed from the inside, not from an outside attack!

v13 Is Christ divided?

Eph 4:13-15

“Let’s cut to the chase, guys! Did I or Apollos or any other man die on the Cross for your sins? In Whose name are you baptized? This feud is prideful, meaningless, and destructive. Stop!”

if we the Body are divided, the Christ is divided...and Jesus bleeds anything that breaks the unity in Christ is sin

on non-essentials (within the Body) have round edges – it’s OK to disagree

on essentials (outside the Body) sharp edges

Heb 4:12

Matt 12:30 if not with Me are against Me

Matt 10:34-39 didn’t come with peace but a sword to

Divide

So...divide, don’t compromise

v14-16 I baptized none...in mine own name

there is even division over baptism...the church still does this today!

Why?

we are saved by Jesus, He is our substitute because His precious blood was shed to cover our sin.

(The sign of the new covenant is the atoning blood of Jesus)

We are not saved by baptism...otherwise both Jesus and Paul would have baptized multitudes rather than

- loving
- feeding
- teaching
- touching

if baptism were essential to baptism,

- why did Paul, the greatest evangelist ever, baptize so few?
Paul would most have certainly baptized everyone
- Paul would have baptized every Jew he could lay his hands on
(Rom 10:1)
- why did Jesus not baptize any? Jesus would have baptized everyone, because He came to seek and save the lost
- Paul is speaking great blasphemy here and his hypocrisy would be a stench to God

Note: Paul cannot be accused of stealing a people away from Jesus unto himself or of leading people astray

sign of a cult

- division over essential doctrine
- different Jesus
- drawn unto a certain man

v17 Christ sent me to...preach the gospel
Paul's Christ-given mission was to preach
(Rom 1:16-17, Rom 10:9-10), not to baptize
Paul's mission could not be stated more clearly

Not with wisdom of words

wisdom = "cleverness"

(from this verse to the end of Ch 3, we hear of wisdom 17 times)

Paul didn't come as a slick-talking medicine man or high-sounding theologian

he came with a simple message: God loves you!

Jesus said "I love you" with the loudest of voices – His death on the cross.

Does God love you? Look to the Cross for your answer!

The message of the Gospel is so simple that a child can understand it yet so deep that a doctor of theology cannot plumb its depths

Jesus calls us to have a child-like faith...so

the gospel is to be communicated in simple language so that all men may understand it. The Cross is for all men, regardless of IQ

common problem with natural man: making more complex the very simple message...corrupting it with pride

If you are saved, you know enough to share the Gospel; you need not go to seminary to be used by God

v18 preaching of the Cross

The Cross – God Almighty loving His creatures so much as to humble Himself by taking on our form, bearing all our sins, and paying our penalty as our substitute, thereby making it possible for unholy man to stand before a holy God

the unbelievers, who are perishing spiritually, think this is absolutely ridiculous and mock such a preposterous thought

but, for those who believe, and have eternal life as a result, this unspeakable love is the power of God to:

- Cleanse the unclean
- Purify the putrid
- Forgive the unforgivable
- Heal the sick
- Make new the old
- Purchase the worthless

every man's choice

- that perish: that are in the process of perishing
- which are saved: are in the process of being saved
sanctified

Phil 1:6

Jesus is the only issue of import in this life

That choice is binary

Jesus is Lord: Yes or No

2 paths on which to walk – to death or to life

good tree, good fruit or bad tree, bad fruit (Prov 14:12)

my lifestyle preaches what I believe; what is your lifestyle?

Evidence (fruit) of being saved:

- Love (God and neighbor – action not emotion)
- Unity
- Obedience to the Word
to hear attentively and then to consent in deed
- Prayer – 2 way communication with the Lord to get His
will done on earth
- Bible study

foolishness = “silliness, absurdity”

the world believes

- There is nor God...or...God is all and all is God...or...there are many gods...or...all roads lead to God.
The Bible says John 14:6
The Bible says there is but one True and Living God.
“Foolish!”
- All things are relative (especially morals and truth).
The Bible says that there is absolute Truth and a Divine standard of morals.
“Get out of my face. That’s foolish!”
- My good works pay for my sin.
The Bible says that the very best work is completely insufficient to pay for even the very least sin.
The Bible says blood is required to remove the stain of sin
“Foolish!”
- God grades on a curve
The Bible says that the only passing grade is perfection
“Foolish! Impossible!”
Agreed!

There is a major disconnect between the world’s ways and God’s ways
The foolishness of the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for all
who would believe

Ps 19:7

the power is in the Word of God, not in man’s “lofty” words

mind-blowing conversations at work (all very bright people!):

- Planet of the Apes: “The best part about that movie is that it could have happened.”
- A book read 10 years ago: “Fascinating concept.
Dinosaurs are not extinct but have evolved faster than man. The world is now run by dinosaurs.”

Who is foolish?

When facing trouble in your life and go to a psychologist or a secular counselor for help, this is the kind of thinking you pay \$75-150 per hour for!

God is truth. Truth is found only in God.

He is our help in time of need

Don’t look for help from this world!

Ps 33:10

Don’t listen to the advise of the world!

v19 For it is written

we studied the temptation of Jesus (Matt 4:1-11) in HF Friday night

key phrase: It is written

used by Jesus to rebuke all three temptations

the power to resist the prince of this world, the power to resist the world, is in the Word of God

James 4:6-8

The Word of God is truth, is our defense and our strength

Paul is quoting Is 29:13-14

Israel turned to Egypt, which was logical from man's perspective

In so doing, they turned away from the God of the universe, their Help

The process of being saved (sanctification, of being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ) does not come by lip service...but by

denying yourself, picking up your cross, and following Jesus

Again, in the temptation of Christ, satan promotes the opposite

- Indulge your flesh
- Deny the Cross
- Follow me instead

The world says the same thing as its prince

The world's ways and God's ways are diametrically opposed

God will show man's ways for what they are – empty, meaningless, vanity e.g. in the church at Corinth, all of the Greek reasoning and

wisdom bore bad fruit

The world cannot comprehend God's ways

- Victory thru surrender
- Receive by giving
- The strong serving the weak
- The way up is down
- Believing is seeing
- Gain your life by losing your life
- Life is forever...and it as a gift

The world does not understand God not His children

We are not here to make peace with the world, but to rescue those who are in it from death that is forever...and is earned

v20 Where

no God-less man (Rom 1:22) is wise before God because God is the very source of all wisdom.

This is an impossibility

Therefore, worldly wisdom is deceptive and foolish

Think back: where did the world's wisdom get you in times of trouble?

Deeper in trouble

What did your way get you? More pain, more hopelessness, more misery, no answers

God has revealed His wisdom in His Word

Prov 1:7

Unlike the world's ways and man's philosophies, the Word of God works!

- It comforts the hurting
- It heals the wounded
- It strengthens the weak
- It makes alive that which is dead
- It changes lives

Who is foolish? The man who follows the ways of the world

v21 it pleased God...to save

the world looks down upon Christians, seeing us as foolish and weak and simple-minded

if their feeling is not contempt and hatred, it is that we are pathetic

most men only trust that which they can see, touch, or smell

and they think they are in control

but...knowing God is by revelation only (by the Holy Spirit)

the world cannot possibly know God

man does not need enough intelligence to know God and His ways, he needs enough faith

the old adage: with age comes wisdom

for those in the world, this is not true. For them, age comes alone!

God says, "You cannot attain my wisdom. Trust in Me and I will teach it to you."

Those who humble themselves by letting go of their (limited) knowledge and grasping (the Infinite) God by faith (trusting Him) are saved.

John 6:26-29

As God was pleased with the righteousness of Jesus (Matt 3:16-17), it pleased Him to save me

Think on this for awhile – it pleased God to save me, a complete wretch!

Saving you gave God great pleasure! And that is how He looks at you now!

v22 Jews require a sign

the Jews: the receivers and the “keepers” of God’s Law, by which they believed they were saved

the Jews were offended that a pagan could live his whole life like a dog, then believe in Jesus, and allowed to walk right into the kingdom of God.

They, on the other hand kept the Law (or so they thought, Rom 7:14, 18) but did not accept Jesus as their Messiah...and they were still dead in their sin.

The Jews demanded a sign to verify the teaching of Jesus
the only sign given them was Jonah

we are saved from eternal death by God’s grace thru faith in Jesus Christ
God’s grace is a great offense to the religious.

The religious today are still offended by the simple truth of the Gospel
Religious family members cannot accept the wild child who is born again,
saved by grace thru faith

Gentiles seek after wisdom

They asked philosophically “What is truth?” and looked in the world for the answer

...like a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that isn’t there

because God is Truth. They could not find truth because they chose not to see God

Acts 17:16-21

They thought trusting your life in the death and resurrection of some guy you never even met was sheer stupidity – “Yeah, sure! Only an idiot would believe such a thing!”

the world thinks we are pretty strange, don’t they!?

But God’s ways are not natural, they are supernatural

Man cannot by his own means arrive at God’s ways, God must reveal them to man

this requires man to take his eyes off himself and to cast his eyes upon Jesus, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe

v23 we preach Christ crucified
the centrality of the Christian faith: the death, burial, and resurrection of
Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the
world...for whosoever believes
the world is blind and dead to this truth
the Jews could not accept God's view of their Messiah, which was so
radically different from their view of their Messiah
to the Jew, Jesus meant defeat, not victory
the Greeks just could not understand such a God, who is so radically
different than their gods, who were angry and love-less, in constant
need of appeasement
there is power and life and hope in the Cross!

v24 them which are called
but for those who receive God's way by faith, Jesus is

- the Way, the Truth, and the Life
- the answer to every problem
- power for the powerless
- defense for the defenseless
- help for the helpless
- hope for the hopeless
- comfort for the hurting
- joy for the despairing
- rest for the restless

Matt 11:28-30

v25 Because
because God's foolishness is wiser than man's highest wisdom and
because God's weakness is stronger than man's greatest strength,
the only way God and man can meet is via faith – man's faith in
what God has done on man's behalf
Is 53 and that whole scene (which we are entering this week) was not
weakness but unimaginable power of a loving Creator, who
humbled Himself by subjecting Himself to His creatures...so that
He could later exalt them for all eternity

Let's celebrate the foolishness of God and the weakness of God
Let's celebrate God's way

v26 not many

“many” vs “any” oh, the difference one letter makes!
Queen of England many years ago: I am saved by an “m”.
“m” = God’s grace

why not many of the wise or mighty or noble? Pride
to accept God’s way requires

- humility and submission
 - an admission of utter failure and inadequacy and inability
 - a proclamation of helplessness and hopelessness without Him
- as we studied in HF on Friday in the Beatitudes, the follower of Jesus is characterized by
- poverty of spirit
 - mourning for that poverty
 - hunger and thirst for God’s righteousness

worldliness, power, and prestige blind men to God’s eternal truth.

v27-28 confound

God has sovereignly chosen (v26-28)

1. not very wise (in the worldly sense)
2. not very influential (very little man-power)
3. not very wealthy (Matt 6:24)
4. weak \ e.g. Calvary movement...
5. lowly \ hippies that no one loved
6. despised / but God
7. me (John 15:13-16)

What did God chose me? To confound the Stephen Hawkings, Ted
Turners, and JD Rockefellers

Confound = “to shame, disgrace, dishonor”

man’s very best and brightest are humiliated by that which they hold
contemptible

the gospel is about God’s grace, not survival of the fittest

v29 no flesh

why does God do this? So no man may boast in His presence.

He is the holy and Infinite Creator and He will not tolerate the bragging of His wretched finite creature

This is the bottom line of Acts 4:5-13

- no man will boast
- He gets all the glory

So the choice is mine: to be wise and mighty and noble...or to be foolish and weak and lowly

I have thought it out...

- I would rather be a zip in this life and find Christ than to be a Ted Turner and die without bending my knee to Jesus
- I would rather be unlearned in the ways of the world and religion and be with Jesus than to be the smartest man alive, like Stephen Hawking, and be dead in my sin
- and I chose to hang out with other zips like me than with the rich and famous

I have learned that life and death are not biological, they are relational

- it is not what you know, it is Who you know
- it isn't what you have that counts, its Who has you that counts
- There is no "Who's Who" in heaven...there is only one Who...and the rest of us are "who's he?"

v30-31 glory in the Lord

NASB: But by His doing, you are in Christ Jesus

By God's doing, we are:

1. saved from sin and death
2. delivered from bondage
3. redeemed out of this world
4. restored to Him

By Jesus, we are wise
 acceptable
 cleansed
 conformed into His image

it's all God's doing, not mine; no man can add anything to Jesus

I can never boast in myself for all I am naturally is evil continually.

It is tiring being around people who glory in themselves, thinking they are
Wise and mighty and noble...and love to tell you about it!
After they drone on about themselves, they say, "Well, that's
enough about me. Now, what do you think about me?"

it is invigorating to be around Jesus!
And by association, around His disciples, the foolish and weak and
lowly

the adage: you don't get something for nothing" is wrong!
Those who think nothing of themselves get something spectacular
– the power of God!

1 Corinthians

Chapter 2

A continuation of the same subject from Ch 1

The cross of Jesus Christ

- Foolishness to the Greeks
- A stumblingblock to the Jews
- The power of God's salvation to the believer

The scene is 30 miles west of Athens, the cultural center of the world at the time

v1 when I came to you
Acts 18:1-17

not with excellency of speech or of wisdom

Paul didn't come to a place known for its philosophers and worldly
Wisdom with

- a philosophy to tickle their ears...but many "hard sayings" to natural man
- thunderous oratory...but with a simple message
- teaching topically...for he was an expositor of God's Word
Acts 20:27 (he was in Corinth for 18 months)

Declaring...testimony of God

What is the testimony of God?

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:16-17)

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (Is 53:10-11)

v2 I determined not to know...save Jesus and Him crucified
remember, Paul visited Corinth (Acts 18) after Athens (Acts 17)
He was effective in Athens and was there by God's leading...but they
mocked him once he got to the resurrection of Jesus.
His intellectually brilliant and stimulating sermon had no lasting impact –
a few believed but no church ever took root in Athens
Now, Paul humbles himself and greatly simplifies the message, a message
of the utmost importance: a crucified Savior who died for the sins
of the world

the Church needs this ministry today. The Camouflaged Church in USA
does not need “feel good” talks that do not convict the heart and
change lives

It needs the straight, life-transforming truth of God
the Church needs to be God-fearing, not man-pleasing,
needs to feed the sheep, not entertain the goats
We are not to make Jesus palatable to men
Jesus made men palatable to God
We therefore are to declare Jesus Christ

To declare = “preach and teach”
That is what you will get at Calvary Chapel – the preaching and teaching
of Jesus Christ and Him crucified

v3 in weakness...fear...trembling
Weakness: “feebleness of body or mind”
Note: this word appears 7 times in Scriptures, 5 of them in Paul's
letters to the Corinthians, the camouflaged church
fear = “terror”
Trembling: “quaking with fear”

Is that your image of Paul the Apostle? No
He was just a man like us...but was consummately available for
whatever the Lord wanted to do thru him
Paul opens up his heart for all of us to see...so that we would know that
God chooses the foolish and weak and lowly things of the world
Consider Paul's track record
Everywhere he went, riots broke out and people chased him
desiring to do him great harm
He had been stoned and left for dead in Lystra
He had been thrown in prison in Philippi
He was brought before the judges in Thessalonica
He had to be rushed out of Berea
He was mocked and scorned in Athens
...so he is a bit “gun shy”

And you can understand Paul's feeling

- when witnessing to a neighbor or co-worker
- Ever go door-to-door evangelizing...with butterflies the size of eagles (Ron and Collin)
- Ever taught a Bible study...shaking

I don't ever "wing it" on a Bible study – I prepare for it

God has given us His very best, we need to give Him our very best
I study during the week...then I get up on Saturday morning at 5:00 AM
when the house is quiet and still...so I can hear what the Lord
gives me...and the red ink flows

And I pray...for the Holy Spirit to teach me...and for the gift of teaching
The gift of teaching comes...and goes. I don't always have it, I
don't own it...it belongs to the Holy Spirit

When I jump out in my self-confidence – "I know this material, I
understand this passage of Scripture" – and do not seek the
Lord's help, He lets me go out on my own! And I throw a
real clunkers!

But every time I am uneasy and uncertain, knowing that I know
nothing and that I really need the Lord's help, He jumps in
and blesses. He even teaches me while I am speaking.

God keeps His servants humble! So if my message is a real dud,
you know what happened, and what didn't happen!

And you know how you can pray for me!

When I know my inability, He is able. I can only be available.

is this a contradiction – coming in weakness...declaring? Not when Jesus
is involved.

here in Corinth, the Lord told Paul to not be afraid, He had many
people here; Corinth would be a safe harbor for Paul for awhile
Acts 18:9-10

Paul is not coming on his pedigree or his self-confidence or his track
record.

He is not coming like Dale Carnegie, trying to win friends and influence
people

He is coming as a servant of God, after having been reminded Whose
work is being done...and by Whom

v4 not with enticing words

man's wisdom appeals to man's flesh (James 4:4)

a modern day tragedy – the invasion of psychology into the church.

My issue with psychology is not as a field of study, but as a philosophy, a world-view, a religion

Blindly, the Body of Christ has ingested a poison whose fundamental tenants undermine the fundamental tenants of Biblical Christianity.

- The Word of God says that Jesus Christ is our Wonderful Counselor and we need to depend on Him

psychology says man is my counselor and I should depend on man

- The Word of God says all men have fallen short of God's standard of righteousness and sinned

psychology uses man as the standard of righteousness and justifies man's corrupt behavior via sweet-sounding labels and contrived diseases. E.g. alcoholism is not sin, it is a disease

- The Word of God says we are to humbly deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow Jesus to be acceptable to God...and the Word says our minds must be transformed;

psychology proudly promotes self-esteem and that we should feel good about ourselves

- The Word of God says that all that God has for us is available in Jesus Christ, Who gives us His life of peace, joy, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control...and God is conforming us into the image of His Son;

psychology offers empty the self-improvement of man and dismisses the power of God as too simple and insufficient for today's complex problems.

- The Word of God says that knowing God is the ultimate issue of time and eternity and that Jesus is the focus of life;

psychology says we don't need to know God, we need to know ourselves and that we are the focus of life.

- The Word of God says we are to love God with everything we have and then to love others as we love ourselves;

psychology says we cannot love anybody else until we first love ourselves...and we need help doing that

Psychology

- as a philosophy provides no answers to the problems of man
- as a religious system blasphemes God while leading His people away from the Light and into spiritual darkness.

The Bible warns us against such subtle deceits that in the end times will tickle people's ears and lead them away from the sound doctrine of God.

2 Tim 3:1-7

2 Tim 4:2-4

Rather than embracing this cancer, the Body of Christ needs radical surgery to purge her of this worldly wisdom

in demonstration of the Spirit and of power

Paul did not come to Corinth with man's wisdom but with God's wisdom – the Gospel

Paul's preaching was by the power of the Holy Spirit - God made Paul effective.

Zech 4:6

The brilliant student and teacher poured himself out and asked the Lord to fill him with God's love...and the gift of teaching

1 John 2:27

coming from Athens, Paul had a fresh understanding that God doesn't need him to accomplish His work...doesn't need his university education...just a humble and contrite heart

In Corinth, Paul spoke much, wrote much, but his loudest testimony of Jesus was his life

We cannot witness of Jesus Christ – by what we say and what we do – without the power of the Holy Spirit

The Camouflaged Church in USA doesn't need man's clever programs, it needs Spirit-empowered preaching and Spirit-led lives to be the salt and light our Lord commanded

serve the Lord with emptiness of self and fullness of the Holy Spirit

v5 faith should not stand...but in the power of God (= the Gospel)
stand = "secure"
there is only a false sense of security in man's ways
the Holy Spirit is telling us to put our faith in God and His ways, not in
ourselves and our ways

because faith is as good as the object in which it is placed
faith placed in Jesus is like standing on Rock...all other faith is
like sinking sand
Matt 7:24-27

E.G. challenge to debate put to Dr. Ironside by well-known agnostic
His response: bring me one broken, destroyed life (one alcoholic,
one drug addict, one prostitute) that has been healed and
changed by the wisdom agnosticism...and I will bring 100
such lives healed and changed by the Gospel of Jesus
Christ

The agnostic just walked away...knowing he could not produce
even one life victoriously transformed by his belief system

Note: only God the Father can bring a man to Christ
John 8:44, 1 Cor 3:6-7

But, we are still to be faithful to our calling of witnessing of Jesus
in a helpless and hopeless world
just know that we save no one by our testimony – salvation is a
free gift of God, who alone can give it
however, our faithfulness is factored into God's rewards system in
heaven (1 Cor 3:10-15)

- v6 speak wisdom among them that are perfect
perfect = “complete”
who are the perfect? Those who
- believe the foolishness of God
 - seek shelter in the weakness of God
 - were lowly and humble...and are exalted
 - find comfort, joy, peace, rest, and healing in a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ
 - are born-again
 - the spiritually mature (more on that next chapter)

world: this age (The New Age...isn't)

to nought: to nothing

1 John 2:17 says the world is passing away – just watch the evening news or read history

Paul did not use worldly methods to communicate the Gospel ala Strategic Marketing plans and PR campaigns. His “program” was the power of the Holy Spirit

much of the Church today is confused – the Church is:

- not an American business, it is a living body
- not a monument to man, it is the Bride of Christ
- strengthened or grown by man’s cleverness, but by
 1. the Word of God
 2. prayer
 3. fellowship of the believers

v7 in a mystery

“secret, a silence imposed”

something that has always been true but was hidden...until now when God is revealing it

the testimony of God – Jesus and Him crucified – was established within the Triune Godhead before Gen 1:1

God knew when He created man in His own image – giving him a spiritual nature and a free will – that man would fall

In His love, God ordained the only possible solution to restore man – Calvary, John 3:16

Revealed in type in OT...but now revealed personally and by direct preaching...now that it was clear what the Scriptures were saying

v8 which none of the princes of this world knew

What is the Holy Spirit saying to us thru the Apostle Paul?

- the most powerful, most intelligent creature, goofed!
- Satan is not a “worthy” opponent of God in some cosmic struggle between good and evil
- Satan is very powerful...compared to us...but power-less compared to Jesus (James 4:7)
- Satan is on a leash, able to do only as permitted by God
God is in absolute control
God alone is all-powerful and all-knowing
- Satan is deceived by his pride and beauty and power...he thinks he is able to execute his own plan
The cross was Satan’s defeat, not Jesus’

Heb 2:9-18

Satan knows Scripture...but is blind to God’s plan because the Truth is not revealed in his stony little heart

v9-10 God hath prepared

not a reference, in the middle of a discussion of God’s wisdom, to what God has for us in heaven...although it is almost always used that way

In context: right here, right now there are things the human eye cannot see...things human reason cannot attain...because the wisdom of God is based on His Spirit, not the 5 senses of natural man

The things of God can be seen only with eyes of faith by the revelation of God

keyword: revealed

truth is revealed by the Author of Truth, it is not learned by the student

E.G. What reaction from unsaved family and friends do you get when you share

- 1 Thes 4:12-17
- that a Christian funeral is a celebration?

“You’re crazy!”

God is Spirit, He sent us His Holy Spirit...

...the gifts and riches of His glory He has for us are spiritual and they are for right here, right now

Life, and it more abundantly, that Jesus came to give us starts the moment you first believe

so don’t try to receive the things of God with your 5 senses

receive them by your spirit, which God has quickened by grace thru faith

v11 who knows

you and I know how we feel...we do not know how God feels

He must be reveal that to us

you know things about yourself, way down deep in your heart, that the person next to you doesn't...and you're not telling...and probably shouldn't!

in the same way, man does not know God...but God wants us to know
"Be still and know that I am God"

as long as we are in this body made of dust, our

1. eyes will not see God
2. ears will not hear God
3. fingertips will not touch God
4. nose will not smell the sweet fragrance of God
5. tongue will not taste that the Lord is good

our	cleverness	will never reach God's	wisdom
	intelligence		plan
	imagination		reality
	love		love

the essence of God, His wisdom, plan, reality, and love must be revealed to our hearts by God the Holy Spirit

v12 the Spirit which is of God...freely given

world: cosmos, the place

the spirit of the world is one of rebellion against God and His ways

freely given: freely undeservedly given

(this mystery is God's plan, not man's!)

Man's responsibility is to throw down his poverty-stricken ways and accept the hyper-rich gifts of God's glory

Eph 3:14-21

Col 1:25-28

v13 which the Holy Ghost teacheth
 man cannot teach that which he cannot reach...so the Holy Spirit pours
 out upon us His gift of teaching (2 parts! Mine and yours)
 Eph 4:11-12 in light of 1 John 2:27
 Comparing spiritual things with spiritual: one cannot

- compare flowers with dogs, but with other flowers and plants
- compare God with anything in the world

 the Word of God is spiritual and God-breathed – so compare Scripture
 with Scripture, not with man’s philosophies and religions
 (hopeless since Rom 7:18)

 every time you read the Word, the Holy Spirit shows you something
 new...something you need today!
 The Bible is not like an Algebra text book – you can never learn all God
 has to give
 Get in the Word and allow the Holy Spirit to unfold the truth in your heart
 It truly is a Living Word!
 God freely gave us His Word so that we can compare things the world
 cannot even see

v14 natural man receiveth not...spiritually discerned
 natural man: man’s intellect, the mind and conscience of a spiritually
 dead person (Eph 2:1-3)
 natural man cannot know the truth – the truth is evident through Scripture
 only the Holy Spirit can show man the things of God
 without the Spirit of God, man has no understanding of spiritual
 things...any more than a toddler can discuss quantum
 physics and microbiology

 the things of the Spirit of God are spiritual
 natural man is controlled by the flesh and has a dead spirit
 so it is impossible for natural man to receive or understand or
 accept or embrace God or God’s ways
 no matter how smart the person is:

- the operating system isn’t “booted”
- the machine isn’t online...

 what is the problem to be overcome: spiritual death
 dead men cannot see the Lord
 hear
 taste
 know

 discernment is a spiritual capacity, given by the Spirit of Truth
 we can only apprehend the things of God by faith, not by our
 intelligence or our philosophies

we, who are able to discern, know the mystery of God
we now understand right from wrong
truth from lie
light from darkness
glory from folly
we know the truth and the truth has set us free

v15 he that is spiritual
spiritual = born again
what is the only solution: spiritual re-birth, becoming a new
creature
John 3:3-8
2 Cor 5:17
the spiritual man is controlled by the Spirit of God
how and Who and why? Jesus because
2 Cor 5:20-21, Gal 3:13, John 3:16
what can you add to that? Absolutely nothing!

judgeth: understand, discern

judged of no man: the natural man has tremendous difficulty with you, a
child of God

he doesn't understand what you do for fun

- don't get drunk
- don't party
- don't chase women
- aren't consumed with the stock market or retirement
plans

he doesn't understand your joy
contentment
peace
meaning of life

my “moonlighting” job at APS is intellectually stimulating

- complex buy/sell decisions based on many volatile factors
- some speculation, even “poker” in terms of timing of transactions
- trust me with about \$800 K every day to keep the gas burning power plants operating and to make a profit trading
- but there is no real satisfaction or joy or eternal value

my co-workers do not understand my real job – serving the Lord is far superior

- no money in it
- truths that are simple yet unsearchably deep
- environment of grace, vs “works”, overflowing with love
- the results are the responsibility of my Master – the pressure is off
- enormous eternal value, satisfaction, and joy

v16 the mind of Christ

the mind of Christ has its receptors in a different realm

the Spirit knows the mind of Christ

- of submission to the will of the Father
- of self-emptying

the world does not understand. They seek

- self-glory
- self-indulgence
- self-esteem
- self-confidence

the self-centered cannot understand the God-centered

1 Corinthians

Chapter 3

Having made a distinction between all men (natural or spiritual), Paul now makes a distinction between believers.

v1-3 could not speak as unto spiritual

in Ch 2, Paul wrote that the natural man, who is governed by his flesh, has no spiritual comprehension, but the born-again, spiritual man, who is governed by the Holy Spirit, does

However, Paul cannot talk to the Corinthians as spiritual people because they lack the spiritual maturity to eat the meat of the Word.

They are walking in the flesh, not in the Spirit

So Paul had to write to them of simple, baby things

Paul rebukes this church for its inexcusable lack of spiritual growth.

They should have grown and matured spiritually in the 4 years since he left them

They should be meat-eaters, but they cannot digest anything stronger than milk

Consider the dietary requirements for infants and toddlers

We are nourished by the milk but we grow strong by the meat...once our digestive system matures

carnal

carnal Christian:

- a born again believer who is eligible for the Rapture; the benefits of salvation are ours by grace, not by our performance
- a spiritual person who has the ability but no desire to grow in Christ
- a babe in Christ who should be mature and walk in the Spirit vs the flesh

babies:

cannot feed themselves
cannot clean themselves
are self-centered
have no mercy!
Don't know anything

babies are cute when they are babies, but a teenager acting like a baby is pathetic

- one who is stunted in their spiritual growth – the issue is “old” babes, not “new” babes

Paul is saying to the Corinthians Heb 6:1-2

“Let's move on from here into maturity. Let's develop.”

Is it easy growing up? No, there are many tough lessons along the way but my folks didn't avoid the tough lessons...because they knew I needed them in order to grow up the Holy Spirit, thru Paul, is giving God's kids a tough lesson they needed in order to grow spiritually the lesson is as needed today in this place as it was then in that place

We all need to ask ourselves the question:

Am I a carnal Christian?

We all need to take stock of our spiritual maturity

We all need to examine our desire to grow spiritually

How long have you been born-again...Do you eat meat or do you still require milk?

If you desire to be stronger – who wants to remain an infant? – then:

- eat right (daily bread, study vs read, Ps 1:1-3)
- exercise (pray, step out in faith, get involved, serve the Lord)

it is my heart to see:

- the lost saved
- the backslidden come back home and be restored
- the unchurched plugged in and serving the Lord
- all to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ
- Bible studies to be started by you as you go and teach the nations, as Jesus commanded! At work (office or home), with neighbors and friends
- Spiritual gifts being exercised
- Men and women gathering for prayer
- Lives changed
- God glorified

But it breaks my heart, grieves my spirit, when I see believers who

- Don't want to know God's Word...or don't think they need to
- Are quick with an excuse to do something, anything but a spiritual activity (study, reading, prayer, fellowship with other believers)
- Walks with Christ are so easily derailed by the devil
- Are still carrying the baggage of the world when they no longer should be (cereal box)
- Clearly have not made Jesus Christ their top priority

Note: key – heart-broken vs angry
I do not want to misrepresent God like Moses did
God is not angry, He is heart-broken

Why am I grieved by these things?

- The Lord our God desires to have an intimate relationship with every one of us...yet we shine Him on
- The Lord our God is always faithful and always near...yet we are unfaithful and distant
- The Lord our God never makes excuses...yet we are so creative in our excuse making
- The Lord wants us to check our bags...not carry them around
Heb 12:1-2
- The Lord our God thinks continually good thoughts about us...but He gets so few of our thoughts and then usually when we are in trouble
- The Lord our God has given us His very best...yet we give Him leftovers or nothing at all

On the flip side,

- what a joy to fellowship with thirsty and hungry people
(Matt 5:6)!
- how glorious when broken and hurting lives are healed and comforted by the Word of God!
- what a rush to see spiritual growth in others! And to hear
“This study is changing my life!”
Because the Lord is magnified and glorified!
- How blessed I was to hear on Tuesday night
“I want to be better grounded so I can more effectively
witness of Jesus”
“I’m tired of being lukewarm”

so I ask you

- What in the world is better than God’s love?
- Why settle for a mediocre relationship when you can have a passionately intimate one?
- Why eat the crumbs off the floor when you can sit at the king’s table?

As I have pondered the death of my car this week, if our relationship with Jesus Christ were an automobile,

- Would you be driving a neglected and abused bucket of bolts...or a finely tuned and brightly polished high-performance machine?
- Would you settle for that...or would you want to drive something nicer?

He is offering the best...so don't settle for anything less!

(back to v3)

Carnality is seen when the flesh is on display – the tell-tale signs of carnality (fruit of the flesh) are division, strife, jealousy.

- “I’m going to give you a piece of my mind!”
[I can’t afford to lose any more!]
- Christianity is not a competition (Scanlans)
Keep your eyes on Jesus
Fear God, not man...Serve God, not man

Prov 13:10

Only by pride comes contention

These things will destroy a church body

The work of the Holy Spirit in the Church is unity (Eph 4:1-6)

Love is the means, not pride

v4-5 I am of Paul

they are fighting over servants!

revere only the Lord, not the pastor (Is 64:6 applies to every man).

No man should carry the title of “reverend” for it is reserved for the Lord

Ps 111:9

as wrong as it is to shoot the messenger, it is wrong to glorify the messenger (ala Paul and Barnabas being worshipped as Mercury and Juniper in Acts 14 at Lystra)

we are only instruments – I am no different than Balaam’s donkey!

the Author of the message is to be the focal point of our attention and devotion, not the messenger

This may be the beginning of denominations!

The Body of Christ fragmented almost immediately!

But the Body of Christ does not grow by transferring people from one denomination to another

growth happens when the church goes on search and rescue missions into the world to seek and save the lost, to reclaim the backslidden

growth happens when we preach Jesus Christ

v6-7 planted...watered...increase

the farmer sows the seed, irrigates the land and/or God sends the rain.
What does the farmer do to the seed when it is in the ground?
Nothing but wait for God to bring life from death

by His sovereign will, God has chosen to involve man in His work of salvation; we are not involved because of our merit

He has given us His Word and we share it with others, but God is responsible for the results – He alone can lead a man to Jesus

John 6:44, John 14:6

this really takes the pressure off His servants!

We are not on a quota system

“What have you done for me lately?”

e.g. David wanted to build God a house...God blessed him instead which means the planter and water-er deserve no glory.

v8 are one

“Me and Apollos...we are one! We are nothing! We are only instruments!

Regarding the division in the church: Focus on God – He is everything!”

His own reward according to his own labor

A lesson in God’s economics and His work ethic

there are coattails into heaven, but none *in* heaven

salvation is the free gift of God by His grace (Eph 2:8-9)

but rewards are earned

Wow! God pays His laborers...the rewards systems is unimaginable

I am to labor with God

Proverbs regarding sluggards (idle, slack, slothful) have both human and spiritual dimensions

1. 6:6-9 consider the ant and be wise
how long will you lie there and sleep?
2. 10:26 to God is bitter, nauseating, irritant
(like 2nd hand smoke)
3. 13:4 rewards go to the faithful and diligent
4. 20:4 does not plant, resulting in no harvest from
his life (unfaithful steward is choke
full of excuses)
5. 26:16 self-deceived that everything is OK

What is my work to do?

Eph 1:14

Phil 2:13

Eph 2:10

we will be rewarded in heaven. How do we earn these rewards?

- not for how many souls we won for Christ (a deception)
- for the faithfulness by which we pursued our calling
fueled by God's love and an hunger/thirst for righteousness
and an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ

v9 laborers together with God

it is His work, He chooses to accomplish it using us

the increase belong to God...then He sends harvesters (Luke 10:2)

the harvest is great but the laborers are few

it is only by His grace that God would stoop so low as to work
with me!

since He is "responsible" for the results, my part is to be faithful to the
work He wants to do thru me

rewards are distributed based on faithfulness, not on the visibility
of our ministry

those "on stage" are not qualified for a greater reward just because of
where they serve the Lord

God sees what no man sees – the quiet, steadfast labor of love

The behind-the-scenes labor will be greatly rewarded

All work is "equal" in God's eyes, assigned according to His sovereign
will – the variable is the faithfulness of the servant

God's husbandry

You are God's field...a tilled, cultivated field

The field belongs to God

I think the reference is to a garden: you are God's garden

A garden is where God first communed with man

Adam was given the work of a gardener

At the same time, we are God's garden

John 15:1-5

God plants a garden to enjoy the fruit of the garden

God desires to come to you and enjoy the fruit of His garden

Gal 5:22-23

If He doesn't find His love in His garden, the fellowship will be
very shallow and unfulfilling

e.g. letting the love of the Lord flow thru you to visitors

God's building

We are cultivated...then God builds us (man does not build us)

He grows us on a foundation

As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we grow

deeper and broader as we mature spiritually

we control our own spiritual growth

it is God's desire...is it yours?

v10-11

wise master builder

Paul, by the grace of God, is the "architect"

It was the work appointed him by God...and he did it faithfully

the foundation...Jesus Christ

Paul laid the foundation of God's building – the Church

Jesus Christ is that foundation

The foundation is the most critical part of a stable building, the main

support for the building

when have a solid foundation you have a solid building

Several weeks ago, Tony helped me concrete around the pool – he

provided the skill and I provided the wheelbarrow labor

per Tony Rannochio:

- there is only one foundation per building
there is only one Lord
no other foundation is needed (Prov 10:25)
- the foundation is the footings that are sunk into the ground...not
the slab that rests on the footings
ala bedrock – Jesus is the Rock upon which we build
- the foundation ensures the integrity, and dictates the size, of the
building, that can be built upon it...it provides the strength
- the wider and deeper the foundation, the bigger and the taller
the building can be built
the more we mature in the Lord, the more we stand on Him,
the more He can use us
- the slab is where we walk, it can crack...but the foundation
carries the load
as we walk, we stumble, but the Lord carries us as we cast
our burdens because He cares for us
- the foundation distributes the weight so the slab is not crushed
Matt 11:28-30

I learned a valuable lesson on the first load, which I dumped in the yard:
I tried of my own strength to muscle it...and it beat me up
I learned that my foundation was very important if I were to be
able to do the job
the wheelbarrow (my work God has appointed me) was heavy and
awkward
the terrain was rocky, not level, had sharp turns
I was unbalanced and out of control
There was nothing I could do about the terrain, the path God had given me
but to walk on that path I needed balance, self-control, a foundation
my feet needed to be spread apart, and cannot cross them (I will
go where my feet go!)
I needed good posture, straight and firm, head up...not hunched
over
I kept thinking back to line drills in HS football – I still got
pancaked but that is besides the point
I learned that foundation is everything, my strength has nothing to do with
It. And I never dumped another load!

Also, notice that it says “take heed how you build”, not “if you build”
You cannot hide the light in your life
You cannot disguise the work of God in your life
Either you get involved in God’s work – and experience victory in
your life and know the joy of serving the Lord – or you
become a sluggard – feel the weight of the world and
experience a defeated life
So, every man is building
Therefore, how you are building is the question

Other (v11): “alongside of”
The idea of laying a foundation alongside that of Christ, a
foundation of “Christ Plus”
Prosperity
Health and wealth
Word of Faith
Positive Confession
The only foundation is “Christ Alone”
Gal 1:6 is a deformed gospel, not the gospel of grace,
another gospel laid alongside of
Matt 16:13-18
Is 28:16

v12-13

man build upon this foundation...by fire

notice that the foundation is in place, it is unquestioned.

Salvation has been settled...Paul is writing to believers

Now, "What have you done with Jesus Christ?"

How faithful have you been to your appointed work?

How do you spend the time and resources the Lord has given you?

Everyday is a building day – what materials are you using

There are no days off, no vacations this side of eternity

Some materials are rare and precious and permanent things – lifestyles led by the Holy Spirit faithfully doing God's work and selflessly reflecting God's eternal perspective

Others materials are plentiful, worthless things – lifestyles based on the flesh reflecting man's fleeting and selfish perspective

(3 little pigs and the big bad wolf)

I think many houses have both kinds of building materials

All, no doubt, are painted up nice and pretty, given a beautiful facade...but beyond the front door:

- a cardboard shanty

or

- a Better Homes and Garden house

And every house must pass inspection by the all-seeing Master

Architect to determine whether or not it meets code

Fire is His means of inspecting

v14-15

abide...burned

the Refiner's Fire reveals the building material beneath the pretty facade

man's building will be judged by his motivation
our motives count! (Matt 6:1-4 SoM)

did I do those things to glorify God...or to get the praises of men?

rare, costly, selfless material is purified and strengthened
my appointed work done out of the love of Christ
the love of Christ constrains me to go the extra mile
I don't see the work as sacrifice but joy and blessings
...even a thrill that my Lord would consider using me to do them!

plentiful, worthless, selfish material is consumed in the fire by a jealous God who is a consuming fire
work of my will done with false motivations for men-pleasing reasons

we will be rewarded for the building that passes inspection, we will not be rewarded for an ash pile

we enter into the kingdom of God with smoking pants or some measure of reward – the carnal Christians will be the ones with smoking pants and no rewards

the unsettled issue is "What have you done and what are you doing with Jesus Christ?"

Are you fruitful?

Are you salt and light?

Or have you blended into the world around you?

Remember, you are building every day.

What are you building with?

Are you building to code?

Will your building pass the inspection of the Master

Architect?

Build wisely!!!!!!

v16 the temple of God

the God of the universe inhabits the hearts of His children

1 Cor 6:19-20

I don't even belong to myself!

Purchased when I was worthless, then

Transformed into priceless

Eph 2:20-22

the Church is built to be a habitation

1 Peter 2:4-5

v9 peculiar = purchased

so not every man is a Temple of God, only those who with faith in Jesus

for example, Mahatma Ghandi, a sincere, religious man who

practiced self-denial as a means of righteousness

- walked barefoot all the time...produced an impressive

set of calluses on his feet

- ate very little...left him very frail

- with his odd diet, had very bad breath

what did all that make him? A super callused fragile mystic hexed

by halitosis

any way, it is important for the believer to know and remember that God

He is as close to you as your heart...remember that as you make

lifestyle choices

v17 defile the temple

whoa! A heavy verse! Defile...destroy

what defiles the temple of God?

- Alcohol?
- Cigarettes?
- Candy bars?
- Coca-Cola?

Where do you draw that line?

Those things are not healthy but I don't think that is what the Holy Spirit

has in mind. Consider

Acts 15:28-29

1 Cor 6:15-18

What defiles the Temple of God? A false god...an idol

We are God's building (v9)...and we are building every day
is the building you have built for God to dwell in one you would want on
the Parade of Homes? Or is it a cardboard shack?

God desires His living quarters to be:

- clean – for He is holy (with repentance, 1 John 1:9)
- stable – not double-minded and unstable in all its ways...or
easily blown by the winds of doctrine
- functional – He has work to do
- still – so we will know that He is God...when sit at the feet of
Jesus
- comfortable – because He wants an intimate, personal
relationship with you

so we say: “Oh, man! I had better clean up my act, get my life together
for Jesus!”

but the Bible says “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain
that build it.” (Ps 127:1)

we say: “I need to get all my ducks in a row so the Lord can use me!”

but then I realize that the Bible teaches that I am a duck...and i need to let
the Lord put me in a row!

What we do need to do is repent...and be cleansed

God desires to live in our hearts...what a precious reality! So:

- submit your will to the Father's
- surrender unconditionally every part of your life to Jesus
- let Jesus build, let the Potter shape
- guard your eye gate and ear gate and mouth gate so your
temple is not defiled by the pollution of the world
- guard your heart and soul and mind against the onslaught of a
vicious enemy

Do not defile His temple with the lusts of the flesh...aka idolatry

v18 Let no man deceive himself

James 1:22

we deceive ourselves when we listen to

- the wisdom of the world
- the philosophies of man
- the desires of the flesh

James 1:13-16

isn't it amazing what man will believe when he rejects the truth of God!?

e.g. Hindus in India regarding cows...while they are starving

let him become a fool that he may be wise

another of God's counter-culture ways – become wise (in God's eyes) by becoming a fool (in the world's eyes) – a radical change of course

this is accomplished by faith...not by works ala cleaning self up

don't seek worldly wisdom, seek God's wisdom by faith

read the Word every day (Rom 10:17)

Why every day? Because the world will seek to fill that which has not been filled with the Word of God

don't handicap yourself – discover the love of God in the Word of God

v19 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness

man tries to make God his size, so he can

- cut a deal favorable to his desires
- maneuver around God's ways, looking for loop holes
- manipulate God to do his will

such a man does not know God!

v20 the thoughts of the wise...are vain

God knows every heart and every thought - there are no secrets from God

Solomon – all his pursuits and thoughts not centered on God proved to be empty and meaningless

the smartest people on earth still don't know where we came from or where we are going – they think we are idiots

the philosophies of man offer no answers to life's problems because they reject the truth

psychology concocts only problems, no solutions

2 cases that have touched this Body: nearly identical

- college boys, raised in a Christian home, jumping into the drug scene
- ending up in psychiatric hospitals
- diagnosed with “schizophrenia” vs a mind corrupted by drugs
- by “doctors” that deny the impact of drugs...while using other addictive, destructive drugs to “cure”
- by parents that find it initially easier to believe the lie than face the truth

the mind is a terrible thing to waste! The world has a reprobate (worthless) mind but believers are transformed by the renewing of their mind

required: submission and unconditional surrender

an active faith in Christ is not an emotional crutch for silly people, it is the only rational choice of a thinking man

walking by faith in Jesus, and not by sight, is the sign of a healthy mind

v21-23

whether of Paul or of Apollos or of Cephas
still addressing divisions
man naturally divides

- nationalism – extreme = war, soccer games
- racism – ethnic strife all over the world
- family quarrels: Hatfield's and McCoy's
- School (HS or college) rivalries
 1. My favorite schools: UNC and whoever is playing NC State
 2. Why do U of A grads hang their diplomas from the rear view mirror?
So they can park in the handicap spaces
 3. How many ASU freshmen does it take to screw in a light bulb?
None – it is a junior level course

Division is so easy, so natural...even in the Church!
denominations

Unity, on the other hand, is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit
Eph 4

all things are yours...ye are Christ's

The enemy seeks to divide and conquer...so he can destroy
the answer to division is Jesus Christ

James 4:6-8

John 10:10, 27-30

Rom 8:35-39

This is an awesome truth. We need to live like we believe it, we need to be doers of the Word, not just hearers lest we deceive ourselves

1 Corinthians

Chapter 4

This is the final chapter in which Paul deals with the #1 problem in this Camouflaged Church - divisions

- v1 Let a man so account of us
“You need examples of spiritual maturity. Consider (count) Apollos and me – we are servants.”
Mark 10:42-45

ministers of Christ: a servant

- we are all ministers (“servants”)...not just me and Chuck
how are you serving the Lord?
- Who are the teachers? To whom does James 3:1 apply?
Me
Chuck
Every parent (Deut 6:6-9)
Every husband (wash bride in the water of the Word)
The older women (to teach the younger women)
The older men (to teach the younger men)
- we are all preachers, whether we like it or not
because we all preach some message with our lives
the things we do and say send a message to those around us and
those watching us
what kind of a message are you giving? Jesus is listening too!

stewards of the mysteries of God

steward:

- “house manager”
the servant with the responsibility to oversee the things of
another, his Master
pay the bills
order the food
make sure the other servants do their job
the steward does not own that which he is managing, he is a
skilled and trusted agent of the owner

the Bible says everything belongs to God.

when the truth of stewardship is applied to material things,
there is tremendous freedom in stewardship vs
ownership

in light of your attitude regarding your house, car, etc...do
you own them...or do they own you?

With ownership comes worry, with stewardship comes
liberty

- “under rower” – a galley slave, the lowest of slaves, chained to an oar in a Roman naval or commercial vessel
Paul is wondering why they are fighting over their favorite slave or debating the attributes of the lowest slaves?
Who cares? It’s all about Jesus!
Paul and Apollos are being treated like celebrities
Man naturally esteems and is drawn to celebrities, we pour out our attention and adulation upon them
People magazine
Entertainment Tonight
Access Hollywood
pro sports figures
BUT...there are no celebrities in the kingdom of God...just galley slaves
- in this context, a preacher of the Gospel (1 Peter 4:7-11), Paul is a servant dispensing the Word of God, the truths of God now being revealed by the Holy Spirit...the mysteries of God

And we too are ministers, teachers, preachers

mysteries of God

Jesus said of John the Baptist: Matt 11:11

How can that be?

He was the greatest prophet...because he had the most clarity regarding Jesus (John 1:29)

but he later sent disciples to Jesus to inquire as to whether or not He was the Messiah...he wasn’t perfectly clear

we have greater clarity than John – we have the revealed Truth that Jesus:

- is Lord
- is risen
- is alive
- is coming again to judge and to reign
- is the Light of the world
- is the Way the Truth and the Life
- is the Good Shepherd
- is I AM, the Word of God made flesh

The Truth changes lives – I am living proof, and so are you!

I am thankful for the faithful steward who shared with me the mysteries of God

We are stewards of...what?

1. our relationship with Jesus

are we faithful with the most remarkable gift ever given?

usually the “tyranny of the urgent” robs us of precious,
necessary time with Him

we are too busy for our Lord...what is wrong with that
picture?

A faithful servant is to “pass it on”

2. Spouse

Another precious gift of God...are we faithful to that
person and to that relationship?

Do we abuse or neglect or take for granted this
relationship...or do we cherish and protect it?

Since your spouse is gift from God, you are accountable to
Him to be a faithful steward...not to your spouse

3. Children

They are God’s children...on loan to us for a season

We are given the responsibility to train them up in God’s
ways...we instruct by word and by example

and we are accountable to God for doing so

Ezk 3:17-21 is for us parents

You are the parent of a teenager...or a “terrible 2”. No
difference

Do you enjoy holding at bay a rabid dog on a pole attached
to a leather muzzle?

Is it fun living with that dog? Caring for that dog?

Does Deut 21:18-21 come to mind?

WWJD?

- Get them under control – kids these days are out of control partly because the parents are out of control, shirking their responsibility of being parents. Somewhere, many parents have stopped being parents...while the kids cry out
- Love him or her or them. As His steward, do His will

How? John 15:5

4. Church

This is God's work, not our own. In fact, God is working in spite of us!

He has entrusted us as stewards to participate in His work...not just me but every one of us

WWJD: seek and save the lost. As His steward, do His will

5. Job

Col 3:23 doesn't matter where you work if you are a supervisor or have responsibility of another at work, do you like the whining, murmuring, complaining, contentious, troublesome employee?

Would you rather fire them or transfer them?

WWJD? Love them, serve them. As His steward, do His will

6. Our homes

Living within our means

Using credit cards to live beyond our means is unfaithful stewardship

Prov 22:7

even if you have no credit card debt because you pay the full balance every month, you are still spending more money...because it is so easy

v2 required in stewards...be found faithful
the expected performance, the only expectation, of that trusted steward is
faithfulness
He didn't say anything about being eloquent or mighty or delivering
results

Don't you appreciate a faithful
Spouse
Friend
Who love you just as you are and who are closer than a
brother...even/especially when times are tough

I appreciate the faithful servant in this Body that I can count on to come
along side and row with me
we all appreciate faithfulness in others...likewise, God appreciates a
faithful steward

God has called us all to be an under rowers...and to be faithful
Jesus had this to say – Luke 12:37-48

- Faithful
- wise (trustworthy)
- watching
- busy
- accountable

I yearn to hear from Jesus:

“Well done good and faithful steward. You have been faithful
with little, I will give you much”
Luke 19:17

we must be faithful with all God has given us - His Son, His Word, time,
possessions, relationships, money, our bodies....
our priorities, our Day Timers should reflect our faithfulness
our hearts reveal our faithfulness

examine your life – to whom and/or what are you faithful?

v3-4 it is a small thing that I should be judged by you
“You judge me. It doesn’t matter.”
It is a very small thing to be judged by men...but it is a fearful
thing to fall into the hands of a Living God!
Christianity is not a popularity contest
They were judging Paul and his ministry
Paul is sensitive to the opinions of others, but they in no way direct his
path
Paul didn’t preach only warm fuzzy messages so people would love him
and come back next week; he spoke the truth of God in loving
frankness – an example for every pastor!
He said “I know nothing of myself”
He counts no sin against himself
Paul, a murderer who called himself the chief of sinners, knows he
is clean and forgiven
Rom 8:1, 2 Cor 5:17, Ps 103:12, Ps 32:1

So don’t fret when someone judges you – after all, you know worse things
about yourself than that person does!
Know what Paul knew – clean and forgiven

He that judgeth me is the Lord
the faithful steward knows Who is his Master, to Whom alone he is
accountable. It is His will he seeks to do, and not the will of any
other or his own
Matt 10:28, 32-33

It is only important that I please Jesus.
Serving the Lord is not a popularity contest
He didn’t send me out here to be popular and gather a people unto
myself...
He sent me out here to be a faithful steward of His mysteries so
that He might be known and that He might gather a people
unto Himself

As true for you as it is for me
If Jesus didn't tell you to serve in the Sunday School or on the worship
team or...then don't do it!
But if He did, do it...and do it faithfully unto Him, not unto Calvary
Chapel or unto me
And don't listen to the discouragement of the devil: "Why bother? What
impact can you possibly have? Just...don't do anything"

Consider the impact on the world of one man, of one act of service:

- Richard Kimball was a Sunday School teacher in a church in Chicago
- He felt a burden for one of his unbelieving students...so he went to visit him where he was working in a shoe store
- He lovingly and faithfully shared the love of Jesus as led by the Holy Spirit...and DL Moody surrendered his life to the Lord
- Moody changed the course of his life and went on to be an evangelist that rocked 2 continents
- While preaching in Britain, the Lord touched...and "torched" ...another man (can't remember his name), who also was used to evangelize 2 continents
- While preaching in New England, a discouraged "working by his own strength" minister caught fire and also became a powerful evangelist
- This man's observant assistant was Billy Sunday...who learned from him and replaced him
- Leaders of the City of Charlotte NC heard Billy Sunday preach, determined to win their city for Jesus, and invited Billy Sunday to their city
- At that revival meeting was a 16 year old named Billy Graham...who has subsequently preached the Gospel to more people than any other man who has ever lived
- In addition, DL Moody Bible Institute and Billy Graham School of Evangelism have trained thousands of evangelists and sent them into the world to preach the Gospel
- How did all of this start? With the faithful and obedient visit of a "nobody" to an unbeliever!
Consider the magnitude of impact on the world of that 1 visit!
Consider the eternal reward of one Richard Kimball!

And I think I have a plan! And you think you have a plan!
How puny are our plans!
We need to get in step with God's awesome plan
E.G. Diana to HF this Friday night – an appointment!

Has the Lord burdened your heart with something He wants to do?
Obey Him, disregard what man has to say...for the only one who
will judge you is the Lord
What impact will you have? God knows!

Every employee knows who writes his performance appraisal...and he
seeks to please that person
Wrestling with, arguing with, ignoring the boss is foolish. Ditto, only
more so, with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords
You say, "Yes sir" to you boss. That is beneath God. We say, "Yes
Lord."

v5 judge nothing...until the Lord come
we don't know the "Rest of the Story" of our ordained work...nor does
any man...so we need not judge each other's work
since the Lord alone judges me – because He alone is worthy and qualified
by His perfect knowledge of my thoughts and motives
He alone judges you. I do not. Nor are you my judge.
We need to understand what the Holy Spirit is saying here
Matt 7:1-6

Judge not: misinterpreted by many people...usually the
ones living in sin! "You're judging me! You can't
judge me!"

I am not to judge that which I cannot see:

- a man's heart
- his motives
- whether or not repentance is genuine

I am to judge/discern the fruit of his life, which can be seen
Who am I to judge anyone? Have I attained Matt 5:48?
John 8:1-11

Who am I to hold myself higher than any other man,
especially given my past behavior?!

I cannot judge the hearts of others because I cannot see
clearly to judge what is wrong in their life...because
of the imperfections in my own life

v6 calls for judgment/discernment and being led by the
Spirit (Is 11:2)

I am to witness to all, to share the love of God with them.
But I am not to win the argument and convince them into
the kingdom.

I am not to give the holy and wonderful things God has
done in my life with those hard-hearted people who
will not appreciate it or ridicule what God has done.

1 Cor 2:15

All things, all hearts, all motives are naked before the Lord (and He is a Bookkeeper without peer!) and at the appointed time, they will be judged by Him...when our building is inspected by fire

Luke 12:3 words to live by!

Paul is saying, "Your timing is bad, it's not time to judge."

Do not judge what you cannot see...judge that which you can clearly see

and know that there is a time of judgment of our Christian stewardship!

v6 figure transferred

Paul has figuratively applied these things to himself and Apollos to deflate the pride that is the cause of the contentions and divisions plaguing this Body. Their self-serving popularity contest is hurting the Body

Paul and Apollos are examples of spiritual maturity and wisdom, not figure heads over which to be divided

Paul is saying, "Not only is your timing bad, but, your standard is wrong." horizontal comparison is flawed and dangerous; vertical comparison is "perfect", humbling, and cleansing if you give your heart to Him against Whom we are to be compared

don't look to me, look to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh

and don't think you are better than your brother because of the work God has ordained for you

who is more important in God's eyes – Richard Kimball or Billy Graham? Neither. Take Jesus away from them and you are left with nothing

The members of the Body are equal in the eyes of God.

The rewards proclaim availability, obedience, and faithfulness and are all of God so no man can boast but in the Lord

- v7 Paul is seeking to change the Corinthians' perspective –
- from self-serving and led by the flesh
 - to God-centered and led by the Spirit
- this change must take place in the maturation process of every believer

differ from another

We are all different! All 7 kids of ours are different!

Every person is unique, created that way by God

But none were created superior to any other...or more valuable

Jer 1:4-5...and –9 regarding pleasing the Lord

why dost thou glory?

“You are not the Author of these truths, only the blessed recipients of them! So what room do you have to boast in them against another?!”

are you gifted? Why do you boast about it, seeing you did nothing to earn it, did not deserve it, and only have it by the grace of God who gave it to you?

Let the Lord use the gift He has given you...for His glory

- v8a full...rich...reigned as kings
- full = “to cram, to be gluttoned” (only times this word is used in NT)
- this is their opinion of themselves...and their perspective is worldly
- they are full of things and stuff and wealth...and think they have life knocked
- but Paul is spiritual and wants to refocus them to their true wealth – God's grace and God's goodness

v8b-9 the apostles last

ala the last shall be first and the first shall be last
the apostles are “under rowers”

appointed to death...made a spectacle

we commonly think we would have greater faith if we had walked with
Jesus as did the apostles.

But...

- did the apostles have great faith?
No, even after having walked, lived with Jesus for 3½
years. They had no/little faith
- did they understand more about the things of God?
No, they didn't get it, they were self-centered
- their faith and understanding grew...
when Jesus was gone! When the Holy Spirit caused them
to remember the things Jesus said and did...and then taught
them what He meant
- They were appointed to die terrible, violent deaths, “proving”
the resurrection of Jesus; they were made a spectacle for all
men
(all except John...and they tried boiling him alive in oil!)

God is glorified by the lives of His saints...and many times
even more so by their death
consider Stephan...and his impact on Saul of Tarsus
Ps 116:15

the early Christians were made sport of by the hostile world
around them – fed to the lions as entertainment for
the Roman crowds

they saw Jesus perform miracles
heard Jesus teach with authority
saw Him die on the Cross and be buried
saw Him alive again 3 days later
touched His wounds

more certain than anything, they were certain that Jesus
was alive and that He was God

they embraced a truth that could not be fabricated and
defended...and a truth that could not be denied

upon this truth (1 Cor 15:1-4) the Church was built
Resurrection was the point of every message in Acts

Note: both the material world and the spiritual world, creation of the
Creator, are watching God execute His perfect plan
1 Peter 1:10-12

v10 we are...but ye are
again, Paul addresses their opinion of themselves

<u>apostles</u>	<u>the Corinthians</u>
fools: “blockheads, absurd” “Fanatics!”	wise: conceited” Rom 12:16
weak: “feeble, without strength” 2 Cor 12:5-10 Phil 4:13	strong: “mighty, boisterous, forceful” (their own strength)
despised: “without honor”	honorable: “noble, glorious”

Paul is not complimenting the Corinthians, he is rebuking them!
These babes in Christ are very worldly – self-centered and
self-righteous
1 Cor 1:26-29
he is not saying” Woe is us!” but “Woe to you!”

v11-13 even unto this present hour
when was the last time you heard a “Health and Wealth” preacher
preach this passage, teach this truth of God?
How does this truth of God jive with man’s “Name it and Claim it”
doctrine?!

The apostles are:

- buffeted: “to be hit with a fist” (physically beaten)
- defamed and reviled: “vilified”
not just scorned or mocked, but slandered and
abused (Child abuse for God’s kids)
- filth: “garbage, something cleaned off”
- offscouring: “scum, something scraped off”
i.e off you toilet or bathtub

their response: because Jesus was absolutely real...

- to bless them that curse them
- love their enemies
- to turn the other cheek – and put up with persecution
- to go the extra mile
- to pour coals on the heads of those that hate them
- to keep their eyes on Jesus

1 Peter 3:8-17 with Matt 5:10-12

the apostles are still without anything the world has to offer
...except trouble.
But they have the unspeakable riches in heavenly places of Christ
Jesus.
The faithful steward can expect the same
Our relationship with Jesus is bigger than Sunday morning
Or a mid-week study...or a prayer meeting
It is a step-by-step walk, it is praying unceasingly
count the cost of being a disciple of Christ

v14 warn you

Paul, having rebuked them for self-righteously boasting of the things they
had freely received, is not boasting.
He is not lifting himself spiritually above them.
Nor is he trying to make them look bad
(discipline your kids, but never shame them)

He is saying: "Wake up! You fell asleep at the switch. Eternal matters
are at stake! Be a faithful steward."

And the Holy Spirit is warning us today
Is your walk with Christ like a carefree walk in the park on a lazy
spring day?
Watch out...and wake up!
You have gotten comfortable and have fallen asleep
Run to win the race

v15-16

I have begotten you

They have been and will be overrun with teachers...but they first heard the Good News of God's grace from Paul

"You first heard the Gospel from me. You were dead in your sin before the Holy Spirit sent me to you with good news.

I have a genuine interest in your eternal well-being.

Be ye followers of me

"Honor me by listening to me. Honor God by following me ...because I am following Jesus."

1 Cor 11:1

Paul was a bondservant

everything he had, was, hoped to be was the Lord's

Jesus gave the example of being a bondservant

"Not my will but yours be done"

how to be a bondservant? Be God-centered and others-centered vs self-centered

to your spouse, children, employer, employees, neighbors,

family...be an example of God's kingdom by following Jesus

v17 Timotheus...faithful in the Lord

"Because you are God's children and the fruit of my labor with the Lord, I am sending Timothy with a refresher course to remind you of the things I teach in every church."

We need to be reminded of God's ways...because we forget and because we are dense – we don't get it right away

so God in His Word repeats Himself

When we study the Bible verse-by-verse, chapter-by-chapter, book-by-book, we get the whole counsel of God

- every issue important to God

- the proportion of every issue

we need to hear the simple truth of God over and over again

Phil 1:6 is a supernatural process of a living, active God in our lives, teaching His ways

we best learn God's lessons thru trials...when we are the most dependant upon the Lord

Paul would send Timothy place he could not personally go

"God's ordained work for me is much greater than just Corinth.

It's time you grew up, it's time you fed and cleaned yourselves.

In fact, it's time you fed and cleaned others."

v18-20

some are puffed up

Who? Those sowing discord with this popularity contest

will know not the speech...but the power

when he comes, Paul will determine if the arrogant ones are full of hot air

or if they are living by the power of God

Zech 4:6 was Paul's M.O., as it should be ours

God's word has power...not man's

religion cannot change lives...the Gospel does (Rom 1:16)

knowing Jesus and Him crucified is a matter of the revelation of

God and faith, not a matter of man's dogma and
performance

but when you come into contact with the kingdom of God, you are
forever changed...changed by the power of God

e.g. Calvary Chapel pastors! Look like a police line up! Not
seminary trained...chosen, equipped, sent by God

v21 shall I come

“So which way do you want it? Will you be self-righteous and proud or
repentant and humble?”

The Corinthians' attitude will dictate how Paul will come to them – with a
rod of correction or in love and meekness

1 Corinthians

Chapter 5

On this point of pride vs humility, Paul now shifts gears to another problem plaguing this camouflaged church...to an issue where they are not camouflaged but rather are a tragic, stark contrast to the society around them
the city has infected the Church...and the Church has done them one “better”

Ironically, this is a division the Church should have made, but didn't

v1 reported commonly

a sin worse than those of the surrounding pagans was fermenting in the Church at Corinth
and not a secret sin, a closet sin, but a blatantly public sin in that it is common knowledge
the sin is grossly offensive to God...and the body of Christ is tolerating it

fornication...not so much as named among the Gentiles:

Note: the Church is separate from the Gentiles

fornication = any sexual activity outside the God-ordained, therefore safe, confines of marriage of one man to one woman

pornea: the root word for “pornography”

fornication was VERY common in that (and our) pagan society

- sexual relationships before marriage
- adultery
- pornography
- sodomy
- bestiality

but in the Body of Christ at Corinth is a sin being shamelessly committed that is so obviously morally wrong that even the unsaved pagans are shocked.

One should have his father's wife:

the sin: an incestuous sexual sin – a man having a sexual relationship with his father's wife

His own mother? Doesn't say

His step-mother? Doesn't say

Where is the man's father in all of this? Doesn't say

Where are the other relatives? Doesn't say

Why is this abominable behavior tolerated and not condemned? v2

v2 ye are puffed up:
 pride...which blinds us to sin
 a Christian was engaged in a sexual sin that even the unbelievers didn't
 engage in!
 As shocking, the rest of the Body did not mourn over this sin.
 fueled by pride, the church has a corrupt application of God's
 grace, of Christian liberty.
 The corruption in the body has spread
 They were proud of their

- open-mindedness
- tolerance
- diversity
- political correctness

 your sin should break your heart...and sin in other people's lives should
 also break your heart

 saved by grace thru faith, we are not free to sin, we are free from sin.
 Rom 5:16 – 6:2
 John 8:32, 36
 Rom 8:2
 God the Holy Spirit thru Paul is deeply concerned about the church that is
 ingesting poison

taken away from among you:
 the Church, like Israel, is to purge the sin from the camp, otherwise the
 evil will pollute the whole camp
 the Church is called to be holy – separate
 a separation is needed here, a proper division
 does that mean sinners cannot come to church?
 No! The Church is filled with sinners...and only sinners.
 But, as new creatures in Christ, we walk in the Spirit and not in the
 flesh as we seek to do the Father's will.
 It does mean that the Church must deal with the believer living in sin.
 However, the carnal church is unwilling to deal with sin

v3 have judged already:
 Paul is inspecting fruit and takes a strong stand against sin
 God the Holy Spirit is also deeply concerned for the sinner
 Concerned...but to be separated? How can that work?

v4-5 name = authority...the authority of God

gathered together:

the sin is common knowledge, public knowledge...so it must be dealt with publicly

When gathered in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we thwart Satan's "divide and conquer" tactics

to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh:

the sin is drastic...the situation is drastic (v9)...so drastic measures are required...and are not to be shied away from

every born-again believer has 2 opposing natures

flesh: self-centered, loves sin

spirit: God-centered and others-centered, hates sin

sexual immorality is a very serious issue

the Church is work the sin issue seriously according to Matt 18:11-18

- Jesus pursues His sheep living in sin; we are to be ever-ready to go out on search and rescue missions (v11-14)
- Confront the sin (v15-17...Gal 6:1-2)
- Call the sinner to repentance, repeatedly bringing more and more weight to bear
- If the believer living in sin refuses to repent, the Church is to cast him/her out of the fellowship, letting the fruit of the sin become its fullest (v18)
- "You have made a choice, live with it. Leave until you have had your fill of this sin"

so Jesus and Paul are saying that this man (the woman is not mentioned so she is obviously outside the fellowship, an unbeliever; perhaps true also of the father/husband) is to be excommunicated to pursue his lusts...until the weight of the sin and the conviction of the Holy Spirit breaks him

the purpose of Matt 18 is restoration – either within the Church... or outside the Church.

we often minimize the value of fellowship in the Body of Christ and the strength we draw from it...until we are separated, or isolated, from it

Sometimes we must cast the unrepentant sinner from our fellowship so that the Lord will deal with him in the wilderness

aka tough love

Ex. 1 Tim 1:18-20

Dead people do not learn, this is a spiritual destruction

Paul is not acting like a judge dispensing justice, he is acting like a father disciplining his beloved son
e.g. a farmer that had a dog he dearly loved...and had a chicken coop
the dog started killing chickens
one day, the farmer caught his beloved dog with a dead chicken
he tied that dead chicken around his beloved dog's neck
and cast it outside, unable to come in the house any more
the farmer left that chicken, that rotting chicken, around his dog's neck for a month!
Rom 7:24 – like
His beloved dog never touched another chicken!

We cannot play “fast and loose” with sin – it is the very reason Jesus came and died
Heb 9:11-14
Heb 10:9-14

We need to learn God's ways...and obey Him
If we refuse to, God will, if necessary, tie the dead chicken around our necks until we learn...because we are His beloved children

so, the unrepentant sinner will go out...and come back repenting...precisely God's desire
while cast out, the Church is to treat him as an unbeliever, needing to be loved and evangelized, needing the touch of God upon their heart

before we move on, let's consider the end of the matter
2 Cor 2:4-11
in God's ways we have victory!

v6 your glorying is not good:
evil is cast out so that the whole Body is not corrupted
It is the process of rotting that causes the loaf to puff up

Whose responsibility is it to confront sin?
The pastor's? Yes...but
Also every believer's
If you love this church, this Body...care for it!

The pure church is a powerful church
Acts 5:1-11

A little impurity can keep back God's blessing from the whole body!
I want God to bless this church, don't you?
Then we all need to take care of it. Be sensitive to the Spirit

v7 Purge:

God the Holy Spirit thru Paul is repeating Himself – remove the sin from the camp (obviously, this is an important issue with God)
Paul is urging the Body to cleanse itself of this filth
every part of the Body serves all other parts of the Body.
Every part is vitally important
No part does it “my way.” (legs while walking, arm while eating)
But there is a medical condition when a body part changes and becomes self-serving – cancer.
What do we do about cancer?
We cut it out ASAP before it spreads and the body dies.
Sin in the church is cancer in the body – it must be cut out to protect the health of the body
the Word of God is the immune system for the Body of Christ
we must know it, obey it
issues adversely affecting the health of the Body must be dealt with very specifically and without compromise
we have The Truth, which is absolute – we must stand on it...or be crushed by it!
No one who has cancer cheers on and cater to, encourages the cancer.
Nor should the Church tolerate sin.

Contemporary issue for the Church: sodomy

Is it a sin or a civil right?

Is it, as a chosen behavior, to be condemned or embraced?

The Church at large is proud of its stand on sodomy today

God help us!

Spurgeon: “I would rather be an intellectual midget and know one thing that is true than be an intellectual giant and know 1000 things that are not true,”

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:

Ex 12

Leaven was to be removed from the house before the angel of death visited

John 1:29, Phil 2:5-11

Jesus took on our form and then exchanged our sin and death for His righteousness and eternal life

He cleansed us of our sin – radical heart surgery

Make it personal – replace “us” with “me”.

Who in there right mind could refuse such love?

(But, remember, sin blinds.)

He has done everything for me.

What could I possibly do for Him in return?

- Surrender...submit...obey...follow
- Love others...make life better for someone else,
rather than yourself
(the more I think of myself the more
miserable I get!)

v8 keep the feast:

get rid of the leaven in your life

Rom 12:1-2

Note: sincerity alone is insufficient...it must be accompanied by
Truth

let us walk with Jesus with pure hearts, being God-centered and
others-centered

Jesus is the (Unleavened) Bread of Life, the Way, Truth, and Life

Not just WWJD...but WDJJ

“Impossible!” True. Becoming others-centered is supernatural process.

We need

- the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives in order to lose
our lives that we might gain our lives.
- the baptism of the Holy Spirit, every bit as much as the
apostles and the early Church did

when we open the door to evil, we of our own strength do not have
the power to close it

the work of God in our lives is a “current event”

- convicts us of sin
- gives us the gift of repentance
- cleanses us with His Word
- forgives...and forgets

v9-11 not to company...not altogether...any man that is called a brother
this letter is not the first from Paul on this issue of sexual immorality...
the issue has lingered, the leaven has spread...as Paul's Godly
counsel goes unheeded

Paul is not saying, "Retreat from the world...live but don't breathe the air"
it is impossible to retreat from evil, to build a spiritual bomb
shelter and withdraw from the world...we would have to
leave the planet!

Notice that 6 sins are listed

We have been sent by Jesus into the world, even though we are not
of the world (John 17)

Phil 3:20 with Matt 28:19-20

Paul is saying to not fellowship with a person who claims to be a believer
but lives like the devil.

Cast them out, where they may better hear what the Holy Spirit is
speaking to their heart.

The purpose of church discipline: that they would repent and be
restored into the fellowship

in that culture, eating with some one was an intimate thing – with common
bowls and no silverware, people became as one as they double-
dipped and shared their germs

with an attitude of meekness and humility (the attitude of a paramedic vs a
policeman) , we must give tough love to an unrepentant brother,
one who does not respond to Matt 18 by not associating with them
e.g. Mick Meyer

do not hang out with unrepentant sinners; who will influence who?

1 Cor 15:33 bad company corrupts good character

2 Thes 3:6, 14-15

v12-13

judge...without...within:

God judges the unbelievers...leave them to Him
love the unbeliever, don't condemn him...for he has already
condemned himself
John 3:15-18

put away from among your selves:

God the Holy Spirit repeats Himself for a third time: remove sin
from the camp
we obviously need to learn this lesson – it is God's way

the Church is to judge from within, God is to judge those outside
the Church

Deut 17:2-7

- Step 1 is to thoroughly and objectively investigate –
there are always 2 sides to every story (v2-4)
- Sin in the camp is very serious business and must be
confronted (v5)
the unrepentant sinner must experience the fruit of
his sin
- No vigilantes, all things done decently and in order
(v6-7, Matt 18)
- No room for self-righteousness; a careful self-
examination is required
- Confrontation must be rooted in meekness and humility
in the love of Christ...and is to be done prayerfully
Gal 6:1-2
- Sin is very serious business...so is confronting that sin

We can't always bail someone out from the consequences of his sin...nor can we
look the other way. He must be removed

1. to save him
2. to protect the whole body

if the unrepentant sinner is left in the body, he is leaven...rotting, poison
others in the body will start to see that this behavior is not confronted so
sin must be OK

the body gets lax...weak

a body that is so weak that it can no longer purge its body of poison will
soon be dead

may God give us the strength to

- Guard your relationship with the True and Living God
- Never get comfortable with sin, personally or corporately
- Look out for the health of this body

1 Corinthians

Chapter 6

Don't Go There

In Ch 5, Paul moved away from his instruction on divisions to another area in church life this Camouflaged Church needed: sexual immorality and Church discipline that instruction continues in Ch 6

Church discipline: in this passage we learn that the Church is to settle our own issues...not to air our dirty laundry before the world – in their courts or in their media

Church issues are “family matters” to be handled Biblically...not legally

Sexual immorality: we learn in this chapter how unthinkable it should be Paul builds his instruction around 6 “Know ye not?” questions
v2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19

v1 go to law before the unjust...before the saints:
this divided body at Corinth is a contentious lot.
Bickering abounds...resolutions do not.
Believers are suing other believers in the pagan courts
The Greek society was a litigious society, they would sue anybody about anything...and the church at Corinth has blended in

dare: a grievous sight is two contentious brothers standing before a heathen judge

v2 judge the world?...unworthy to judge the smallest matters?:
Paul can hardly believe his ears
these bickering, boastful people are children of God and will reign with Jesus during His 1000 year reign
...but here and now they cannot even settle the most minor disagreements between themselves.

Dan 7:22

Paul is flabbergasted

He might ask them, “Are you Christians?”

And they would respond, “Oh yeah, we’re Christians, we’re just not following the Lord

What kind of Christian is that? Tragically, a common one

Needed: spiritual maturity

- v3 judge angels...things that pertain to this life?:
If we are going to be judging in spiritual matters, we certainly should be able to judge the matters that pertain to this life
but their perspective is worldly, selfish, and live-for-the-moment, rather than spiritual and eternal...when we will be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus
- in the light of eternity in the glory of God, our silly disputes fade away.
Rom 8:18
Avoid disputes by being a servant: God-centered and others-centered
- v4 least esteemed in the church:
Paul rebukes the Corinthians again. “Take all your silly disputes and give them to a child to decide. Even a child has sufficient spiritual maturity to make the correct judgment.”
- What is pornography and what is not
 - What is obscene and what is not
- The affairs of the Church are spiritual matters
A Spirit-filled man is a better judge of spiritual matters than a Harvard educated man who is not born again
- v5 there is not a wise man among you:
“You are fighting each other in secular courts with pagan lawyers. Shame on you! Don’t you realize you are exposing the things of the Lord to the pagans for judgment? Have no wisdom? Are you all foolish?”
Prov 1:7
- Wallowing in the muck of the secular courts, the Corinthians have lost sight of the Higher Court of Law and the higher code of conduct they have not grown, not matured, because they are not in the Word
- v6 the unbelievers:
Paul is heart-broken and appalled that unbelievers are mediating between believers, parts of the Body of Christ of which Jesus is the head
This church is a lousy witness of Jesus Christ, as they resist the Holy Spirit and walk in the flesh
These ambassadors are not faithfully serving their King
It is time to grow up, to stop being self-centered and immature

v7-8 rather take wrong...be defrauded
fault = "loss, failure, defeat"
"By going to the secular court with church matters, you have already lost."
the loser = the church, the battling believers
the loss = eternal spiritual blessings
the loss in the Higher Court of God is far greater than any potential "win"
in this pagan court
USA today is a lawsuit crazed society...but Church matters have no place
in court
It is better to wronged by a brother than to seek wholeness before an
unbelieving judge

Don't cry, "No fair!"
Don't go there!
None of us deserve salvation, we deserve condemnation, death,
and hell
What's fair about Jesus hanging on the cross, made sin for us?
What's fair about Him saying from that cross, "Father, forgive
them for they know not what they do."?"

if a Christian businessman/craftsman does an incomplete or poor quality
job for you, don't sue him, seeking restitution in the courts
instead, even though he is cheating his own family, forgive him
and let the Lord deal with His child...
and next time use a provider with a solid reputation and integrity
just because you see a fish on the business card doesn't mean you should
blindly trust that person – use good judgment/discernment
be wise, don't be a patsy
too often Christian businessmen are poor witnesses to the world and other
believers because

- the love of money (lose their spirituality when money
is involved)
- they are slackers hiding behind God's grace ("Oh, they
will understand and be gracious with me."

If you are a Christian businessman, Col 3:23
Work with energy, integrity, consideration, and excellence..
More so that your unbelieving competitors
And God will bless your business because it honors Him
I do believe it is better to keep it in the family, but do not subsidize a
believer who does not perform in a way that honors God
actually, should even expect more from a believer

What is the Holy Spirit saying to us? Don't go there
now let's go to the real Court!

v9-10 the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God:

Paul resumes his corrective instruction on sexual immorality

his rallying cry: Be not deceived

because millions of self-centered people are (self) deceived!

“I’m not hurting anyone.”

“It’s my body, I can do what I want.”

“God still loves me and will let me into heaven.”

“God created me this way.”

Paul taught the same truth to every church

Gal 5:16-21 repetition in God’s Word

Eph 5:5-7 because we need to hear it

Col 3:5-6 again and again

Why be not deceived? Deception is death

An unregenerate heart will abuse the grace of God and live
a life trying to get away with sin

The truly regenerate may entertain sin for a season but,
when convicted by the Holy Spirit, obeys God and
seeks to get away from sin

Gal 6:7-8

These things, sin, is why God’s wrath will be poured out on
the world

how not be deceived? James 1:22

we cannot live any way we want and enter into the
kingdom of God. God says, “Obey.”

Neither...nor:

not the unpardonable sin...Jesus died for these sins

Paul is talking about Christ-rejecting, unrepentant sinners

- Fornicators: any sexual sin
- Effeminate: the male prostitute playing the role of a woman to satisfy another man’s desire for sodomy; the passive homosexual
- abusers of themselves with mankind: the aggressive homosexual who takes the male role

An issue that the Church today is proud about...but also divided
over...is homosexuality

The liberal camp in the church is proud of their

- Tolerance...at the expense of truth
- Political correctness ...at the expense of saltiness
 (“It’s the 90’s, it’s a new millennium!”)
- Compromise with sin...at the expense of love

Rather than loving, we are unloving when we turn a blind eye to
God's Word in order to avoid confrontation with sin
It is not loving to watch a loved one blindly walking toward the
edge of a cliff...without saying anything

Jude 17-23

“gay” : nothing could be further from the truth.

Compared to the heterosexual population, those who have
chosen this lifestyle (all who are homosexuals have
chosen it for none were created by God):

- Have more money and material wealth...and
more emptiness
- Have more physical disease
- Have more alcohol and drug abuse
- Have a significantly lower life expectancy
- Have more misery

“You are intolerant!”

No, God is intolerant of sin, He hates sin. Take it up with
Him. It's His universe, His rules.

“You are homophobic!”

No, I love the sodomite, I hate sodomy. I love what God
loves and hate what God hates.

Be not deceived – these behaviors are not illnesses

God doesn't say	“Gay”	He says	sodomy
	Alcoholic		drunkard
	Kleptomaniac		thief

We use softer sounding words to diminish our sin...or to duck the
responsibility for our choices and absolve ourselves of guilt
by making sin an illness and us victims

if you think you are an alcoholic...you are not. You are a drunkard
if you think you are gay...you are not. You are a sodomite.

God says it like it is.

Feel uncomfortable? Read the next verse...

Such sinners can be saved by Jesus and freed from the
bondage of their sin

these uncomfortable words should lead us to the foot of the
cross...where deliverance and freedom await by
the grace of God

no program can deliver you from sin

AA is a failure, a false hope

Always are an “alcoholic”, keeping you in
bondage

“New creature in Christ” is a 1 Step Program!

Once I was blind, but now I see

Once I was lost, but now I am found

But be not deceived – those who live these lifestyles without
repentance will not be saved
Not “Can I lose my salvation?”
But “Am I saved?”
the world pushes tolerance...God doesn't
instead, God loves us enough to change us!

v11 such were some of you...washed...sanctified...justified:
that list fairly well described me BC. What about you?
No? Read Sermon on the Mount again and get back to me
Attitude check: we never have cause to be self-righteous – we were those
people in v9-11
Eph 2:1-3
until Rom 4:3 and 2 Cor 5:17 with Rom 8:1

But God changes us...only God can change us
And he gives us a clean slate
Rom 5:8, Col 1:21-22, Titus 3:3-7

Is 1:18

- Cleansed by the blood of Jesus
- sanctified (“set apart for an exclusive purpose”) by the Holy Spirit
ex: vessels used on OT worship (potsherds at Shiloh) – set
apart for an exclusive use
- justified (just as if it never happened) by His righteousness

so why do I act like I was rather than as I am?

We forget truths we need to remember:

- That BC man is dead and buried
- I have been called out of the world
- I am holy
- I have a different Master
He has cleansed me of the filth I was into
He has removed my guilt
He has transformed me into a child of the Light

v12 all things are lawful unto me:

I am no longer under the Law (John 1:17).

The Law is for the lawless...and it condemns them to death
My Master satisfied the requirements of the Law for me and freed me
from the penalty of the Law – set free to sin? No, set free from sin
and free to serve God
so living in sin is not an option

liberated from the Law, no longer a slave to my flesh and its desires, I am
free to serve God

we make “P&L” choices every day

I am free to do “this” (not from previous list), but is it profitable?

“this”: a fleshly desire, a weakness of the flesh, something
you regret later in your spirit

before each choice, take a “P&L” exam:

- can I do “this” in faith (Rom 14:23)?
- does “this” honor the God who loved me enough to change me?
- does “this” bring me closer to Jesus, who died for my bad choices?
- Does “this” help me win the race?
- does “this” have any eternal value?
- Under what power does “this” put me?
- does “this” cause a weaker brother to stumble?
- WWJD?
- WDJD?

Rom 6:18-22

Can you run the race in cowboy boots? Yes...
But you cannot win the race in cowboy boots
Run to win!

What is the Holy Spirit saying us? Don’t go there! Rom 8:4-8

Don’t live on the edge of sin, asking yourself, “What can I get away with before I fall into sin?”
believers who fall into sin do so because they were walking on the edge of sin...it starts with their thoughts

Don’t dabble with things that destroy lives – don’t go there!
Embrace that which edifies, strengthens, and comforts lives –
God’s ways

Live on the edge of love, pushing the envelope on God’s love in and thru your life. Live under the power of God.

“I’ll have to give up too much!” No you won’t; nothing is a sacrifice when it is done in love

Title: You are not Your Own

v13 the body is not for fornication:

the Lord owns the whole earth - that includes my body!

I am fearfully and wonderfully made – how I use my body is
to be governed by God, not me

I am to yield my body, a member of the Body of Christ, to God for
His use, not for fulfilling my sexual drives

remember Ch 3:11-17

God lives in us, in the house we are building with our choices
Have you asked the Lord to live in a whorehouse...or a Most Holy
Place?

v15-16 your bodies are the members of Christ:

harlot = temple prostitute, of which there were over 1000 in Corinth at the
temple of Aphrodite, a pagan goddess of fertility

I am not an isolated entity.

“I can do anything I want as long as I don’t hurt anybody” doesn’t hold
water.

I cannot do anything I want...because my every decision has many
ripples...affecting many innocents

I am a part of a glorious Body, the Body of Christ.

I have a function within that Body and I am important to the health
of the Body.

I have been created to serve the other parts of the Body and not
myself.

One body...one flesh:

Starting in Gen 2:24 and all the way thru Revelation, “one flesh” describes
marriage...which is a model of our relationship with Jesus Christ
not just a physical union, but also emotional and spiritual union

When one falls into sexual immorality, he/she joins the pure with the
filthy

Does the pure purify the filthy?

No, the filthy defiles the pure.

Hence, we need to be holy

v17 joined unto the Lord is one spirit:
fornication is a spiritual issue
fornication is idolatry...at the feet of the god of pleasure
idolatry is spiritual fornication
the Body of Christ is a spiritual Body (1 Peter 2:1-5)
our Bridegroom does not want to share His Bride with any
other...we can understand that, can't we?
so don't look around at other flesh, look up in the Spirit
walk in the Spirit so you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh
be "one spirit" with the Lord, a higher union

v18a flee fornication:
when (not if) faced with this temptation, don't walk, run.
And don't just run, run for your life
e.g. Joseph – decide NOW in your mind and in your spirit, not
when you are in a situation facing an offer your flesh
cannot refuse
people flee hurricanes, tornadoes, angry bears...because to not flee results
in destruction
they don't need to think about it, they just act to preserve their life
for the same reason we must flee fornication
1 Thes 4:1-7, 2 Tim 2:22
"But I can't run, I am too weak"
all you need to do is submit to Jesus
2 Peter 2:9-10, 1 Cor 10:13

flee to Jesus, flee for the love:

- of your spouse (current or the one the Lord is bringing you)
- of the Lord (who died for the fornication in man's heart)

v18b against his own body:
the human body was designed by God and, accordingly has a
purpose...His purpose.
God gave us sexual desire as a means to multiply and as a blessing, but
God never purposed that our sexual desire would control our lives
a hammer is designed to drive nails, not my fingers.
To use a hammer for that which it is not designed is to know pain
and suffering
I must master my passions and not let them master me
Gen 4:7
fornication is a foolish, deliberate act of self-destruction
myself (physically, emotionally, and spiritually) and my
spouse...who is myself

also, fornication desecrates the Temple of the Holy Spirit

v19 What! Know ye not:
the Corinthians are deceived
The world is filled with deception...deception is death
“I am my own person” leads to bondage to insatiable, ever more
demanding passions (v9-10)

temple of the Holy Spirit:

but, with v11, we have been

1. washed clean
2. set apart for an exclusive purpose
3. purchased by Christ

why?

- a Temple, the sanctuary, of the Holy Spirit
- to glorify God

therefore, I am not my own

we are “God possessed” (making demon possession impossible for the
believer)

Acts 20:28

Eph 1:13-14

Eph 2:19-22

fornication defiles, desecrates the temple of God...is akin to slaughtering a
pig in the Most Holy Place

v20 bought with a price: Mark 10:45, 1 Tim 2:5-6

I have been redeemed, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ...the
highest price that could be paid
more than

- all the gold in Fort Knox
- the total market value of Wall Street
- anything we can imagine

my soul is more valuable to God than the entire universe

He bought me when I was worthless...He has made me priceless

(like taking a charcoal briquette...good only for burning...and
transforming it into the Hope diamond...worthy of
adorning and displaying)...

so why would I not want to live a holy life in unity of Spirit with
Him?

He has such an awesome plan for my life that He died for it.

So why would I ignore His plans for me?

God gave me His very best...so why would I not give Him my very best?

Note: if I am the Lord's, then certainly all of my stuff is too!
time
will
plans
ambition

C.T. Studd: "I had known about Jesus dying for me, but I had never understood that if He died for me, then I didn't belong to myself...If I belong to Him, either I had to be a thief and keep what wasn't mine, or else I had to give up everything to God. When I came to see that Jesus Christ had died for me, it didn't seem hard to give up all for Him."

Come to see what CT Studd came to see...and give up all for Him who died for you that you might be a Hope diamond
Live for Christ...glorify Him with all you do
Body and spirit are not mutually exclusive
We cannot do one without the other – the spirit cannot belong to God if the body belongs to the world
Therefore, glorify God with both your body and spirit, walking in union with Jesus.

Flee fornication – you are not your own

1 Corinthians

Chapter 7

v1 now concerning...ye wrote unto me:
this epistle is Paul's response to correspondence from the Corinthian church, addressing multiple issues, including marriage
remember, Corinth was "Sin City", a very sensual and immoral city
prostitution, both female and male, was readily available because of the temple to Aphrodite, pagan fertility goddess
as a result, there was another group at the other end of the spectrum that believed all physical desires were evil
obviously, the Corinthians needed some instruction on marriage
ours is a practical God, with answers for every problem we face

good for a man not to touch a woman:
we don't have the question, but from the teaching on the issue it may have been: Is celibacy (singleness) better and more spiritual than being married?
Paul's answer: celibacy is a good thing...not better...or more spiritual...or even preferred...just "good"
celibacy is a gift from God not given to everybody
Matt 19:3-12

Note: Paul, a member of the Sanhedrin, was married because all members of the Sanhedrin had to be married
he is either a widower or a divorcee...and that probably because he became a Jesus freak
and given the rigors and perils (2 Cor 12) of Paul's missionary journeys, it was better that he was not married

but, that is the exception, not the rule
God said that it was not good that man should be alone...so He created woman and established the institution of marriage, where 2 become 1
now, if you are single and do not desire to get married, that is a gift from God
however, if you are single and do desire to be married, know that the Lord is preparing a husband/wife as a gift for you

in all cases, flee fornication...for you are not your own

v2 let every man...woman have:

Paul personally advocates being single, because time is short
But if sexual desires cannot be controlled, he advocates marriage...since
fornication is never an option
it is better to marry than to fornicate
not to say one should run right out and marry the first warm pulse you find
for that reason!
2 Cor 6 unequally yoked

Note: if God has given you the gift of celibacy, He would not torture
with an acute sex drive...by which we are to be fruitful and
multiply in the safe confines of marriage
with the gift of celibacy, I believe, would be accompanied with a
greatly diminished or no sex drive

v3-5 a critical truth to learn: single people are not to live as married people...and
married people are not to live as single people...you are not your own

render unto the wife...husband...hath not power:

render = "conjugal duty" i.e. physical intimacy

benevolence: to meet the needs of another i.e. the need for physical
intimacy

physical intimacy

- a gift from God to be shared with another...but...
- only in the God-ordained institution of marriage of one man to
one woman...forbidden outside the marriage relationship
- 2 become 1...so neither can withhold themselves...for they do
so from themselves!

defraud = "to deprive, to withhold by deception"

too often, and probably in every marriage on the planet, physical intimacy
is used in a divisive way – it is conditional and withheld for selfish
reasons

e.g. "I have a headache"...when you don't

"I am too tired"...when you are really too lazy

key: deception

but God's Word says you are not your own

- you are the Lord's – He purchased you
- you are your mate's – the two are one
mine are hers, and hers are mine

clearly, balance is needed so we must not lose sight of the other Biblical teaching on marriage, the foremost of which is Eph 5:21-33, declaring that marriage is the model of the relationship between Christ and His Bride, the Church

That teaching starts with Eph 5:21, not v22!

it applies to every aspect of marriage, including the physical aspect
We all have spiritual, emotional, and physical needs...we are all to meet the needs of our mate...only we can

here in 1 Cor 7, the Holy Spirit very directly addresses the physical needs we defraud our spouse when we hide behind any excuse that masks a selfish unwillingness to submit to God's will and to each other

and don't be looking at your spouse...pray that the Lord ministers to your heart regarding selfless love!

physical intimacy in the marriage relationship

1. is a beautiful gift from God, not a club to be used by one against the other to
 - motivate
 - manipulate
 - control
 - punish
2. a beautiful gift between husband and wife, something joyfully given...not something to be earned...no strings attached
3. is a blessing, not a reward for passing some unspoken test

the husband's desire is God-given, the wife is to meet his need...
only she can

the wife's desire is God-given, the husband is to meet her need...
only he can

to selfishly say "No", to push your spouse away

- results in a feeling of rejection
- becomes a wedge between the two that are one...a division not desired by the Lord, a division that can be used by Satan
- is a self-inflicted wound (1 Cor 6:18)

except with consent:

a mutual consent to refrain from physical intimacy...with parameters

- for a season – defined, agreed upon, short period of time
a time = “a limited period of time”
- for a purpose – to jointly focus on a spiritual matter via prayer and fasting
- with a mutual commitment to “breakfast” at the end of that time, which is not to be prolonged so that the separation becomes destructive
(come together = “conjugal cohabitation”)
this is important so Satan does not tempt us with fornication due to our lack of self-control
(incontinency = “lack of self-control”)

bottom line: you are not your own

there is no room for self-centeredness in this aspect of marriage

any more than there is in any other aspect of marriage

it is not “my way or no way”, it is “God’s way”

God’s way is two others-centered people...man’s way is two self-centered people...which way works?!

Now if I might speak to the men for a moment

Women are more emotional than us...God made them that way

And they must endure some physical things that we don’t

So, there are times when a man takes his life in his hands when he speaks with his wife.

How you speak to her, what you say to her is REALLY important!

Some good common sense is needed

For example:

Dangerous: What’s for dinner?

Safer: Can I help with dinner?

Safest: Where would you like to go for dinner, Sweetie?

Dangerous: What did you do all day?

Safer: I hope you didn’t overdo it today

Safest: I’ve always loved you in that robe, dear

Dangerous: What are you so worked up about?

Safer: Could we be over-reacting, honey?

Safest: Here’s \$50.

v6 permission...not of commandment:
permission = "concession"
commandment = "decree"
"this" is marriage (v1-5). Marriage is not mandatory
it is a gift, just as celibacy is a gift

But, in either case, You Are Not Your Own

- You are the Lord's
- you are your spouse's

Title: Be Faithful to Your Calling

v7 all men were as even as myself:
Paul was not married at this point in time, and it is probably a good thing!
He had been, but quite likely his wife left him when Saul of Tarsus
became Paul, bondservant of Jesus Christ.
He never re-married.
Instead, gifted with celibacy, he directed all his time and energy into his
calling from the Lord – to take the gospel of grace to the Gentiles

I am not gifted as Paul was gifted.
being married is also a gift from the Lord
Prov 18:22, Prov 19:14

I, personally, would not be very effective in God's calling upon my life
without Monica and our kids –

- God has taught me many awesome truths thru them
- they have taught me more about God's love than any
commentary I have read

I could not do this ministry without Monica!

To be as Paul I would have to labor under a great burden
To strive for that which I have not been given is to court failure and
frustration...and it is sin on the brink of happening
If you are not gifted with celibacy (for the cause of Christ), don't try it!
" " " marriage, "

one gift is not better than the other...so why are so many single people
living like they are married and so many married people living
like they are single?

Be faithful to your calling

Note: the Roman Church corrupted this gift by making it a legal
requirement of its ministers

v8 it is good:

Paul is speaking as a pastor, not an OT theologian

Being single is not a curse or a burden, it is good...if it is given
single people who are faithful to their calling, can be completely given
over to the Lord, an enviable place to be!
In heaven we will all be single!

v9 better to marry than to burn:

contain = "to exercise self-restraint in diet and chastity"

burn = "to be inflamed with anger or lust"

it is better to be married than to have continual sexual desires

if you are single and desire to be married, pursue that...but not by hunting
for a wife/husband...rather pray for her/him

- for protection – spiritual, physical, emotional
- growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ
- are being grounded in the Word
- keeping themselves pure...for you

...and someone you have not even met yet is praying for you!

An invisible bond can be formed before you even meet!

v10-11 let not wife depart:

this context – believer married to believer

marriage is sacred and is for life

Rom 7:2-3

The expiration date of marriage vows of a Christian marriage is the date of
death of one of the two that have become one

Jesus said, Let not man put asunder (rip apart) that which God has joined

Leave and cleave: cleave = glued e.g. plywood

when plywood is ripped/broken, it leaves many ragged
edges...that is what divorce does to people...and that is
why God hates divorce

Mal 2:16

this is the Lord's command, not a suggestion!

So, don't leave your spouse.

If you do, your only two options are to

- remain unmarried
- be reconciled with your spouse....

remarriage is not an option, for the Lord sees it as fornication

reasons to separate (reconciliation is always the goal)

1. adultery (Matt 19) – Why separate? Because “2 become 1” is violated and because of the hardness of your heart
2. physical abuse – Why? The King's daughters are not punching bags

v12a but to the rest:

to all others in the other scenario – believer married to unbeliever

- one was saved after they got married
- believer rebelliously married an unbeliever

speaking I, not the Lord: this is Paul's opinion, his advice to us

Paul's pastoral advice to unequally yoked couples

bear in mind v40b – this is wisdom from God

v12b-16 she be pleased...let him not...what knewest thou:

the believer is not to divorce the unbeliever

- if peace reigns in the house, which is God's desire
Rom 12:18 believer is never to be a peace-breaker
a believer is not to divorce an unbeliever if the unbeliever is content to live with them...and their faith (we are never to deny our faith in Jesus)
that reflects on how important God holds the institution of marriage. And it is a picture of John 3:16
- the unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the believer's faith, but not saved.
Salvation is a personal event...but the unbeliever shares in the blessings God pours out on the believer – God does not “rain” on just one of the two become one but who knows! Might even get saved!

How do you save your unbelieving spouse?

1. pray fervently – the battle is spiritual, the battle belongs to the Lord of the Harvest
2. be a doer of the Word
don't preach the Gospel verbally, but visually
walk the talk...24 x 7

James 1:22

- deceive ourselves
- don't fool the unbeliever observing you

do what Jesus would do – seek and save the lost by love, not condemnation and judgment

e.g. party husband coming home at 2 AM, demanding breakfast for his buddies...

e.g. Monica loved me into the kingdom
God's love is the way out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of Light

they might surrender by observing the life of Christ is the believing spouse (1 Peter 3:1)

- The children are holy (set apart)
here Paul indicates that the children will be covered by a believing parent
again, he is not talking about salvation but that a believer positively affects the lives of the unbelievers in the family
i.e. the unbelievers enjoy the benefits of the blessings upon the believer

what happens to babies that are

- aborted
- miscarried (my child)
- still born (my big sister)
- Die so young (my big brother...5/7/51)

I believe they go to be with the Lord

Why do I believe that?

God draws a difference between adults and children

Deut 1:34-39

2 Sam 12:13-23

Jonah 4:9-11

Matt 19:14

The Lord has spoken to my heart and given me peace on this question

In the absence of a categorical statement in Scripture (ala
“All kids go to heaven”), we don’t know
solution: don’t live in a question mark

1. evangelize your kids!
2. Cover them with prayer
3. Walk the talk...be doers

“our” kids are God’s kids on loan to us for a season...for
which we must someday give an account before our
God

Let’s not debate about when a person becomes morally
responsible (when knows right from wrong and
chooses wrong, when can be reasoned with Is 1:18)
instead, get God’s Word into them immediately, even while
they are still in the womb!

- If peace does not reign because the unbeliever cannot live with
the believer and his/her faith in Jesus Christ and wants out
of the marriage, the believer is to let him/her go
if it comes to that; do not cling to an unbeliever against
his/her will
love is not a forced march, a Trail of Tears
if the unbeliever bails out, let him/her go. The believer is
free to remain single or to remarry

v17-20 so let him walk:

The Lord gifts according to His purpose for our lives.
So, walk faithfully with Him according to His will and not your own.
Be faithful to your calling

You don’t need to change your station in life to be more righteous...let the
Lord make radical changes in your heart right where you are
Circumcision vs uncircumcision is not the point of life.

Being single vs married is not either.
Obedience to the will of God is.
Be faithful to your calling.

so settle down! Be content with God’s will for you life.
Ask the Lord, “What is your plan? What can I do to be a witness
for you right here, right now?”
You can trust His heart more than you can trust your own heart!
Go with His heart

v21-22 servant...freeman:

Remember that at the time of Paul's writing there were freemen and slaves

- If you are a slave, you are now free from the bondage of sin
If you get a chance to be free, take it!
- If you are free, you are now a slave of Christ

The Good Shepherd does not depend on high IQ sheep to get His work done, He is simply looking for sheep willing to follow Him so relax right where you are...eat what is on the menu...be faithful to your calling

God has His children where He has them for a reason.

the vast majority of ministry happens "out there" during the week, not in here on Sunday morning (just do the math)
you are all ministers

ministry happens in the workplace, in the home, etc as God's people seek and save the lost by loving them with God's love
equipping the ministers is what happens here on Sunday morning...and Tuesday night...and Thursday night...and Friday night

We are building a house of God here in Ahwatukee

I am not the only one doing the work of the ministry

Just as Nehemiah built a wall around Jerusalem...everyone built...not just Nehemiah...and they did it in 52 days!

If Nehemiah had done it alone

- Would have taken a long time
- Would have been a small wall

Remember James 1:22...

It's fun being a Christian!

The fun is in the doing!

Title: Be Faithful to Your Calling, Part 2

v23 bought...be ye not servants:

I was held captive by death. Jesus paid the ransom for me, giving me life
and setting me free

Now that I am free, I am His servant. I do His will. I do what pleases
Him, not other men...nor my flesh

I was a servant to sin. Jesus bought my freedom.

A transaction like Ron Miller buying for \$1 Thai girls sold into
prostitution by their fathers...giving them a Christian education,
sending them out to witness of Jesus
they now serve Jesus, not their wicked fathers

v24 called...abide:

Since the Lord bought me and I am His willing servant,

- I will serve the Lord in whatever way He chooses for me.
Period...no conditions
- I will be satisfied with His will for me. Period...no exceptions

John 15:4-5

If you are called to be single...be faithful to your calling...and be
fruitful

If you are called to be married...be faithful to your calling...and be
fruitful

God has a calling upon each of our lives

- If life is confusion and anxiety, we are most likely not being
faithful
- If life is harmonious and fruitful (in spite of the storms), we most
likely are being obedient and faithful

Be faithful to your calling.

v25 no commandment...my judgment:

just as Paul did not have a commandment from the Lord regarding
marriage (v6), he does not have one regarding being single.

Both are gifts and callings from the Lord.

But, having been married and now having been faithfully celibate...for
which he gives all the glory to the Lord...he is qualified to counsel
us on the issue

- v26 for the present distress...so to be:
his assessment of the situation in the Roman Empire at the time, when persecution of the Church is gathering steam, is that a man is better off being single than married –
- it would be more difficult to face persecution and death and maintain your stand for Jesus Christ as a married person...distracted by “Who will care for my wife and kids...”
in fact, your wife and kids might be tortured and killed before your eyes to get you to denounce Jesus Christ
 - you are more able to focus on Jesus if you are gifted with celibacy

- v27 Art thou:
bear in mind that things could get tough, even deadly
but don't change your current marital status based on this present distress (the situation in the world, the circumstances in your life)...
serve the Lord right where He has put you
- be faithful to your calling...one day at a time

- v28 thou hast not sinned:
it is not a sin to be or to get married.
But, in Paul's opinion in Corinth at this time, marriage is the more difficult of the two
- Why? Life gets more complicated when you get married...and have children...and the battles are more intense, directed at very close relationships where we have so much
invested
responsibility
- Note: he wrote Ephesians 5 years later
- Marriage God's Way is a picture of the relationship between the Lord and the Church, His Bride (Ch 5)
 - Spiritual warfare (Ch 6)

Marriage is NOT the reason for trouble...we believers are promised trouble in this world
2 Tim 3:12 (among Paul's last words to one sent out with the Gospel...the world hates Good News and its messengers)

Spare = “to treat leniently, to forbear”
Like Gal 6:1-2...as opposed to 2 Cor 13:2

v29-31 time is short...world is passing away:

this is why Paul advocates being single – time is of the essence, the Lord is coming back very soon!

He knew the harvest is great and the laborers few
the single person can be totally devoted to the Lord...

the married person faithful to their calling must be devoted to and care for a spouse...and kids...and the Lord

Notice that the Apostle Paul, 30 years after the resurrection of Jesus, believed that the Lord was returning at any moment

1 Thes 4:16-17

Paul had a sense of urgency every believer in every age should have...

The Lord intended every generation to live with a sense of urgency that His return was imminent.

By living an “urgent life”, every believer in every generation would

- be watching and ready to leave our “Exodus” (Ex 12), also at any moment...in the twinkling of the eye either corporate (Rapture) or personal (death)
Matt 24:42, 25:13, 26:41
- occupy until He comes – be busy about His work of seeking and saving the lost
- be passionate about the Great Commission...where the Lord has placed you
- Have the proper attitude about the things of this world...all of which will stay behind and burn
houses
cars
jewelry
career
cares

the Lord intended every generation to share this sense of urgency

As the Lord tarries, in His love and grace wanting no man to perish but to come to repentance, skeptics say, “Yeah sure! My grandmother used to say that all the time and her grandmother before that.”

But, wake up! Our generation is unlike any preceding generation

- Israel, God's chosen people, is back in God's land (1948)
after about 1900 years!
Ezk 37, written over 2500 years ago, has been fulfilled in
our lifetime!
The Dispersion started about 5 years after Paul died
- Jerusalem is controlled by Israel (1967)
- Israel would stand alone in the world
UN voted to give the Jews there own homeland...but has
ever since repeatedly and frequently condemned her
for trying to survive in it
The USA alone has been Israel's ally...why the USA has
been blessed (Gen 12:1-3)
Sharon's trip this week to Europe to gain political support:
Cool receptions
No support offered
"Don't talk bad about Arafat!"
- Russia, Iran, Libya, Ethiopia, and others will invade Israel
while Israel is living carelessly...and nuclear weapons will
be used
Ezk 38-39
[For Zion's Sake newsletter]
- Apostasy will sweep thru the Church, hard hearts will become
harder, and God will pour out His Holy Spirit upon Israel
we evidence all around us of those things happening
[human cloning]
- The world will be a very small place
Technology is making it so...communications, travel,
finance...and it will be abused by evil
[microchips to be inserted in death row inmates...under
the auspices of credit card theft prevention and medical
history capture]
- Revival of the Roman Empire
Dan 2, 7
There is unity in Europe unseen since the collapse of the
Roman Empire...currency, government
remarkable considering the great wars of the past 100 years
in Europe
[EU kills GE-Honeywell merger]

We live in the time of the signs of the time just before Jesus returns
All end times scenarios are in motion...never before have they
been

Our generation can see more clearly than any previous generation
Paul believed time was short...time is shorter now than it ever has been!
Rev 1:1

We need Paul's sense of urgency...not complacency...which has invaded
and overrun the Church today...

we need to be salt and light, not camouflaged
we need to be on-fire, not lukewarm

Note: Laodicean church was lukewarm...Church is!

the world is about to be turned right-side up!

Life as we know it will radically change at any moment

So live to please the Lord, not to please the world

Don't live for the temporary

If you are single, live for the Lord

If you are married, live for the Lord

And be not deceived. Know that if you live for Jesus you will be
persecuted by the world

Dan 3:17-18

Daniel's 3 buddies lived for the Lord...faithful to their calling

But who cares! The world is passing away

John 16:33

Is 26:3

It is time to stand up and be counted for Jesus!

v32-34 without carefulness:

in this present distress, our pilgrimage in a strange land that is not our home, Paul would have us to be without care, “light on our feet”, able to focus entirely on the Lord and His work in this lost and dying world

Don’t let these choke out your fruitfulness for Jesus

- The cares of this life (same word “to be pulled in directions” as in Matt 13:22)
- The deceitfulness of riches
- The desire for other things

We who are married have a Divine responsibility to love our spouse
Sacrificially, unconditionally, completely

To do so is to be faithful and to honor the Lord

To neglect your spouse will result in divorce

The Lord would have not anyone do something He hates (Mal 2:16) in order to “help” Him

so the married person is to love the Lord AND his/her spouse, whereas the single person is able to love ONLY the Lord – both honor the Lord

v35 your own profit:

this is not a temptation to sin nor a guilt trip. Nor is this a leash to bind you

profit = “advantage“

comely = “noble, honorable“

Instead, this is an invitation for an unhindered, 100% sold-out life for Jesus...

We do this, whether we are single or married

The difference is a greater dedication to the Lord if you are single due to your greater freedom and mobility

v36-38 let him do what he will:

a father with an unmarried daughter

v39-40 her husband is dead:

Paul closes his exhortations with a repeat of v8 to the unmarried to remain so if

- you have the necessary self-control
- you are led and empowered by the Spirit of God

wisdom from God

1 Corinthians

Chapter 8

Title: Knowledge, Love, and Freedom

Paul wrote this letter because divisions wracked the Body of Christ at Corinth

- shepherd – which man...Jesus!
- Church discipline – sexual immorality
- marriage practices
- Christian liberty...Christian convictions new subject
 - “It is OK for me to do this.”
 - “No it isn’t...at least it isn’t for me.”
 - “Is it OK for a Christian to do this?”

the subject: eating meat sacrificed to idols

v1 touching things offered unto idols

context: idolatrous temples in Corinth...many and monstrous

meat was offered to these false gods, presented by the common man to a priest

the priest would get his portion, a portion offered to the god, and with the great surplus due to the volume of sacrifices offered...

the remainder either sold in the temple area or in the main marketplace

(Yikes! Flies everywhere, no refrigerators!)

sometimes the temple meat was discount to the marketplace a higher price than could sell to the butchers...but lower than the prices the butchers would charge the people
capitalism at work

we all love deals, right! How far will we drive to save 3 cents per gallon on gasoline?

So, believers who knew idols were empty deceptions, would shop at the temples because of the lower prices

knowledge puffs up but love edifies

knowledge and love are contrasted

<u>When</u>	<u>knowledge</u>	<u>love</u>
interact:	says "I know"	says "Tell me, I care, I want to know."
share:	Says "I will tell you." sharing is verbal what have	Says, "Let me show you." sharing is non-verbal what do, give
problems:	says, "I told you so!"	comes alongside to comfort and encourage
serve:	serves self first – so I look good or sound important	serves others first – makes others feel important
external impact:	intellectual superiority swells our head...and stays put MBAs, PhDs...	love swells our heart... and pours forth to others, cannot be contained typical grandparents
internal impact:	puffs up – self-centered pride, self-reliance Prov 11:2	builds up – others-centered humility, denial of self
As a tool:	is used to tear down the weak	is given to strengthen the weak
measure of worth:	IQ is a lousy way to keep score	God's way of keeping score

don't get me wrong...I am all for knowledge, the acquisition of facts
knowledge is desirable, beneficial, necessary...and is from the
Lord

Is 11:1-2

You know what you know because the Lord has given it to you

But usually, knowledge is an "I" disease

"I did it"

"I earned it"

"I learned it"

being contrasted is love and knowledge without the fear of the Lord
with the fear of the Lord, knowledge would never puff up

taking it a step further, wisdom is knowledge applied with love...God's love

wisdom is also given to us from God

Prov 2:6-7a, 10

Prov 4:7

Prov 8:10-11, 14

Wisdom, in the realm of the heart and the spirit, is preferable to

Knowledge, in the realm of the head...just ask Solomon

Do you hear God in the voice of a Christian

- whose head is filled with Bible knowledge but their heart is filled with judgment and condemnation...
- who is not a Bible Answer Man but whose heart is filled with God's love, compassion, and mercy

James 3:17

Jesus said to the knowledgeable Pharisees,

Matt 9:13, Matt 12:7

Quoting Hosea 6:6

KNOW this: God's love

we do not minister to people with our knowledge...but with God's love

v2 he knoweth nothing

even the smartest man has very limited knowledge

the more we know...the more we don't know!

Man's total base of (recorded!) knowledge from Adam to 1965...doubled

by 1975...in just 10 years

now it is doubling every 5 years!

Dan 12:4 increase = "multiply

Man's knowledge is multiplying logarithmically, not linearly

Experts say that we currently know only 5% of what we will know 10 years from now...staggering!

God alone knows all...we are only discovering that which He already knows...as He reveal it to us

Rom 11:33-36

Ps 139:6 David said, "Such knowledge (knowing what God knows) is too wonderful (remarkable) for me.

I cannot attain it."

So what room is there for boasting?

Besides, how does man use his accumulated knowledge? He uses it with his heart
So much knowledge...so much evil and destruction
e.g. DNA research – reading God’s digital code for life
has led to the harvesting of brain stem cells from babies conceived in Petri dishes in a lab in Norfolk VA
babies are being conceived and murdered in a laboratory for the sake of knowledge
Rom 1:22

The issue is man’s heart...desperately wicked and deceitful

v3 if any man love God

God alone is good...God alone knows all
What does God know? What is the most amazing thing God knows?
He knows me...and He loves me!!!!
This is the greatest truth man can learn!
1 Cor 13:12, 1 John 4:7-10

which of us could stand against the Lord’s knowledge of right vs wrong?
We are able to stand before Him because of His love and grace...not His knowledge
so we need to approach God by faith in love, not by our knowledge
He desires fellowship with the meek and humble, who love Him and are dependent upon Him rather than themselves
So God is not impressed by a know-it-all...who really doesn’t

v4-6 an idol is nothing

“What’s the big deal? We know an idol is nothing more than a man-worked stone or piece of wood.
We all know they have mouths but cannot speak, hands but cannot touch, eyes but cannot see, ears but cannot hear. (Ps 115:4-7)
We all know there is no life in an idol...now or forever.
And worshipping an idol is foolish (Is 44:9-20)
We also know that there is only one Living and True God, the all-knowing, all-powerful God of AI&J.”

1 Cor 10:20

no idol can do this! [Angelica Schmidt reports]

an idol is nothing!

v7 not in every man that knowledge
an idol is nothing...some Christians don't know this...because their
conscience is weak
the weaker feels guilty by association, the stumblingblock is in his mind –
to him the idol is real
and if he feels it will alienate him from God, it will

weak in the faith (Rom 14:1) are

- baby Christians on milk toast vs meat – nurture and disciple them
- carnal Christians simply not interested – encourage, exhort, even rebuke them

don't relate to each other based on our personal convictions of
right vs wrong...relate to each other in love

v8 meat commendeth us not to God
diet does not define my relationship with God nor how I must approach
Him

vegans and vegetarians are not more spiritual or more acceptable...may
even be idolatrous. Connie, for example, worshipping the creature
meat eaters are no more spiritual than vegetarians, either
meat eaters should not look down at vegetarians...and
vegetarians should not look down at meat eaters
food is amoral...God accepts us all
the human heart is what God cares about

my relationship with God is not dictated by what I eat (Acts 10) but
rather what I am doing with Jesus Christ
Matt 15:10-20

v9 this liberty of your become a stumblingblock
back to v1b
the believer is there to help and to love his neighbor, never to be the cause
of a spiritual “skinned knee”
the issue is not our personal convictions of right vs wrong, the issue is
love

Christians have various personal convictions about

Food

Television

Movies

Going to the beach

A glass of wine with dinner

A glass of beer with your brats or pizza

Etc

So we ask “Is it OK for a Christian to do that?”

Often times the answer lies in the culture in which we live

e.g. having a glass of beer with your brats would not be shocking in
Germany

having a glass of wine with your pasta would not be shocking in
Italy

smoking a cigarette would not be shocking in North Carolina

Going to the beach is not shocking in Southern California

Matt 16:17-19

Bound = mandatory, no freedom (The Word is explicit)

Sexual sin, drunkenness...sin

Loosed = discretionary (The Word is not explicit)

Do it...if can do by faith

Rom 14:14-23

v10-11 if any man see

the temples in Corinth had “dining halls”

what if a weaker brother saw a mature Christian eating there?

people are watching us...children, neighbors, friends, parents, siblings,
even people we don't even realize

- “911” capability of Cable TV operators – they know what you watch and when
- PCs track history of usage i.e. Internet web sites visited

we are being scrutinized...especially Monica and me...by you, and
rightfully so

we live in a glass house...willingly for the calling of the Lord on our lives

Example: when my 1988 mini-van died...and had opportunity to buy
Costable's Suburban

I really struggled

1. Can we afford it? (issue: stewardship)
2. What message am I sending to the fellowship? Will I cause any to stumble?(issue: love)

what Monica and I do is VERY important!

Affects not only our walk with Christ...but many others too!

What would you think if you saw me

- Riding down the street in a brand new Mercedes convertible, diamond rings flashing, smoking a stogie
- Coming out of a movie that was suspected to contain foul language and nudity
- Coming out of Safeway with a bottle of wine

perished, for whom Christ died

at stake: perished = “ruined...devastated”

...a shipwrecked faith

the Law of Love is higher than the Law of Right and Wrong

Love is built upon righteousness, the ultimate in right and wrong

Love says, “Don't do that which you have liberty to do if it stumbles a weaker brother.”

We love you guys! So we gladly live in that glass house and lay aside our
liberty in Christ so none of you get hurt spiritually, but rather grow
in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ

our motive is the Love of Christ

1 Cor 13:1-8a

Now...what happens when we submit to the Lord's will and He combines
knowledge with love: mature Christians growing younger
Christians

Glorious! A healthy, balanced Body of Christ
This was Paul's desire for the Corinthian church
This is the Holy Spirit's desire for this Body, too

v12 against Christ

hurting a weaker brother hurts the Body, and Jesus takes it personally!!
Paul learned this up front and personally!

Acts 9:4

I don't want to be acting contrary to the Cross in someone else's life, do
you?

I don't want to hinder any man's relationship with the Lord

This is a serious offense against the Lord

Consider Matt 18:6

v13 offend

"stumble"

the Love of God...why Paul rebuked Peter for his eating habits with Jews
and Gentiles...after decision in Acts 15...and Peter obeyed

Gal 2:11-14

Knowledge, Love, and Freedom

freedom is not doing whatever you selfishly desire,
is selflessly not doing for the benefit of another
freedom, like love, is others-centered, not self-centered

denial of self for the benefit of my weaker neighbor or brother...it's what

Jesus did...so we would not be ruined, devastated

Only in His love is there freedom

John 15:13 is much more than falling on the grenade, it is mostly denying
your liberty, dying to self, for the sake of another

Do you have the liberty to do that? Keep it to yourself

Be others-centered vs self-centered

highly educated & opinionated people usually are arrogantly unwilling to
listen to others...or to God

Closing

what is more important?

- My belly or my brother?
- My entertainment or my brother?
- My opinion or my brother?

Seek to know much...but love even more...because

At the end of the day, it is not about how much you know, it is all about
how much you love

your freedom is based in the Love of Christ
the end of the matter is the love of Jesus Christ
1 Cor 13:13

do you know such love?

- It is yours for the taking – all you need do is surrender to the One
who loves you that way
- this is the most important truth a man could ever know – God loves
you
- the wisest decision a man could ever make is to surrender to Jesus
Christ and, by faith, receive His love

If you are a believer,

How much do you know?

- he that knows not...and knows not...that he knows
not...is a fool
- he that knows not...but thinks he knows...is deceived
- he who knows...and knows...that he knows not...is a
student
- he who knows...but does not...is a hypocrite
we are called to be students and doers

How much do you love?

Do want biblical knowledge

- To have in your head so you can lord over others
 - To have in your heart so you can be a doer of the
Word, serving others, thereby the Lord
- if knowledge is in your head but not your heart, ask the
Holy Spirit for a break thru

The Love of God is

- THE proper motive
- The Most Excellent Way (1 Cor 12:31)
- Ours...when we deny ourselves and follow Jesus

1 Corinthians

Chapter 9

Title: Motive for Christian Service

In Ch 8, Paul was making a point about eating meat offered to idols – exercise your Christian liberty in love
He will mention it again in Ch 10
So, in that vein, he continues his discussion of “Hey, it’s my right!”

v1-2 Am I not an apostle:

apparently Paul’s authority was challenged by some in the church.

“Why should we listen to this...this fanatic?”

division characterized this church

Because Paul was an apostle, God’s chosen replacement of Judas,

Mathias was man’s choice

God uses whom He chooses

John 15:16

Paul offers the following proof of his apostleship (requirements)

1. He has personally seen Jesus Christ, the Lord i.e. was an eyewitness...a requirement (Acts 1:22)
As a Pharisee...Acts 9...in jail in Jerusalem

2. His work in this fellowship

There are only 12 apostles, who are the foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:14)...a very special position

They were given specific authority by the Lord...including miracles

They wrote the NT Scripture

The seal (sign of ownership) of apostleship: this church!

Paul was sent to Corinth by the Lord...the Corinthians certainly did not invite him there (not much to brag about, huh?)

Paul’s apostleship and authority cannot be questioned

v3 examine

examine = “to scrutinize, to interrogate”

a term from the courts of law

e.g. if someone were to come into this fellowship and
“interrogate” me –

Who gave you authority to minister here?

Who gave you the authority to baptize, etc.?

To dedicate children, to marry people...

The Pharisees had these same questions of John the Baptist (by
what authority do you baptize?) and Jesus (by what
authority do you do these things?)

so now Paul faces the same questions
the interrogation of the enemy is predictable

v4-6 Have we not power

In the form of 3 questions, Paul stakes out his right as an apostle
financial provision (v4, 6) and marital status (v5)

v4 “I am entitled to material support, just like the other apostles,
from the churches where I minister.

v5 “I am entitled to be married and for my family to be supported
also, just like the other apostles.”

Sister: wife who is a believer (2 Cor 6:14)

The travelling apostles and their families with them
deserved provision from the churches they visited

Brethren: James and Jude were married

(Mary was not a perpetual virgin!)

v6 “Are we the only ones that don’t have the right to not work
outside the ministry?”

v7-14 Paul elaborates on the common sense and Biblical support for his “right” as an
apostle to receive financial provision from the church

v7

common sense:

- what soldier goes to war...and takes his own rations and pays for his own training and supplies and wages?
Like hearing the drill sergeant at Camp Pendleton welcoming a group of new recruits: "Welcome to Boot Camp, ladies! Hey, where is your gun? Boots? Uniform?"
- who plants a vineyard...and does not eat of the fruit it produces?
What farmer in Iowa doesn't eat corn from his own field?
- Who tends the herds...and doesn't drink the milk?

Interesting how Christian service is compared to

1. War (Eph 6)
2. tending a vineyard (John 15)
long labor...before bear fruit
caring
pruning
3. shepherding a flock (John 10)
feeding
caring
leading

(can also be applied to a parenting ministry)

v8-9

Biblical support: man would say the worker is due a wage...God agrees
Deut 25:4

Paul references it again in 1 Tim 5:17-18

Image:

stalks of harvested grain

Ox tied, walking around and around on top of the stalks

Its weight and hoofs used to separate the chaff from the fruit

Since the ox is doing the work, it is allowed to stop occasionally to
get a mouthful...providing energy needed to continue the
work

(in the analogy, I am the ox...some may think it to be literal...)

God cares for the ox...doesn't He care more for the man?

Key phrase: "it is written"

Not written for oxen...so it is written for man

Labor has its rewards

v10 in hope:

hope = Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13)

those who

- work the soil (the hearts of men in the community)
- cast the seed (The Word of God)
- labor in the harvest (salvation)
- thresh (sanctification, as men grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ)

should receive some provision for the work they do

this is echoed in Pastor Paul's last letter, to Pastor Timothy in 2 Tim 2:6

v11 it is a great thing:

so, by common sense and by God's Word, since we labor in spiritual things, it is only fair and proper that we share in the material things

Gal 6:6

Communicate = "share" (context: Gal 6:1-5)

v12 not we rather:

"You support the others when they come...I have a right to be supported by you more than the others...after all, I am the one who was sent to you in the first place and established the church here."

Not used this power:

However...Paul did not want their material support, he did not ask to be paid for his service to the Lord.

Although entitled to be paid, he chose to forego a "right" if it caused a weaker brother to stumble

what is the proper motivation for Christian service?

the Love of Christ...or money?

Matt 6:24

e.g. Chuck's brother worked for a mortuary in Orange County CA.

A funeral...had been raining...grave side service...grave was quite a distance from the pavement

Minister: "Stop. I'll do the service here...I don't want to ruin my new \$100 shoes" (A very recognizable name)

Later, another funeral...same conditions...different minister

Chuck's brother: Do you want to do the service here so you won't ruin your new shoes?"

Minister: I don't care about my shoes, I care about these people. Let's go."

v13 of the temple:

Paul cites further Biblical support for pastoral provision – the Levites who served in the Temple, who lived on a portion of the tithes and offerings the people brought to the Temple – the Lord was their portion of the land

v14 has the Lord ordained:

the same applies to the Church (Matt 10:5-10, Luke 10:1-9) – the Lord has ordained support for His laborers
it is proper for those in full time ministry to receive financial support from the church

v15 But

it isn't wrong to be supported by the church if you are ministering to the church...but be an example that glorifies the Lord and don't cause any man to stumble
2 Thes 3:8-10

Paul was not writing this in order to get support from the Corinthian church

to the contrary, Paul did not want provision...because it would better for him to forsake his "right" than for a weaker brother to stumble over his provision by the church
for that reason, he would rather die than to accept their support

he would rather starve to death than to have

- the testimony of Jesus tarnished
- the Lord's work in his life nullified

by a perception of a hireling working only for the wages due him
John 10:11-14

Paul came to Corinth to minister, not to be ministered to

His burden was to serve the Lord, not to work for men
The Lord was his provision

He would rather suffer want than encumber the work of the Gospel
Phil 4:11-13

Paul is a remarkable contrast to many TV evangelists today!

Seemingly, many ministries exist for the sole purpose of supporting the Minister

And unbelievers are not fooled, they are revolted and they mock Christianity

It would be better to die!

The proper motive for Christian service is that Jesus be glorified and men would be saved....never “What do I get out of it?”

CCA has no paid staff, I don't take a salary.

(other senior pastors have encouraged me to...but I decline)

The Lord has blessed me with a moonlighting job that meets the material needs of my family...so I can minister to this fellowship

- Freely, without an agenda, an underlying motive
- Not treading lightly around the absolute truth of God's Word for fear of losing my family's support

a better use of the Lord's money: a radio ministry, sowing the Word

some could look and say to themselves, “Gee, he must get a nice salary and benefits from that church! Who wouldn't want to be in the ministry.”

But that is an ignorant statement...God has given me a job so that I may serve Him from my heart...not my belly

v16 Woe

“I deserve nothing. I wasn't hired by men to preach. I am called by the Lord and sent to preach the Gospel...I do it joyfully and willingly.”

In fact, Paul was grieved if he didn't preach...which he did boldly regardless of his material circumstances. Why?

His motive is the Love of Christ...his perspective is eternal this is his burden and his calling, not his job

I am not doing this for the money – there is no money!

I am doing this because I love the Lord...I love the Word of God...my heart breaks for the lost...my heart's desire is for God's children to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ...

this is the Lord's calling upon my life

If you preach because you are paid, you will not preach when you are not paid. That kind of preaching is not of God.

a man called to be a pastor must have this burning drive to minister God's Word to God's children and to the lost

If he does not, he sees the ministry as a money making job, not a calling
Do you want a shepherd like that?

v17 reward...dispensation

For if: since

the faithful steward will be rewarded in due time!

The calling is spiritual, the message is spiritual, the rewards are spiritual

But if: if

The minister is accountable for that which has been entrusted him
dispensation = "stewardship"
committed = "entrusted"

the issue is being faithful to your calling

v18 without charge...abuse not my authority

the Gospel is to be given free of charge

no one should have to pay a penny to hear the Gospel preached
if you have to, red flags should go up (PK...)

The Gospel, the power of God unto salvation, was a gift freely given
When he sent his disciples out to minister the Word of God, Jesus said,
"Freely you have received, freely give."

The Gospel is not for sale, not to be prostituted

those who sell it, motivated by their own material gain, are making
merchandise of God's children

2 Peter 2:1-3

1 Cor 10:33

Ex. Jesus said false prophets are ravening wolves in sheep's clothing

We can know sheep vs wolves by what they eat – a wolf needs to
devour sheep in order to survive

ravening = "extortion"

they are after your money...they care not for your
spiritual growth, your walk with Christ

some TV evangelists and authors need to take heed of God's Word

Ex. The Christian community buys a lot of books.

There are books in a Christian book store have no place there...but are
because Christian bookstores are businesses, not watch guards of
your relationship with Jesus Christ

many books written and published hoping to catch the wave of popularity
in the Christian community

e.g. there is a book about prayer that is the current rage – it would
not be sold in our book store

don't be blind, walk in with your "eyes open"

Be a Berean!

Jesus said, "The laborer is worthy of his hire"
But if the laborer's motive is the love of money rather than the love of
Christ, he is guilty of

- Abusing his authority
- Prostituting his calling
- Making merchandise of God's kids

It is tragic how quickly people lose their spirituality when money is
involved!

Title: Run to Win

v19 For though I am free from all men...made myself servant unto all
the whole point of Ch 8-9 – exercising your Christian freedom with the
mind of Christ, the mind of a humble servant (Phil 2:5-11)
here, in context, "I do not depend upon men for my support. I am not
obligated to any man."

Point of clarification from last week: I am not saying that those who are
full-time in the ministry are wrong for receiving the support of the
church...quite the opposite...God ordains it
what I was saying is that...at this time...for this season...under current
circumstances...I chose to not receive support

- gifted with a job
- sowing the seed of the Word on the radio
- all savings will go to property

that I might gain the more:

the proper motive for Christian service is to seek and save the lost
Paul has the mind of Christ, the heart and mind of a willing servant
focused on the eternal benefit of another in need

The gain is eternal...not temporal (financial gain)

The average duration of service of a pastor (all denominations) in
USA is 2 years

- Burn out (their decision to attend seminary vs the
Lord's...striving under own strength vs Lord's)
- "Can make more money 'out there!'"

the ministry is calling...not an occupation

We are just pilgrims here, this is not our home...we are not here to collect
material things

and our journey is not a comfortable one

the Lord is looking for those who are willing to leave their comfort zones
to follow Him and serve others

we all have ministries...we are all ministers
What price can be put on these words: "Well done, good and faithful
servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."?
Serve faithfully where the Lord has called you

v20-22 to them...that I might by all means save some:

Paul became "as" one of them in order to win them to Christ
vs become one of them

he did adapt to the culture (language, customs, etc) he was visiting in
order to identify with them and to share

- The Lord Jesus Christ
- God's Word
- His faith
- The Gospel

But Paul never became one of them...and

- Denied his Lord
- Comprised God's Word
- Abandoned his faith
- Diluted the Gospel

He is not saying:

- Live like a heathen to win a heathen
- Go to the bars and drink in order to win the drunkards
- Use drugs to reach the addicts
- Become homeless to minister to the homeless

when we witness by "becoming one of", we hear "Why should I listen to
you? You are no different than me."

We are always to be salt and light, different from the world, not like the
world

When we witness by becoming "as" them, we start where they are (in their
understanding of Jesus) in order to come alongside and lead them
to Jesus

I am made

The bondservant is

- Called
- Equipped
- Empowered
- Sent

By the Master

We gotta be flexible and teachable

v23 this I do

Paul's motive was never self-serving but always serving the Lord and others. He ministered to save souls, not to make money as such, he could not be bought, hired, or fired he was not for sale...any more than was the Gospel he did all that he did for the sake of the Gospel

with the mind of Christ, Paul was reaching out to fallen humanity, he was not comfortably cloistered with believers only, excluding the "undesirables" of the world from his life Jesus went to the sick and hurting, to the prisoners, to the inner city, to the AIDS patients of His day He went in God's love with God's Word...where man in his love would not go Jesus came to us where we were...ministering the Truth in love...in Word and action Now He wants to send us as ambassadors with His love to those that need His touch today Will you leave your comfort zone...and go? He may be sending you no further than across the street

v24 run in a race

Paul now uses a sporting metaphor to illustrate the proper motive and purpose of Christian service...an illustration everyone in Corinth would understand ie he went where they were in understanding to witness God's truth in Greek society, athletic games were very big – Olympics 2nd largest Games in Greece were held in Corinth every other year the Isthmus Games in view here, I believe is a marathon race Marathon was the site of a heroic victory by Greece over Persia in 490 BC news of this great victory was carried to Athens by a runner...a distance of a little over 26 miles over hilly terrain the marathon race was a memorial and a tribute to this great victory

In every race there was but one winner

Q: Does every contestant want to win...and train accordingly? No!

- Most run with no intention of winning, or even finishing – they are there only for the experience
- Some run to finish, but don't intend to win – they are easily defeated
- Few run not just to finish, but to win – they are devoted, zealous, determined, running with the spirit and energy of wonderful news

Consider the Boston Marathon – most just want the T-shirt so they can boast that they ran in the Boston Marathon

Few train with the sacrifice and determination and devotion needed to not just finish the race, but to win it

the same can be said of the Christian walk

it is a difficult race, requiring

- training
- discipline
- sacrifice

like a marathon race, many are in the race

- all look good at the beginning!
- some are Christians only in it for the experience
- others are easily defeated, unwilling to finish when it gets to painful or discouraging or tiring
“winning” requires too much discipline, sacrifice, effort, and determination for these “weekend warriors” of Christianity
- few are on-fire thru all the trials and tribulations... always keeping there eyes on the kingdom of God

each of us must examine ourselves:

Which kind of Christian marathoner am I?

How much of an effort do I give for the Gospel?

How much of myself am I giving to Jesus?

How much baggage am I carrying around?

Do I honestly think I can win wearing cowboy boots, an overcoat, and a full backpack?

- Looking over my shoulder at past failures
- An unwillingness to let go of a certain lust of the flesh
- “I can do it myself” attitude of pride

Does everything I do help me to win?

Heb 12:1-2

Phil 3:8-14

Run to win!

v25 mastery

another sports metaphor

a term used for Olympic wrestling – where one man, with superior strength and endurance masters another man

(I have never been in better shape than when I was wrestling!)

temperate = “disciplined”

participants in this sport were very disciplined...willing to sacrifice the present for the future glory

diet, weight training, rigorous workouts

for a pile of money? No, for a crown (laurel wreath) that turned brown!

Today, for a ring...that is lost or stolen...or for a trophy that rusts and corrodes

e.g. AFN article about Greg Battle...and the 5 rings he has to show for which he and his family sacrificed so much

How much more willing should we be to endure the discipline of the Christian life to receive an incorruptible crown of righteousness!?

Our race – to be faithful to our calling – is also for a crown...but it cannot wilt and die, rust and corrode, be lost or stolen

James 1:12	crown of life	\	
1 Peter 5:4	crown of glory	\	rewards
Rev 2:8-10	crown of life	/	
Rev 4:10-11	this is what our crowns are for!		

I want to throw a real beauty, how about you?

In the wrestling metaphor: The disciplined Christian life starts with prayer – where with the strength of Jesus we master the tyranny of the urgent to be still before the Lord and say, “Not my will but yours be done.”

Eph 6:10-12

Go to a prayer meeting...and wrestle!

In the marathon metaphor: Run! The Christian walk is really a run.

Run with eyes fixed on the goal line.

And run to win!

We don't have time for a casual stroll, time is of the essence

We need to be about the Lord's business urgently

[IRAQ]

[WND article]

[DEBKA update]

[Ezk 38-39]

[Bozrah importance]

[Brad's Newsletter]

v26 run, not as uncertainly, so fight

Paul's isn't running around helter skelter, but with clear direction
He had one goal – to win! He is going to run thru the pain
and the discouragements, giving it all he had...time was of
the essence...he had news of a great victory to tell!
He was fighting a real fight...and he was fighting continually, never
letting his guard down
he was not shadow boxing!

Everything he did had an eternal purpose....all other endeavors were
distractions
so if eating meat or receiving a salary worked contrary to that purpose by
stumbling a brother, he didn't do it

we have the same great news of victory to tell...we need the same sense of
urgency

We aren't shadow boxing either – the fight is very real
we have been appointed to live in exciting times!

Redeem the time! Time is short

Let the Lord equip you...empower you...send you

Be willing to leave your comfort zone...for an incorruptible,
beautiful crown to throw at the feet of Jesus...before time runs out

v27 discipline my body

we are in a race – time is of the essence

we are in a fight – resistance never ceases

The race...the fight...is internal

Spirit vs flesh...warring for your mind and your attention

The battle is CONSTANT!

Deny...or indulge...myself...

To many Christians are “Corinthian Christians” –

- undisciplined in prayer and in reading the Word,
- spiritual coach potatoes vs exercising and becoming stronger
- playing at a relationship with Jesus vs serious about it
- in the race just for the experience or until it gets painful

should be a cataway

Paul was ever mindful of the battle that raged inside his own heart
He knew the risk of being a Corinthian Christian – to be a castaway
Paul is not talking about losing his salvation and going to hell
Castaway is a sports term meaning “to become disqualified”

no one wants to train for a race and run the race...only to be disqualified
before the end!
Enhance your performance with prayer!

every Christian “athlete” needs
discipline
denial of self
endurance...requires great strength
a driving motivation that enables him to look beyond the pain to
the glory that lies ahead

don't become disqualified by sexual sin...drugs and alcohol...any other
compromise with the world

Be wise:

- The most important part of winning a race is finishing well
- Give up what you can see for what you cannot see
- He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what
he cannot lose

Jim Elliott

Don't play fast and loose with the spiritual things you have been given

Be disciplined and focused

Set your course to serve the Lord the rest of your life

Run with the mind of Christ with the power of the Holy Spirit...
and you will never tire or quit

And run to win! Time is of the essence!

1 Corinthians

Chapter 10

Title: Learn from Israel

Paul continues his teaching on the Law of Love, that supercedes all other Law

v1 I would not that ye should be ignorant:

ignorant: = “to not know, to not understand, to be wrong”

when Paul says this it is usually because we are ignorant of something we need to know!

- a. Acts 17:23 worshipping God incorrectly (unknown God)
- b. Rom 11:25 blindness of Israel until fullness of the Gentiles
- c. 1 Cor 12:1 spiritual gifts
- d. 1 Thes 4:13 Rapture

there is still great ignorance about these 4 truths

Ignorance is both an intellectual condition and a spiritual choice

- a. Heb 5:1-3 High Priest compassion on sinners/ignorant
- b. 2 Cor 2:11 Satan’s devices i.e. forgiveness
- c. 1 Cor 14:38 if any be ignorant, let him remain ignorant
- d. 2 Peter 3:3-7 scoffers in last days are willingly ignorant of God’s promised judgment

v1-4 our fathers:

the church at Corinth needed to learn from the wilderness wanderings of their spiritual forefathers

1. under the cloud (The Shekinah glory of God):

- protection from the sun of the Sinai
Ps 121:5-7
- guidance
God went before them
Parallel: walking in the Spirit

2. passed thru the Sea:

deliverance of God via the parting of the Red Sea
Parallel: the blood of Jesus

3. baptized in the cloud and in the Sea:

- God destroyed the power of the enemy over His people and brought His people out into a new relationship with Him
- captivity was left behind
Parallel: water baptism

4. ate the same spiritual food:
manna, supernatural bread from heaven
- gather enough for today only (except Day 6)
 - every person had to gather his own
- Parallel: The Word of God, the Bread of Life

5. drank the same spiritual drink:
the Rock Moses struck was there at the beginning of their journey...and at the end
The Jews were under constant supervision during the wilderness wandering...the Good Shepherd was always with them (Heb 13:8)

Parallel: living water (John 7:37-39)
“the great day” was when the priest went down to the Pool of Siloam and brought water up to pour out in remembrance of God’s supernatural provision in the wilderness was a day of silence...breaking that silence...so all could hear...was Jesus

- v5 God was not well-pleased:
“was not well pleased”: same word as “castaway” in 9:27 and Matt 5:13
- “disqualified”, thrown out
 - no longer useful to God
- NOT loss of salvation

Not many: of perhaps 1.2 million adults, only 2 were acceptable
Joshua and Caleb alone had faith (Heb 11:6)

the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land should have taken about 30 days...it took 40 years

Why? Their lack of faith

They did not believe God would do what He said He would do

- go before them
- drive out their enemies
- give them to possess a productive land with built cities

so, they died in the wilderness, they never entered into God’s promise of their inheritance...and their children entered into the Land

Many times our Christian experience is like this wilderness
wandering...and needlessly so...because of our lack of faith

- a joy-less walk with the Lord
- too much of the world to have the joy of the Lord
- too much of the Lord to be happy in the world
- sometimes close to Egypt/the world...
- other times close to the Promised Land...but not entering in
- seeking happiness when should be seeking holiness

God was...and is...not pleased with those who do not trust Him
They are not useful to Him

v6-10 ensamples...for our learning:

Jewish history, filled with triumphs and failures, is given to be an example
to us so we know how to live unto the Lord...and how not to live!
Rom 15:4

these sins are not unique to Israel, they are in the hearts of all men
we are faced with either learning from Israel...or repeating their
mistakes...and all the consequences

- lust after evil things
they stepped outside of God's blessing for them
lust = forbidden desires...because they are self-destructive
and lead to brokenness and misery
desires drive a man
the Lord wants to be our Delight, our Desire
Ps 1:1-3, Ps 37:3-4

In the wilderness, Israel looked back on Egypt and
remembered it as Club Med!
The desire of their flesh (food) blinded them to the truth
that Egypt really was hell, a place of bondage at the
hands of cruel taskmasters
Ps 106:7-8, 13-15

Lesson: True of us...as we look back on life BC as "fun"
We forget the pain and misery of our bondage to sin
To go back to BC life will result in leanness of soul
"emaciated, famished"

Christians find themselves where they don't want to be...
spiritually, emotionally, physically...step-by-
step...as they follow the desires of their flesh
falling into sin is incremental, not sudden
it is a process, not an event
James 1:13-15

We keep our eyes peeled for the cliffs...but are blind to the
incremental steps....so we fall
sin starts with desiring in our heart something outside the
provision and blessing of God
result: leanness of the soul

- idolatry: (notice how closely connected idolatry is to lusting
after evil things)

Ex 32:4-6

while Moses was on the Mount receiving the Law of
God...the people, who were eyewitnesses of the
parting of the Red Sea and the very presence of
God going before them. All joined in an orgy of
gluttony, drunkenness, and sexual immorality
this included Aaron! (The High Priest learned Eph 2:8-9)

Lesson: the things they saw with their eyes did not keep
them pure
walking by faith keeps us pure (2 Cor 5:7)

idolatry is still alive today

mammon (money) is still deified

so is pleasure (sex)

convenience

Temple

Wall Street

TV, Internet...

abortions

- fornication:

Num 25:4, 9

Thru the wicked advise of Balaam to Balak, they saw how
the pagans around them worshipped their gods
...and fell into feeding the lust of the flesh

Lesson: any sexual relationship outside the God-ordained,
safe confines of marriage...is sin...and idolatry,
serving a false god

- testing the Lord our God
Num 21:5-9
“foolish” remedy: Look to the brass serpent...and live by the grace of God

Lesson: Don't turn your nose up at God's supernatural provision and His “foolish” remedy – look to Jesus on the Cross, who was made sin for you...and live by the grace of God

- murmuring
murmur: means just like it sounds!
It flies in the face of God and His love for us
Every parent of a teenager knows what murmuring is
 - An attitude (“I know better than you...”)
 - A tone of voice laced with sarcasm, contempt and ingratitude
 - Whining and complaining, sniveling...by someone who wants to be treated like an adult

Lesson: How do you like your kid's murmuring?
How does God like mine?

v11 All these things...upon whom the ends of the ages have come:

The entire OT record is for our benefit

...have you read/studied it?

Note: the “NT” church is choosing ignorance vs lessons learned

These things happened early in the history of Israel, but were recorded that we, who live in the times of the end, would benefit

have you noticed that the world around is crumbling and falling apart...and getting worse every day

spiritual warfare is intensifying in these days

in Sudan, Lebanon, etc: war of persecution and longsuffering

in USA: war of devotion (matter of the heart) and idolatry (pursuit of happiness)

v12 lest he fall

in the midst of that warfare, what is between “standing” and “falling”?

Only “take heed”

don't take the blessings of God for granted

don't forget the pain and misery of “Egypt”

he who thinks he can stand without God's provision and strength will fall

v13 this is one of those very special verses that should be highlighted and boxed in red

bear in mind the context: Corinth was filled with

- Idolatry – pleases the flesh, not the True and Living God
- temples to false gods – where sexual immorality was rampant...
an acceptable form of worship of these false gods.

Lust of the flesh was a very powerful temptation in Corinth...and is still today
The human condition has not changed since Gen 3

common to man:

tie this back to v6-11

examples of what not to do because these things displease God

News Flash! Contrary to what we think, none of us

- are going thru
- have gone thru
- will go thru

anything unique.

There is nothing new under the sun.

- no man in 2001 has not invented anything that God hasn't
already seen or provided for
- no man in 2001 is facing anything that man has not faced
throughout the ages

so no man has an excuse to justify the evil he is doing

common to man is (1 John 2:16)

- The lust of the flesh
- The lust of the eyes
- The pride of life

These were satan's temptation tactics

- in the Garden of Eden
- of Jesus
- of us

Let's not be ignorant to satan's devices...but so often times we are
because we choose to be ignorant

But we give in incrementally to the lust of our flesh, and before we know
what has happened we hear ourselves saying,

“I can't help it!

I am too weak and this urge is too strong!

What am I supposed to do?”

A: Do what you know...what God's Word says...do not do what you feel

1. don't listen to the advise of the ungodly (Ps 1)...listen to God
2. don't be double-minded (James 1:8)...fix your eyes on Jesus
3. don't be deceived (Gal 6:7-8)

4. God is faithful...even when we are not

5. He knows how much we can bear

God knows me and will not allow me to be tempted beyond
what He knows I can take

e.g. Job, Peter (Luke 22:31)

2 Peter 2:9

notice that God does not take away the temptation...

He adds His strength to us so that we can bear the
temptation

Gal 6:1-2 (we need each other)

Phil 4:13 (we need Jesus)

James 4:2 with James 1:2-5

(we need to ask for His strength)

And He calls upon us to trust Him to lead us out of
temptation

Analogy: you and your teenager

"You just don't care! You just don't understand!"

as if they are going thru something no other

teenager, including you, has

- Raging hormones
- Erupting emotions
- Despicable attitudes
- Peer pressure
- Face doubt and uncertainty at every turn
- Self-deception
 - * think are an experienced driver
 - * think know everything!
 - * think it is actually OK to be angry
with parents and say anything
they feel
- Sheer rebellion – no rules, no boundaries
- Pure freedom...with no responsibility

"You just don't care! You just don't understand!"

But we do understand, we do know.
 We survived those horrible years!
 We cannot take our kids out of the teenage years
 But we can add

- our knowledge
- God's strength and wisdom

so that they will be able to endure these years of
 torment
 and we call upon them to trust us to lead them thru
 these years
 that's the hard part...they insist on learning the hard
 way

6. He always provides a way out, an escape route...so that we
 will have the strength to bear the temptation

How do we escape?

- Rely on the Lord's strength
 Eph 6:10
- pray
 always (Eph 6:18, 1 Thes 5:17)
 lead us not into temptation but deliver us from
 evil (Luke 11:4)
 He hears the cries for help from His children!
 And the Comforter is faithful, giving us strength,
 encouragement, peace, contentment, joy
- flee the temptation as Joseph fled
 he decided his course of action BEFORE tempted
- follow Jesus...
 if we want Him to lead us out of temptation, we
 must follow
 how did He fight the temptations by Satan?
 with the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit
 Eph 6:17
 in the Word is what to do in every situation in life
 2 Tim 3:16-17

- humble yourself and submit to God and resist the devil
James 4:5-8
We flee...Satan flees
We flee to God, he flees from God...safe!
resistance now makes resistance later easier
and vice versa!
The “No” comes easy when you realize that to say
“Yes” hurts Someone Whose love you
cannot live without.
- abide in Christ
John 15:1-5
- give it up to the Lord
1 Peter 5:5-10
- walk by faith
2 Cor 5:7
Heb 11:6

just as

- the lust of the flesh,
- the lust of the eyes
- the pride of life

is common to man...so also common to man is

- failure
- unfaithfulness

as God's children, we know how to please Him.

Yet we rebel...we don't take the way of escape He has
faithfully provided

Why?

- We are dense!
- We are stubborn and rebellious
- Pride...which God hates

When you fail...better yet, BEFORE you fail

- 1 John 1:9
- James 1:22
- Do what you know (above)
- Lean on the supernatural provision of God

v14 flee from idolatry:

Flee from idols and cleave to the Lord.

The God of AI&J alone

- is One...there are no others
- is True and Living
- loves you
- is faithful
- is stronger than any temptation you will ever face

The carnal Christian lives life short of the fullness God has for him

v15 judge ye what I say:

“You folks are reasonable people...decide for yourselves if I am speaking the truth.”

The Gospel is for reasonable people, God’s ways are reasonable

v16-17 communion:

cling to the Lord, commune with the True and Living God

2 levels of communion (“partnership, participation”)

- we have communion with Jesus Christ (v16)
Jesus is the Bread of Life...broken for me
Jesus is the Life...shed for me
We participate in the righteousness of Jesus by faith
- We have communion with each other (v17)
The church at Corinth was characterized by divisions...
Jesus crosses the denomination barriers erected by man
Our perspective should be that of the whole Body, not just
for Calvary Chapel
Let’s rejoice in the Lord blessing other ministries in our
community

v18 Behold Israel:

Behold: consider

An example of man in communion with God

v19 idol is anything:

rejoining the topic of Ch 8:4

idolatry was a huge issue for the church in Sin City of Greece

Paul is saying with our hearts, minds, ears, etc focused on the one True and Living God, the power of idolatry is broken

v20 sacrifice to devils...fellowship with devils:

Why flee idolatry? Because idolatry is

- communion with devils!
Behind every false god is a deceiving devil
- A snare inspired by Satan to lure man's heart away from his loving Creator

In the history of Israel, Baal, Chemesh, Molech, Ashderoth, etc were the idols of the surrounding nations.

Note: new PLO stamp (not a political war, a spiritual war)

Sexual immorality, drunkenness, and child sacrifice were standard religious fare in the worship of those gods.

Fanning the flames of the lust of the flesh were demons, seeking to destroy men...especially God's chosen people thru whom the Seed of the Woman would come.

Learn from Israel

- Lev 17:7
High Priest to offer an acceptable sacrifice for the people
Jesus Christ:
 1. High Priest
 2. Acceptable sacrifice
- Deut 32:15b-29
to not flee idolatry is to embrace destruction

Today, man is more sophisticated in his idol worship, foregoing the graven images of stone and wood...but...
the demons working in Corinth then are still working today...right here in Ahwatukee

What do you wake up thinking about? What gets your blood moving?

- Your job
- Your car
- Your house
- Your investment portfolio
- Golf...or another leisure activity or "hobby"
how much time and money people spend on their "hobby"!
- Entertainment (TV, movies, surfing on the Internet...)

What if you lost your...job...car...house...IRA...hobby
can you say what Job said in
Job 1:21
Job 2:9-10
Job 13:15

That which you cannot agree with Job is an idol...beware!
Deceiving devils are behind them as well...their objective is the
same – our destruction
Skating on thin ice can get you into hot water...be wise!

Are those things inherently evil? No. In and of themselves they are
amoral
what is wrong is their place in your heart...your heart is the problem

If you cannot spend eternity with your god, you have the wrong god!
If you do not make peace with the True and Living God...and give Him
His rightful place in your heart...you will spend eternity with those
deceiving devils!

v21 cannot drink the cup:
communion with those demons results in (the end of the matter)
eternal death
Matt 6:24
2 Cor 6:14-18

eternal life requires acceptable communion with the One God
acceptable communion: a relationship based on the shed blood of God's
Innocent Lamb
Get and keep Moses' perspective
Heb 11:24-26

v22 provoke the Lord to jealousy:
another reason to flee idolatry!
Ex 20:4-5 do not make a graven image, God is a jealous God
Ex 34:12-17
Heb 12:29 our God is a consuming fire

Let's

- Learn from Israel
- Consider the end of the matter...the end of this path
- use just a little common sense!
[French court case]

v23 all things are lawful...but...not expedient:
repeating 1 Cor 6:12...so it must be important!
We need ears to hear

we have been

- saved by grace thru faith in Jesus
- freed from the bondage of sin and from the penalty of the Law by the blood of Jesus Christ

as a result, we have

- His righteousness and His nature
- the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and guiding us
- a loving vs a legal relationship with God
- the freedom to NOT to sin
- given a higher standard of living – the Love of Christ – that governs how we exercise our freedom

not everything I am free to do should I do because some things are not

- expedient – “profitable” ie spiritual gain
make good “investment” decisions!
Invest time or money in things that have eternal value
- edifying – build up, strengthen myself or others
there are things that can hinder my walk with the Lord
e.g. how much TV do I watch?
What am I watching on TV? (eye and ear gates)
What does my hobby do for me that the Lord cannot?
It’s lawful (not sinful), but does it help me win the race?
(9:24)

v24 seek his own...another’s:

don’t be selfish...don’t seek your own good...do what is best for others
be considerate of others, don’t be an offense

don’t live to enrich your life, live to enrich the lives of others

- spouse (this is convicting...so often I am selfish)
- children (safe boundaries)
- brothers and sisters in Christ

enrich their lives with

- time
- love
- encouragement
- comfort
- faith
- thinking before speaking and acting
- mercy (James 2:15-16)

v25-27 eat, asking no questions:

e.g. the Christian is free to eat meat offered to idols...for idols are nothing

- so when you buy meat in the market, don't ask whether or not it was offered to idols so your conscience won't be bothered.
If you got a good deal, just buy it and eat it !
- If you are obligated to go to a family function, don't be self-righteous about your diet...and don't ask questions so your conscience won't bother you

Be a good witness

Jesus did not come to divide with food, but with the Word of God
Matt 15:11-20

Food is not the issue, my heart is

v28 eat not

but if there is another believer present, don't eat that meat if that person would be offended or might stumble in his walk
your conscience may not be bothered...but his will...be so don't do it
e.g. glass of wine at dinner...champagne at a wedding
build that brother up, don't undermine him

v29-30 not thine own:

“Why should my freedom be limited? Why should I suffer?”
Anybody care to ask Jesus that question?

my freedom in Christ is different from “American” freedom

- my freedom is of lesser importance than my brother's walk with Jesus
- I need to deny myself, not indulge myself

the Christian is called to a higher Law, the law of the love of Christ
Matt 22:36-40

v31 do all for the glory of God:

If we grasp nothing else this morning, God help us to grasp this!

We are to live for the glory of God...that is the purpose of our existence

Eccl 12:13-14

Who is able to live outside the glory of God?

Job 38:4-13

16-17

19-20

25-32

35

What is the most glorious thing God ever did?

Phil 2:5-11

by the blood of Jesus Christ we are purchased and free from

- the curse of sin
- the penalty of the Law

as a result, we are reconciled and are now free to

- not sin...we can now say “No” to sin and the flesh
- serve our loving Creator

the words to one of my favorite worship songs really captures this

Jesus, all for Jesus

All I am and have and ever hope to be

Jesus, all for Jesus

All of my ambition, hopes and plans

I surrender these into Your hands

For it is only in your will that I am free

Jesus, all for Jesus

And we are free to choose...so we must choose wisely!
Matt 11:28-30

v28 what is the heavy burden man is carrying?

- Sin (Ps 38:4, Prov 27:3)
- Life (1 Peter 5:7)
- Trying to please himself
- Wanting to be happy
- Seeking contentment and satisfaction in riches and pleasure
(there is never enough money, the thrill of pleasure is very short-lived...driving man to more and more and weirder)

v29 yoke: Jesus was a carpenter, houses were of stones, so a carpenter usually made yokes for oxen they were “custom tailored” to each animal so it could work with the least amount of chaffing, pressure, and strain
so Jesus is saying, “Take my yoke, I have a plan for your life. Let me take the reins and guide your steps.”

v30 What was Jesus’ burden, His choice, His master passion?
To do the will of the Father, to please the Father
so, in other words, it is easier to please God than it is to please yourself

Choose that which glorifies God (Joshua 24:15a)

- salt and light
- love your neighbor as yourself
- love your enemies
- have a sweet and gentle spirit vs a critical spirit
- be gracious vs condemning
- be a servant – lose your life to gain your life
- humble yourself – and God will exalt you
- have no other gods before you

the carnal Christian

- lives outside the provision and blessing God has for him
- lives life short of the fullness God has for him

don’t cheat yourselves!

Don’t settle for happiness (fleeting emotion)...
seek holiness (life of victory)

Holiness is better than things Matt 6:33

Better than money 1 Tim 6:6

Better than what the life the world offers

John 14:27, 2 Tim 1:7

Walk with Jesus...not with Jonathan Winters

“I couldn’t wait for success...so I went ahead without it.”

“Can I do this? Yes or No...based on God’s Word
if Yes, “Should I?”

- Does this humble me before others...or exalt me?
- Is God glorified if you do, or if you don’t?

The Love of Christ is to be our motivation for all things said or done
when in doubt, don’t do it
Col 3:17

v32 church:

spirituality is not measured in the selfish exercise of Christian
freedom...but in the denial of anything that hurts another
The rule is the Love of Christ, not the benefit of self

v33 that they may be saved:

Paul is concerned about the less mature brother who might imitate him

Don’t do whatever you like or whatever is best for you...do whatever is
best for others...that they might be saved

live unselfishly...walk in love

choose the option that loves the most...in it I will be the most useful to
God

Lord, help to make better decisions!

11:1 Paul’s whole life was a testimony...he was completely sold-out for Jesus

Is my whole life a testimony of Jesus?

Am I completely sold-out to Him who purchased me with His own blood?

1 Corinthians

Chapter 11

In Ch 11, Paul deals with another 2 issues in the church at Corinth

1. the breaking down of God's order (v1-16)
2. the abuse of the Lord's Supper (v17-34)

both are manifestations of man's selfishness

v2 keep the ordinances

ordinances (traditions in NKJV) = teaching, instruction

"You have remembered my instruction and now that there are problems.

So you have written me for advise and counsel. Well done."

I can't help but think Paul was tongue-in-cheek...for this church had not done well...it was famous for divisions, sexual immorality, selfishness, riotous living...

if not tongue-in-cheek, then Paul is being very gracious

1:2-4

v3 head of...head of...head of:

a very tough verse for our society

- democratic form of government
don't like the leaders? Vote them out of office
need a law...no longer need a law? Vote
but...the kingdom of God is a monarchy, not a democracy
there are no votes, no ballot boxes
we are not Democrats, Republicans, Independent...we are monarchists
and in God's kingdom, there is order...God's order
- Women's Lib movement
In practice, it has hurt and confused the family
Ladies: we will consider the whole passage from here thru
v16 to get the context and the balance of
God's Word
Don't envy the position of the man...he is in a
position of greater submission and
accountability
Jesus has already liberated of women...woman does not,
cannot, liberate herself ant more than He has

as we try to understand this passage, we must keep in mind the first 3 rules of proper Biblical interpretation:

1. context
2. context
3. context

context: “man and woman” = husbands and wives...

i.e. the marital relationship

- Not...social relationships
- Not...men in general vs women in general
- Not...applicable in dating relationships

context: in that culture, the woman was

- just one step above a common slave
- considered to be the property of her husband
- in every regard treated as a second-class citizen

But the abuse women received in the culture at large had crept into the Camouflaged Church...and the freed daughters of the King objected!

A Women’s Liberation movement had started!

Truly, there is nothing new under the sun

issue: is not equality of the genders...but...God’s ordained order and authority

1 Cor 14:33, 40

this is about functional hierarchy and order, roles...not value or worth we see roles, a functional hierarchy

- within the Godhead:
 - the Father sent the Son
 - the Son sent the Spirit
 - the Spirit testifies of the Son
 - the Son gives glory to the Father

but all 3 are God, the One God

- in God’s creation of man and woman
 - The two were given different...complementary ...roles
 - man is provider
 - woman is care-giver

but the 2 have become 1....

- in the God-ordained institution of marriage...which speaks of a higher truth
 - Eph 5:22-32...built upon...v17-21
 - Note: both are accountable to the Lord...not to the other

with v3 and Eph 5:32 in view, God is not for man, man is for God

- man's self-centeredness/selfishness is contrary to reality...is irrational
- God-centeredness is the design...is rational

God's established order requires humility and submission

- Jesus submitted to the Father
Phil 2:5-11, Matt 26:39-44
- The man submits to Jesus
- The woman submits to the man
Gen 3:16

Naturally, we resist

But God's order is supernatural...so we must die to self

This is such a difficult verse because we live in a world that hates order and submission to authority
(as reflected on TV, in movies)

Again, this truth in v3 is based on the sovereign God's order

It is not a matter of qualifications or abilities

e.g. Margaret Thatcher...Golda Mier...were superb rulers

and when it comes to Church government, women can do many things

- deaconess (Phebe....others in Rom 16)
- worship leader
- prayer leader
- Sunday School teacher
- Women's Bible Study leader
- Note: 1st person to see the Risen Lord was a woman

there is only one prohibition

1 Tim 2:12-13

women pastors are unbiblical – usurping the authority over man and thereby destroying the Divine order

Again, the context is husbands and wives

in the marriage relationship, the husband is given by God

- leadership
not a dictatorship
but after "team" discussion, the final word...because...
- responsibility
- accountability

1 Tim 2:14

Eve was deceived...Adam willingly sinned

To him was given the greater consequence for disobedience

God's order does not make the woman a doormat for the man
The King loves His daughters just as much as He loves His sons
Jesus died to liberate women from the bondage of being
second-class citizens

Fathers...would you tolerate any man abusing your daughter?
e.g. my reaction to guys being interested in Hayley...

v4-6 covered...uncovered:

context: in Corinth at the time, there were over 1000 prostitutes in the
Temple of Aphrodite

context: in that culture,

- the married women wore veils
so no man would lust after her beauty
so she would reserve her beauty for her husband
the veil was a sign of chastity
integrity
faithfulness
e.g. Rebekah in Gen 24:62-67
- the only women that did not wear veils were prostitutes
they also shaved their heads
so there was no mistaking a prostitute!

For both man and woman

1st head = physical head

2nd head = spiritual head

man: Christ

woman: her husband

if uncovered, people will think she is a prostitute, thereby
dishonoring her husband

Problem: the man has one covering...and the woman has two

For a man, this would be disastrous...because we can only do one
thing at a time

but women can do many things concurrently...and do them all well

Q: Should a woman follow a man who is living in sin (following his flesh)?

A: No, she should follow the Lord...because He is saying NO to her "other head"...her husband
when the 2 heads are in conflict, obey the greater...
and let the 2 heads work out the conflict
and by following the Lord, she will be in harmony with the resolution of the conflict...before it is even resolved

Point of Clarification: this is NOT saying the woman is to divorce the man living in sin...for God hates divorce...so the Lord will not lead you to divorce
This is saying follow the Lord...and let Him change the man's heart and heal the relationship

Let's try a more subtle example: Mr. and Mrs. Jones
Mr. Jones works, Mrs. Jones cares for the children, going to church (living in harmony with God's order in Gen 3)
Mrs. Jones loves her job as care-giver...even lamenting that she had not trusted the Lord and quit her job outside the home sooner than she did
but Mr. Jones hates his job and loves to hunt and fish
so...Mr. Jones says "Let's move to Payson...you get a job and I'll stay home with the kids." (and I'll go fishing during the day while you are at work and the kids are in school)

Q: Should Mrs. Jones go along with her husband's plan?

A: No. It is not only selfish and irresponsible, it is against God's order
Mr. Jones is following his flesh, not the Lord
He is not loving his wife sacrificially like Jesus loves His
So, Mrs. Jones should follow the Lord, not Mr. Jones, leaving the conflict resolution with her 2 heads
When Mr. Jones is once again following the Lord, Mrs. Jones should again follow Mr. Jones

=====

Note: sometimes Christians take things out of context
A Christian religion had taken this literally and made a tradition – prayer veils to be worn in church by women
Story: David Rosales' mother-in-law...chovies on her head!
So sometimes a woman is shamed by what she puts on her head!

v7 image and glory:
man is made in the image of God...
woman is also made in the image of God
equals in value

man is the glory of God
woman man
her hair woman (v15)

nowhere are the attributes of God showcased than in His dealing with man
love
grace
mercy
longsuffering
patience
nowhere is the beauty and gentleness and kindness of man showcased than
in his wife
nowhere is the beauty of woman showcased than in her hair
consider the time and attention her hair receives
consider all the hair care commercials on TV
“My hair looks awful!” Huh?
“Oh no! Gray hair!” Where?

v8-9 man is not of the woman:
speaking of God’s creation...wherein we find God’s order
Gen 1: 4 Day 1: light
10,12 Day 3: earth and seas, plant life
18 Day 4: sun, moon, and stars
21 Day 5: sea life, birds
25 Day 6: land animals
31 at the end of it all: it was VERY good
Gen 2:18 the ONLY “it is NOT good”

Ladies: in the account of creation in Gen 1-2, the ONLY time God said
“It is NOT good...” was when He was looking at Adam!
it was not good that man was alone...man is incomplete without woman
To bring completion to the man, God created Eve from Adam’s rib

v10 because of the angels:
there is order in God’s kingdom...
angels are ministering spirits...
angels are concerned with keeping the divine order in God’s kingdom

v11-12 neither is...without:

1ST man came from the dust, 1st woman came from man...

all others came from woman

and all are God's – He alone is the Giver of life

if it weren't for God...and woman...none of us would be here

1 Tim 2:15

saved = "persevered"

- physical: mankind is preserved thru the woman
- spiritual: woman is usually more spiritual, more in tune with The Holy Spirit ...she passes that on to her children

e.g. Hannah and Samuel

she was loving
godly
prayerful
faithful

and so was he

man and woman are

- not independent of each other
- need each other
- equal in God's eyes...He plays no favorites...
He loves his sons and daughters alike

in the Lord there is equality that cannot be found in the world

Gal 3:26-28

Women in Judeo-Christian cultures know a freedom that women in other cultures do not e.g. Islamic

but freedom does not mean the absence of order

in fact, to prevent chaos in the midst of freedom, God established an order

Bottom line: All we need to remember is "God" and "all things" (10:31)

Let's look again at God's order in His creation

When creating life, the Giver of Life said "after its own kind"

Gen 1: 11-12

21

24-25

God's order...and..."all things of God"...is being attacked by the world

[cloning articles]

v13 comely:
“proper”
in that culture, a woman uncovered was seen as a prostitute

v14-15 long hair:
in God’s creation, there is a distinguishing between the roles of men and women

the covering (veil) is long hair.
Woman is beautiful with long hair
man is shamed by it.

Calvary Chapel caught a lot of flak over this verse from other parts of the Body of Christ back in the hippie days, in the early days of the Calvary Chapel movement
Does it say long hair on a man is a sin?
No...it is a shame, not a sin
Pastor Chuck would look at all the long-haired hippies and think...”Such a shame”....and then look in the mirror at his bald head and think...”Such a shame.”
but neither are a sin

v16 keep it in context – concerns the culture at Corinth

but God’s order is universal!
God is sovereign
He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords
He alone rules
His order is universal
We are not given a vote...but given to obey

Last time: we talked about the Divine order in the marriage relationship

- Built on humility and submission...of BOTH man and woman
- Based on selflessness...not...selfishness

There is also a Divine order to the Lord's Supper

There is not any room for selfishness here either

v17 the Corinthians practices in observing the Lord's Supper were shameful, carnal they selfishly remembered the ultimate act of selflessness...the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the Cross for our sins

v18 divisions

Paul has called this church carnal...he spent 4 chapters on divisions in the Church

Even in communion they were divided!

Division is

- contrary to the Lord's will for the Body and command to His disciples
- a mark of carnality – a lack of spiritual development and maturity

partly believe it:

I think Paul is again being gracious...he believed it, knew it!

v19 heresies

“sects, bodies of men, following their own tenets” vs following the Lord
i.e. doing communion their way...rather than God's way

v20-22 hungry...drunken...shame

Communion Corinth-style was characterized by selfishness
manifested in gluttony

- the early church would have an Agape feast every Sunday ...a church potluck
- a significant part the early church were the poor and slaves ...this Agape Feast was usually their best meal of the week
- But those at the front of the line would load up their plates with more than their share...and leave those at the end of the line...the poor and the slaves...with nothing
- the poor, who have a special place in God's heart, were shamed because the hoarders left nothing for them
- inconsideration for others was the order of the day vs kindness and tender-heartedness (Eph 4:32)

Communion had also become a drunken feast...Party!...vs be not drunk with wine but filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18)

clearly the Corinthians needed instruction on the proper observance of the Lord's Supper...because it had strayed from a spiritual observance of the selfless love of Christ...and had become a selfish indulgence of the flesh

v23a I have received of the Lord

Paul, with all his Bible knowledge, didn't understand either...until Jesus showed him that all of God's Word spoke of Him

John 5:39 search the Scriptures...they testify of Me

Gal 1:11-18a for 3 years in Arabia and Damascus the Lord revealed His Word to this Bible scholar

1 Cor 8:1 "Up Close and Personal"!

v23b-26 What is "the Lord's Supper" all about?

1. A time of communion

- "partnership, participation" with Jesus and each other
10:16-17

- a unity

in that culture...even to this day...to eat a meal with another is an intimate form of communion

To eat the Passover Lamb...the Lamb of God...God's perfect sacrifice...is to have intimate communion with God

- a spiritual event

to be one in God.

John 17:20-21

Jesus said the world will know us by our love...His *agape* love...a sacrificial and Spirit-filled love during communion, we reflect upon and bask in His love for us

2. a time of remembrance

- how Jesus fulfilled the Passover Feast, a remembrance of God's deliverance out of slavery in Egypt...and of the blood of the lamb to escape death
- of our utter depravity...and...of our abject need...and
- the Lamb of God's overflowing provision to meet our need, delivering us from the slavery of sin and the penalty of the Law i.e. to remember what He endured for me

3. a time of celebration

- to focus our hearts on the blessed hope, the return of our Lord and our eternal communion with Him

Let's consider some keywords in this passage

1. thanks:

with His appointment with death less than 24 hours away...what was the 1st thing Jesus did?

He gave thanks!

With complete foreknowledge, Jesus gave thanks BEFORE

- His passion in the Garden...sweating drops of blood due to the extreme tension
- Betrayal
- Abandonment
- Beating beyond human recognition
- Scourging
- Mocking
- Complete humiliation
- Beard ripped out
- The multiple trials
- Crucifixion
- Terrible, tortuous death on the cross...at the hands of His beloved creatures

The first thing Jesus did in these extreme circumstances...was to express His gratitude

A man after God's own heart...has a thankful heart...regardless of the circumstances he is facing

2. do:

several years ago a UCLA study showed that we remember

- 10% of what we hear
- 50% of what we see
- 90% of what we do

sure puts a whole new light on

James 1:22 (90% vs 10%)

John 15:14 you are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you i.e. obedience to His authority

3. till he come:

we don't usually associate communion with the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ...but Jesus did!

The all-powerful Creator willingly endured torture and humiliation at the hands of His creatures...and died...for a Bride...that He will gather unto Himself when He returns

the Church is instructed to remember what God the Son did for us...via communion...until He returns

the Lord's Supper is a foreshadowing of an awesome communion we will know...soon

[UN Racism Conference – Jerusalem is now a burdensome stone!]
[Russia and Iran]
[Euro introduced]

the Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus to remind me

- past tense: of what my Lord did for me
- present tense: how I am to live today
- future tense: that my Lord is coming! And soon!

v27 whosoever shall eat...drink...unworthily:

who are the "whosoever"s?

Paul is not talking to the unworthy...for all of us are

Rev 5:1-4...spoken amongst the saved in heaven!

Instead, Paul is talking about unbelievers...but believers who partake in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner

v28 let a man examine himself

Communion is very somber and serious time, not to be trivialized or diluted.

It is a time for:

1. self-examination

when I let the Spirit of God examine my heart...

vs my examination of others...or others of me

because man's heart is deceitful desperately wicked,

only the Spirit reveals the truth

2. self-judgment and confession

When I agree with the truth revealed to me...about me...by the Holy Spirit

3. repentance

when I act on that truth...and change course

4. submission

when my chosen course is God's way...not my way

5. to honor...and worship...and give thanks

to the One who loved me sacrificially, selflessly...when I was so completely unlovely

- v29 eat and drink damnation:
if one partakes of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy way
selfishly
drunken
self-righteous
divisive
there is no communion...no fellowship with God...only judgment
- so one must get his heart right before coming to the Table
How?
when participating in communion, the believer must look:
1. within – and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth about our heart to us
 2. back – to remember what Jesus did for me when I was so completely unworthy
 3. ahead – to His 2nd coming
 4. around – discerning His Body, the Church...being considerate of others
- v30 this cause...you...sleep:
speaking to the Church, not unbelievers
“you”
believers “sleep”, since will be getting up again
unbelievers “die”
- because of their shameful celebration of the Lord's Supper, they are experiencing spiritual and physical weakness and sickness
- v31 judge ourselves:
we need to inspect our own lives (Ch 3), asking the Lord to reveal to us the areas of our lives He wants to repair
we invite the Lord to do some remodeling work before major demolition work is required
we are to do this daily
an honest examine your life thru the lens of God's Word
how do we make these repairs?
Thru humility and submission...God's Divine order
“You will be done, not mine”

v32 we are chastened...not be condemned:
 Sometimes we resist that inspection and remodeling work...and the Father
 needs to step in and give us an attitude adjustment
 our Father calls us to obey...and He faithfully disciplines His rebellious
 children who refuse to obey
 from Ch 10, learn from Israel...meaning of “stiff-necked”

Notice the contrast:

<u>for God’s children</u>	<u>for God’s enemies</u>
“to train up, to educate”	“a sentence of damnation”
discipline	punishment
love from the heart of the Father	wrath from the King/Judge
grace	justice

the Divine purpose of discipline

- to correct
 God corrects us...because He loves us so!
 As incomparably demonstrated on the Cross
- To establish order and authority
 We all must bow to the authority in our lives...
 it’s God’s order...given so there is not chaos

parenting is discipline...a fundamental part of God’s order

Col 3:16-24

Ex 20:12 Honor your father and your mother...

Listen to the Word of God given to the wisest man who has ever lived

Prov 3:11-12

Discipline is an expression of love...a blessing

Apathy is a form of punishment...a curse

Consider Eli’s and David’s families

Prov 13:24

Spare not the rod...“twig” ie switch

Prov 22:6

Steadfastly educate them in God’s ways...not your
 ways...or their ways

look beyond the end of your nose! The wise man does.

Prov 22:15

rod = “stick” (a little tougher)

Prov 29:15-18

The absence of discipline leads to shame...

Discipline leads to rest and delight...for all!

vision = “oracle, revelation” ie God’s Word, not the
 pastor’s direction (which is to follow the Lord)

we need the Word of God...it gives us God’s discipline

...that parents are to give their children

2 Tim 3:16-17

Parents, don't turn a blind...or a tired...eye when instruction is needed by
your child...they are crying out for it...seeking the boundary
within which they will feel safe
and don't short-circuit the consequences of bad choices of your children
by not disciplining them
lessons are learned in the consequences
you only hurt them when you look the other way...or when you let them
wear you down into no action

somewhere along the line in our society, parents stopped being parents
...and started being friends to their children...and we see chaos
and not order all around us
our children do not need us to be their friends, they need us to be the
authority over them
parenting is not a popularity contest ("I want them to like me")...it is
God's anointed work

during communion, we reflect upon our obedience to our Heavenly Father
Do we faithfully submit and obey...regardless...or
Do we obey when it is convenient for us (selfishly) ?

v33 tarry one for another:
i.e. Wait! Don't pig out (it's not kosher!).
don't push your way to the front of the line...let others go first
Don't load up your plate before the hoarders get there
Be gracious and considerate of others...especially the poor

v34 let him eat at home:
if you can't wait, eat at home before coming to the Table
God's Word is very practical!

all other corrupted practices will be fixed in person
what in the world could they have been?
This is a church in great need of God's discipline!

1 Corinthians

Chapter 12

Paul has been instructing the Corinthians on divisions and disorders
in Ch 11, disorders in marriage and in observing the Lord's Supper were
addressed
in Ch 12-15, disorders and ignorance in spiritual things
Ch 12 spiritual gifts
Ch 13 spiritual love
Ch 14 public worship
Ch 15 Resurrection

v1-3 concerning spiritual...not have you ignorant:

Paul's objective: to remove ignorance

His topic: spiritual: "supernatural"

so, spiritual things (Ch 12-15) are for spiritual people...and they
are to understand

the word "gifts" is in italics in the KJV...meaning it is not in the
original language

Paul's warning against ignorance is broader than just the gifts of
the Spirit...it sweeps all the way thru Ch 15

his audience: Gentiles who

- were once lost
- being led helplessly by dumb (non-speaking) idols
- but who are now born-again children of God,
- quickened by the Holy Spirit because of their faith that Jesus
Christ is God

His message: the Lordship of Jesus Christ

Lord = *kurios*, God Almighty, Yahweh, LORD (in OT)
no man speaking by the Spirit of God can call Jesus Christ
accursed

and

a genuine proclamation of "Jesus is Yahweh, GOD" cannot be
spoken by the natural man, but only by the supernatural
man...because only by the Holy Spirit can a man be
brought to that confession

with the removal of ignorance in the church his goal...and the Lord Jesus Christ as his
ever-present message, Paul now starts his instruction on spiritual things
first up...spiritual gifts

spiritual gifts are given from God the Holy Spirit to spiritual people

i.e. born-again believers

they are not just for super spiritual believers (spiritual for show), but for all
believers

as in Ch 10:1, Paul did not want the church to be ignorant...because they were ignorant
...and to a great extent the Church is still ignorant
then, as today, the church was exercising spiritual gifts in a disorderly manner...not
according to God's order

this letter to the Corinthians is very timely...it is for us, it is for today
there is in the church a wide-spread lack of knowledge concerning the proper
exercise of spiritual gifts
the Holy Spirit does not want us to be ignorant about His gifts

ignorance is seen in:

1. Abuses: disorder, false doctrine
 - “If you don't speak in tongues, you aren't saved.”
 - “If you are sick...or not healed, it's because you lack faith.”
2. Neglect: being so stubbornly closed to the moving of God's Spirit
 - “If you do speak in tongues, you are demon-possessed”
 - “The gifts died with the apostles”
 - also a result of the abuses, on Christian TV in particular,
“That's so weird! I want nothing to do with that circus!”

both extremes of the spectrum are wrong...

- neither are taught by the Word of God
- both rip you off of the power of God working in your life

What does the Body of Christ need?

Balance

A healthy body is balanced...and it then bears fruit (love)

The Holy Spirit, thru Paul, instructs us here on how God intended the gifts to be used in
the life of the believer and in the church

overriding Rule of Thumb: gifts of the Spirit, when manifested in a scripturally
correct way

- always focus the believer on Jesus Christ and cause him to fall deeper in
love with Him...
- NEVER to draw attention to the person exercising the gift.

recommended reading: *Living Water*

a thorough, balanced, biblical exposition on spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit

v4-6 diversities:

to set the stage, there are differences in:

1. Gifts

so there are different spiritual gifts...all given by the same sovereign God

The diversity of gifts is complementary, never contrary with

- The Word of God – God never contradicts Himself
- Other gifts ie competing gifts...causing division

the purpose of complimentary spiritual gifts:
the unity of the Body of Christ

2. Administrations

= “attendance as a servant”, “service”

from this word we get “minister” – servant

we all serve the Lord differently, according to the calling upon our life, but we all serve the same Lord

3. operations

= “an effect”, “working”

the same spiritual gift is used

- differently by the Holy Spirit...
- in different believers...
- with different results

God works differently in and thru us

He uses our individual personalities and talents

His pattern of work is not the same

- person to person
- situation to situation

the gifts of the Spirit do not take up permanent residency...they come and go according the God’s will and man’s need

God, and therefore His spiritual gifts, cannot be confined to a formula

...much to our dismay

We strive for a formula to get predictability...so we can do it again

“Bob prayed this prayer over his sick child and God healed him.

So, if I pray that prayer over my sick child, God will heal her too.”

If I can figure out a formula

- I can get what I want when I want it
- I know something you don’t...
- I can do something you can’t...
- I have control...God on a string...which makes me...God!

Improper expectation...ignorance...and pride...hurt our faith

But God's work in the lives of men is not the result of a formula
We see this truth in the Book of Acts
No two cases of God working in the midst of His people are
identical...there is great variety in how God works

Let's not forget that <u>God is</u>	<u>we are</u>
• Infinite	finite
• Sovereign	powerless
• Bigger than any man-made box	
• The one doing the work	vessels

Note:

v4 same Spirit
v5 same Lord (Jesus Christ)
v6 same God

the three are equated...but at the same time differentiated
God is one...but 3 distinct Persons...a compound unity

v7 manifestation...given to every man to profit all:
manifestation = "expression, bestowment"
something that can be seen or experienced

spiritual gifts belong to the Holy Spirit...and He has a purpose for them

1. He gives gifts to every man i.e. every born-again believer...
whether they believe in spiritual gifts or not...
2. for the benefit of all, the whole Body of Christ...
the gifts are given to individual believers to comfort,
strengthen, encourage, exhort, help the whole Body
exception: gift of speaking in tongues, which
edifies the individual believer during
personal devotions
the gifts of the Holy Spirit are intended to draw us all to the
Lord and to glorify Him...

the gifts are NEVER to be used to draw attention to the person exercising
the gift

the gifts are for the benefit of the whole church...not for personal gain
this is a huge problem on Christian TV...a huge trap that the
ignorant fall into

the proper use of spiritual gifts MUST be firmly grounded in God's Word
God never contradicts His Word

Abuses of the gifts spring up when the Church is not firmly grounded in
the Word

What follows is a non-exclusive list of spiritual gifts
(others are found in Rom 12:6-8, Eph 4:11-12, 1 Peter 4:9-11)

v8 word of wisdom:
insight...discernment on a course of action...the proper application of
knowledge

“the word of wisdom” is given at just the right time, when critical issues
arise and important decisions must be made.

In that time of need, the Holy Spirit gives us the perfect words to resolve

- differences between people
- settle thorny issues
- bring peace

Personal: do you have a situation like that? Pray for a word of wisdom

Corporate: Church divisions can be avoided and healed by someone with
the word of wisdom.

Acts 15

James came up with the right answer to a very divisive issue

...because God gave it to him via a word of wisdom

result: unity

everybody was happy, the issue resolved

James 1:5

Acts 23

Paul is in Jerusalem, led by the Holy Spirit to witness of Jesus the
Messiah to the Jews...

Personal testimony...“Gentiles”...

dust flying and torn clothes everywhere...

Paul is called before the Sanhedrin (Pharisees and Sadducees),
and...

perceiving a split in his accusers on the issue of resurrection,
speaks only of that...and walks away

1 K 3

“My baby!”

No! My baby”

“Split the baby”...knowing the real mother would rather surrender
her claim than see her baby die

Solomon “split the baby” by a word of wisdom

The right words...at the right time...to bring peace

word of knowledge:

Understanding

there are very many knowledgeable people who are not very smart
because they know...but do not understand
linked closely with wisdom
in fact, knowledge without wisdom is a dangerous thing

“word of knowledge” is

- understanding...
- information concerning a person or specific situation we could not naturally acquire...
- but is given supernaturally by the revelation of the Holy Spirit...
- so that we might begin to pray with and intercede for hurting people and minister to their needs

Like the gift of the word of wisdom, the Holy Spirit anoints with this gift only at special times and for specific occasions.

Acts 5

Peter was given a “word of knowledge” about Ananias and Saphira

Abuse: “There are 5 people here tonight the Lord told me are going to give \$1000...so stand up!”
this contradicts Jesus’ teaching on giving in the SOM...so it is not from the Holy Spirit

Abuse: “I have a word of knowledge for you, brother.”...

- Condemning...vindictive
Would the Holy Spirit say that to you?
- that cannot be supported by Scripture
because the answer to every question we ever have was written down thousands of years ago
test all things, hold to that which is good (1 Thes 5:21)
we must be grounded in the Word of God!

v9 faith:

faith is a gift (Eph 2:8-9)

Faith is given by a sovereign God to open the door for His work in the world...faith is the touch point of God working in and thru our lives

since God has given every man a measure of faith (Rom 12:3), this is a special dose of faith required for a certain circumstance

Acts 3 man born lame is in the Gate Beautiful...as he was every Day...begging for alms
“Silver and gold have I none, but what I have I give...stand and walk!”
God gave Peter and John (via an impression on their heart) the faith to “do” something supernatural...and to the man He gave the faith to respond

Acts 14 Paul perceived the lame man at Lystra had received the gift of faith to be healed... and Paul was given the faith to heal

Note: many times the gifts are given in combination
Paul was also exercising

- the gift discernment of spirits
- the gift of healing

1 K 18 Elijah’s challenge to the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel

the gift of faith, like the other gifts of the Spirit...sometimes you have it...sometimes you don’t
it is given by the Holy Spirit in the moment of need...

1 K 19 Elijah fleeing Jezebel!

the Holy Spirit is in control of the gifts of the Spirit

Acts 3 if Peter and John “possessed” this power, there would have been no lame people in Jerusalem...yet there were how many times did Jesus walk by this man...and not heal him?

There was a right time for the Holy Spirit to heal him

healing:

The critical understanding required for this gift is that God heals.
Always has, does now, and will in the future.
He is the family physician and the first treatment is always prayer.

Notice: “gifts” of healing (plural) vs “gift” of healing...
Any time God has healed you, you have received the gift of
healing

v6, difference in operations, is seen very clearly with the gift of healing

Sometimes God heals thru a process involving doctors, He has gifted with
knowledge and wisdom, and medication...

and

Sometimes supernaturally and instantly, miraculously
(coupled with the gift of faith) Pastor John driving...”Go to the
hospital”...blue baby in an incubator, doctor giving father
bad news...”Pray”...John laying hands on...baby pinked
right up!

and

Sometimes people die...for we are all appointed a number of days, and
then the judgment (Heb 9:27)

But God does heal...that is why it is scriptural to

- pray for the sick
- lay hands on them in the name of Jesus
- anoint them with oil

God heals according to His will...healing is not a formula we can invoke
at our will.

God is not a genie in a bottle

otherwise hospitals would be emptied...but they are not...and “gifted”
men would be glorified by men

God is not limited as is medical science...but...

We don't see more miraculous, instant healing today because of man's
general unbelief...not because God can no longer heal or because
He has stopped healing miraculously

Abuse: Word of Faith movement

“No healing because you lacked faith”
not a doctrine of love...but of devastation

Abuse: “For only \$1000, I will send you this miracle handkerchief...”

The Church is guilty of ignoring...or abusing...a gift that is given to benefit the Body and to cause unbelievers to investigate the reality of Jesus Christ

v10 miracles:

So many things are miracles for us...because there are so many things that are impossible for us to do but nothing is too hard...nothing is impossible for God Almighty

By His sovereign will...to cause men to fall deeper in love with Jesus...the Holy Spirit gives the gift of miracles

Acts 9 Peter raising Dorcas from the dead

Acts 19 God did special miracles by Paul, healing any and all in Ephesus

Acts 20 Paul raises Eutychus from the dead (Abused today)

Pastor Chuck's sister raised from the dead

This would be a very difficult gift to possess, one that would require extensive preparation...in humility

because our heart is so prone to prostitution and pride

There are very few people God could trust with such a radical gift, one that shouts so loudly of His power and glory.

which of us could restrain our unbelief and our pride to be used this way?

prophecy:

the public exposition of God's Word aka teaching and preaching

Note: not the office of a prophet..."Thus saith the Lord..."

1 Cor 14:3... instructs us on proper use of this gift

all prophecy is to be judged against the revealed Word of God

Acts 17:11

this gift is often used in combination with other gifts – word of wisdom and word of knowledge

this happens frequently during the teaching of the Word of God.

The pastor will often illustrate a particular point with what he thinks is a hypothetical example...or a thought that "just comes to mind"...

only to find out later that it convicted and rebuked someone listening to him.

The pastor could have in no way known and wasn't even aware of what was happening, but God does...and reveals this knowledge in a very natural way through the teaching of His Word...to draw you closer to Jesus

discerning of spirits:

the judging of spirits, the distinguishing between spirits

to discern the truth about a prophesy...a teacher...an experience...a place manifested by

- a chill
- a knot in your stomach
- a heaviness of spirit
- a discomfort, physical, emotional, or spiritual
- an inspiration from the Lord

Acts 8 Peter's handling of Simon the sorcerer

1 John 4:1-3

installation of Disney computer game

Internet link to an arcade, included evil games

Chat rooms – profanity...uncensored

Abuse: Health and Wealth/Prosperity doctrine

Abuse: Christian form letter...from a total stranger – the Lord has put you on my heart, brother...for only \$1000...)

The gifts of the Spirit are for today...because God still desires to help His children and to draw men to Jesus

they are not to be feared...but received and exercised by faith...CCA needs to use our gifts if we are to be a strong Body

tongues:

the Body of Christ needs to be strong...so does every believer
the gift of tongues can help both be strong

tongues: the ability to speak fluently in a language unknown to the
speaker through the power of the Holy Spirit

- a language of man
- a dialect of heaven

Acts 2 birth of the Church on Pentecost (17 different languages)

Acts 10 Cornelius' house ("Gentile Pentecost")

Many other places in Acts

Speaking in tongues is a covenant of faith with God...

where the believer trusts the Holy Spirit to communicate his love
and gratitude...

which cannot be adequately done within the limitations of human
language

the gift of tongues helps us to "give thanks well" (1 Cor 14:17)

When words are impossible to praise God, tongues "stands in the gap."

- The gift of tongues is used to assist our prayer life, our
devotional life...and as such...to edify the believer
- how the Holy Spirit intercedes for us when we do not know
how to pray (Rom 8:26).

The gifts of tongues is

- listed last in Paul's list of gifts, which is not to communicate a
lack of importance...
- but it has become synonymous with "Gifts of the Holy
Spirit"...even though...
- Not every believer has this gift, just, as an example, not every
believer has the gift of healing.
- and is the most controversial gift
- and therefore, is the least understood and most abused gift

Tongues is also the most controversial of all the gifts of the Spirit.

Since it flies in the face of man's intellect, pride often rears its ugly
head and men oppose this gift.

More importantly, because tongues is a vehicle of intimacy and
communion with God, Satan aggressively opposes it.

Abuse: "You don't have the Holy Spirit unless you speak in tongues"

Not every believer has this gift (v30)...but every believer can pray
in the Spirit

Rom 8:26, Jude 20

When words fail...groans or tears work great!

i.e. tongues is not the only way to pray in the Spirit

Abuse: in operations

In a public worship service, Tongues is to be restricted, in that it is not to be in church service unless an interpreter is present... and then, only two or three are to speak in tongues nor will the gift of tongues interrupt the gift of prophesy
The gift is to be restricted, but not forbidden
We will learn more as we continue our journey

Let's not be ignorant of the enemies devices...one of which is division
As believers saved by grace and loved before we loved, we must never, in the face of this opposition, let the gift of tongues divide us.
Love is supreme.

interpretation of tongues:

a companion gift with the gift of tongues...when it is given to benefit the whole Body
is the explanation of a word spoken in an unknown language to a community in their own language
Tongues are not to be uttered in a public worship service without an interpretation...

Otherwise,

- chaos reigns and not God's order (1 Cor 14:33, 40)
- unbelievers present will think these church people are crazy...and flee

vs

being drawn to the Lord by His love felt thru His people

How does this gift work?

Interpretation is not to be confused with translation.

Translation is a word-for-word conversion from one language to another.

Interpretation is concerned with the concepts, not the words, and tries to explain the meaning expressed in the original language.

The interpreter need not necessarily understand the language spoken in order to receive by faith this gift from the Holy Spirit and be used by God to comfort His Church

This gift is to be received by faith, just as are all the others

Dan 5

Daniel reading the handwriting on the wall

v11 worketh...the selfsame Spirit:

spiritual gifts are from the Holy Spirit...to individual believers...for the Church

How does the Spirit distribute His gifts? By His sovereign will the Holy Spirit is the focus, the gifts are not...man certainly is not

the Holy Spirit orchestrates these various gifts into a beautiful symphony of God's helping and guiding hand upon, in, and thru His people

- the gifts = the instruments
- believers = the musicians
- The Holy Spirit = the conductor

He directs us according to His will, we never direct Him according to our will

His will: a strong Body and strong body parts

v12-14 body is one...many members:

I have but one body, but it is made up of thousands/millions/billions of equally important parts doing different functions...for which they have been designed ("gifted")...for the benefit of the one body

head
arms
hands
fingers
legs
feet
toes
eyes
ears
nose
mouth
tongue
heart
lungs
brain

believers, spiritual people, make up the spiritual Body of Christ, each

- is important
- has a different function
- is spiritually gifted accordingly

the Body of Christ is an organism...not an organization...it is alive!

All parts do not fulfill the same function, but all parts are required to make the whole...every part is mission-critical.

In a healthy body, all parts work together selflessly in unity

v15-17 if the foot...ear...eye...the whole body:

it is human nature to want to be better, smarter, faster, stronger etc than the next guy...in order to fuel our pride.

Can the foot “secede” from the union?

Is my body made up of competing parts?

- Does my eye puff itself up by withholding help from other parts?
eg a staircase
- Does my ear make itself seem more important by failing to warn the rest of the body of an approaching train?
- Does my hand claim a superior position by stabbing the eye?
- Does my liver say, “I quit because I never get to ride on top of the shoulders!”?

Absurd...ridiculous!

All parts are important to the health of the body...to do what they have been designed to do

In fact, without the rest of the body, every part loses its function...its purpose...its life
every part needs the whole body

True also of the Spiritual Body of Christ

all spiritual gifts are important to the health of the Body of Christ...we all need each other

All parts are equal...there different only by function given by the Designer

we are all interdependent upon each other

You can't sit alone at home and say you don't need the church...because you do!

You are a body part that needs the whole body in order to be healthy

Therefore, believers should not seek to claim spiritual superiority over other believers by humanly ranking the importance of spiritual gifts

e.g. some believers who speak in tongues think they are spiritually superior to believers who don't.

Absolutely untrue...it is known as spiritual pride, the ugliest form of pride

taken to its end, that spiritual pride says one is not saved unless they speak in tongues...something the God's Word does not teach

there is no room for pride in the Body of Christ

v18 pleased Him:

I am in the body of Christ precisely where God wants me, and gifted precisely as He wants me! That comforts me each of us a gifted perfectly...just exactly the way our Creator wants us to be in His infinite wisdom and foreknowledge, God is pleased, delighted, with the way you are gifted!
No part can say, "I have no function, I have no gift."
Nor can any part boast of having a more important function, a better gift

v21-24 feeble are necessary:

notice: which seem to be weaker...to who?
To man, not to God...all parts have the strength of God
pride blinds us to God's truth

Less honorable: we think are less weighty, lesser in importance
Some parts are more noticeable – eyes, biceps, nose, cleft chin...
Other parts are more modest...less visible...in that they are covered (are internal to our bodies)
digestive system
circulatory system
heart
lungs
brain

the eye cannot boast of its importance, claiming to be more important than the other parts, because, in truth, the "weaker" parts are more indispensable.

- Man can live his entire life blind
- Man will not live very long with out kidneys...which are weak and hidden and protected...and when healthy, transparent
- For the healthy life of the body, the humble kidneys are of greater important than the proud eyes!

besides, what does an eye need when it gets an eyelash in it?
A hand!

Q: what if parts of my body displayed the pride and rebellion we see in parts of the Body of Christ?

What if my big toe got fed up with being confined in a hot, humid, stinky place...and planted itself in the middle of my forehead so it was more noticeable?

Grotesque...and chaos...rendering the body sick and not useful...
as is rebellion in the Body of Christ

Q: which parts are more valuable to a healthy life?

Those on center stage...or those behind the scenes?

Most parts of the body spend their entire existence not being seen...but being very busy about keeping the whole body healthy

The real work of the Body of Christ is accomplished by the quiet, faithful, selfless, unassuming, and unnoticed parts

man may not know of your ministry...but the omniscient God most certainly does...because He gave it to you and He will reward you for your faithfulness to it

why is this humble unity so important?

v25 no schism:

God has so wisely knit the body together and so gifted each body part so that there will be no division in the body...but unity of purpose, as the parts work cooperatively together to keep the Body healthy and strong

each part selflessly serves all the other parts

the part that becomes corrupted and serves itself has been infiltrated by cancer...and must be cut out to preserve the life of the body

and the modest part that wants to promote itself to a more visible place will be put back where God intended it to be

v26 one member suffer...rejoice:

a consequence of sin in the believer's life is pain...and then the whole Body hurts.

When one of us falls, we all suffer.

the fall of any Christian hurts and is felt by every Christian

- How do your eyes feel when your head hurts?
- What is the impact when your big toe gets stomped on?
- Or your thumb gets smashed by a hammer?
- How wonderful do all the glamorous parts feel during an attack of appendicitis?

When one of us hurts, we all hurt...

But when one of us is blessed, we all rejoice!

Honored = strengthened

How great does all parts feel when the pain in any one part is gone!

In this time of great need in our nation, when so much pain abounds, we all hurt

we believers know the only Source of comfort...and we desire that all unbelievers come to know Jesus Christ, the God of all comfort so we pray for full churches...and changed lives

God's comfort is not denominational...it is Jesus Christ

v27-30 all are the body...in particular:

the whole is the sum of the parts. The Body of Christ is one body...
and it is a wonderfully designed and orchestrated collection of
parts

are all:

7 rhetorical questions posed to teach us; the answer to all 7 is

“No”

“Of course not”

“Obviously not”

not every part has the gift of sight...the gift of hearing...etc.

The Parts are not all the same...nor are the gifts of the Holy Spirit

one-size-fits-all

No part has all the gifts.

Each part has a God-ordained function and calling

Worth repeating: not all do speak in tongues!

But every believer can...and should...pray in the Spirit

v31 covet the best:

the Law says we are not to covet material things or people, by Grace we
are commanded to covet spiritual gifts.

God wishes to re-direct man's natural covetousness to supernatural
objects

What are the best gifts?

- Pastor Chuck says tongues is one because it is a higher level of communication with God - spirit to Spirit (1 Cor 14:15, 18)
- prophesy (1 Cor 14:1)
- those that edify the Church (1 Cor 14:12, 39)

what is the best gift to covet?

- Depends on the job at hand...the one most needed at the moment.

A handyman will have many types of saws in his garage
Jigsaw...Table saw...Hacksaw...Skill saw
Sawsall!

Which is the best saw? Depends on the job at hand

Certainly, a screwdriver is not the best tool...

- The ones (s) you need to be faithful to your calling
As pastor, I need, and therefore covet,
 1. prophesy
 2. word of wisdom
 3. word of knowledge

1 Corinthians

Chapter 13

in Ch 12, he wrote of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their manifestations in the lives of believers...of which they were ignorant
that discussion of spiritual things started in Ch 12 will continue in Ch 14
in the midst...“The Love Chapter”, in a letter written to a church given over to carnality
so, in context of spiritual things and spiritual gifts, the subject becomes God’s love...

12:31 most excellent way:
what is that way? Love

Love is superior to...more desirable than...any gift of the Holy Spirit...even the best gift
we are told to covet

the More Excellent Way, life at its very best, is to walk in the way of God’s Love
What a privilege for a wretch like me!
An “overflowing cup” of God’s love is better than anything mentioned in Ch 12

1 John 4:8 says God is love
James 1:17 says God is the giver of every good and perfect gift
Love is better than any gift

Ch 13 is the under girding of Ch 12 and Ch 14...spiritual things

v1 tongues of men and angels:
angels have their own language!

have not love:
man is

1. physical
2. emotional
3. spiritual

love is expressed on all 3 levels but in English, we are confined to one word

Greek, a more robust language, as a different word for each

1. physical

eros

in the safe confines of marriage it is beautiful form of intimacy between one man and one woman...for life

elsewhere it would be better translated as “lust”... self-centered...seeking self-gratification

2. emotional

phileo

“fondness, friendship”

the love you have for your

- spouse (best friend)
- children
- family
- friends

is reciprocal...give and take

I like you...because you like me...

or because we like the same things...

or because I can relate to you

3. spiritual

a “new” Greek word, coined by the writers of NT

agape

a depth of love that transcends human love...

- a spiritual love...(in midst of spiritual things)
- NOT a natural love...a supernatural love
- a self-sacrificing, unconditional, overflowing love...
- a choice...a decision...an act of the will...NOT a feeling
- God’s love

this new word *agape* is defined

- here in v4-8
- Gal 5:22-23

A supernatural love that can be demonstrated only by a believer, by the working of the Holy Spirit

I have become a sounding brass:

what good are they gifts of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit?
without God's love, the gift of tongues...even if it is a dialect
spoken in heaven by the angels...is just a meaningless noise

The world's greatest preacher...without *agape*...is just a harsh noise

in fact, without the self-sacrificing love of God, it is like fingernails on a
chalkboard

v2 but have not love, I am nothing

more important than these gifts is being a vessel and funnel of God's love
Bible knowledge without God's love...i.e. head knowledge but no heart
knowledge...is

- an irritating noise
- empty
- of no value
- has no power

faith: not saving faith...but the gift of faith

Matt 17:19-20

who has faith like this?

Have you seen any mountains flying around lately?

But this faith is worthless apart from God's love

gifts do not make the man...God's love makes the man

a highly gifted man is of no use if he does not love with God's love

we are useful to God only by God's love

v3 all my goods to feed the poor:
the giving of yourself or your resources out of an attitude of self-
righteousness...if I sell everything I have and give to the
poor...
but God's love is not my motivation...it profits me nothing

if I am willing to be martyred for Jesus...but my motivation is not the
Love of God...I have thrown my life away

there is nothing in me that can produce *agape*
rather, *agape* is seen in my life when I abide in the Vine
John 15:1-5, 13-14
When I abide in the Vine, God's love bears fruit in my life...
it is to be my motivation for doing all that I do
agape is manifested in our life in

- forgiveness of others
- denial of self...as I lay down my life/will for others
the Lord does not desire self-sacrifice...
He desires sacrifice of self
He doesn't want self-denial...
He wants denial of self
- obedience to God's Word

When I abide in the Vine, fruit is produced...by the Vine
The fruit is love
The fruit, *agape*, is the work of God
An excellent life is a fruitful life
God producing in us the nature of Christ

v4 Love is

1. longsuffering/patient
2. kind

long-suffering:

“to put up with...and put up with...and put up with...and...”
Doesn't know the meaning of "Enough!"

1 Tim 1:12-16

Kind:

benevolent, gracious, giving the undeserved to the undeserving,
in fact, at the far reaches of suffering...after having suffering without
end...then love is kind!

Love is

1. longsuffering...and then
2. kind

that's all! But that is everything

in our current situation...war is what governments do...are ordained to do
the Body of Christ is given to...love
and there is no time limit, no “weight” limit

Now, to help us understand this, we learn thru v6 what Love is NOT

Envy not:

Because it is longsuffering and kind
It does not get upset when someone else gets blessed by God
New house, new car, promotion at work, growth in their ministry...
jealousy is a very ugly thing in the corrupt heart of man
It looks ugly, feels ugly, sounds ugly

Love is not a competition...it is unconditional and sacrificial giving of
yourself

Vaunteth not itself:

love is not self-centered...Love is others-centered
Love is not running a campaign to get elected...it does not promote itself

Not puffed up:

love is not proud and boastful...Love is meek and humble
Phil 2:5-11, Matt 11:29
agape does not do what it does in order to be seen by men...
Love submits for the benefit of another

agape builds up vs puffs up (1 Cor 8:1)

v5 not behave itself unseemly:
love is not manipulative or controlling
agape doesn't act

- weird
- improperly
- immorally
- or in any way not fitting of the name of Jesus

seek its own:
agape is not self-centered (repeated!)

not easily provoked:
agape is not provoked. Period.
"easily" is not in the original transcripts
love controls the tongue
love has an infinitely long, slow-burning fuse
love is not a quick-tempered, knee-jerk reaction
love is not provoked...there is no loophole for our anger
love is a choice, an act of the will...not a feeling

thinks no evil:
love wants the best...for others
Jer 29:10-14a
Love is gracious and merciful
Agape does not "keep book" of wrongs so it can settle the score...
or balance the books...later
Agape never says, "I will forgive...but I will not forget."
Love is never bitter
Love seeks healing and restoration

v6 rejoices not...but rejoices:
love is grieved by sin...mine and yours
agape does not seek revenge or rejoice in bad things happening to anybody
somebody who did you wrong...wrecked his new car...how do
you feel?

Love rejoices in the truth
Even if there is near-term pain in the truth...

more descriptions of what love is

v8b they shall fail:

these gifts will become idle, stop:

- prophesy
not the content...for all prophesy will be fulfilled
but the function...because when it is all fulfilled, it will be
unneded
- tongues
“ceased by themselves”
used by those who oppose the validity of the gifts of the
Spirit for today as a proof text
But consider Luke 8:22-24
“cease”
same word
the wind and the seas did not cease themselves...
they were ceased by Jesus
so...tongues will be ceased by Jesus...not by unfaithful
man
- knowledge
knowledge in general?
If that were true...who would know?
Are we all to check our brains in at the door?
No, there will always be knowledge
In context of the spiritual gifts, this refers to the gift of the
word of knowledge...which will no longer serve a
purpose

v9 in part

why will those gifts stop?

Because here and now we are incomplete, “handicapped” by this
tent

the gifts are for this brief pilgrimage.

They will no longer be needed when Jesus comes...when the
pilgrimage is over

v10 but when that which is perfect:

perfect = complete

what brings completeness to the incomplete?

1. the Bible, the canon of God's Word ???

would the Corinthians have understood what Paul was talking about if this is what he meant?

Is God completely revealed in the limited language of men?

Now that the Bible is complete, do we no longer need the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives to comfort and strengthen the Body of Christ?

2. Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ alone is perfect/complete

Jesus Christ makes all things complete at His 2nd coming, when He sets up His kingdom that will have no end

Acts 2:14-20

- The gifts are for today
- They are no longer needed when Jesus returns and reigns...but they are until then!

God has gifted men because we are incomplete

Spiritual gifts are for a season

When Jesus returns, He will make us complete

Phil 1:6

v11 when I was a child:

this is not a seniority system, this is a maturity level

child:

self-centered and selfish...oblivious and uncaring about the needs of others...immature...carnal

man:

mature...spiritual...cares and provides for others... accepts responsibility and accountability

some teach this is the Church coming to maturity...quite the opposite

early Church

pure

holy

on fire

sold out

empowered by the Holy Spirit

small

overflowing with love

Church today

corrupt

carnal

complacent

compromising

power-less

large

no love...cold...lukewarm

pray that our fellowship would be like the early church...not the contemporary church

v12 through a glass darkly...face-to-face:
an obvious reference to the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ

glass = "mirror"

Corinth was known for the high quality brass mirrors it produced
Still, inferior materials and processes compared to today resulted in
cloudy mirrors that did not clearly reflect images
we have mica windows now but will soon see Him face-to-face!
1 John 3:2

we see a cloudy mirror from this tent.

When Jesus returns and we get our glorified body suitable to the
environment in heave, we will see clearly
then, we shall know the Lord as He knows us
know in part: know = "to perceive"
know even as also: "to become fully acquainted"

v13 Faith, hope, love:

faith, love, hope are eternal...they will abide throughout eternity

faith: Heb 11:6

hope: Titus 2:13

love: 1 John 4:7-11

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1 Thes 5:8

God's love is greater than

- my (lack of) faith
- my hope of His return.

God's love is sure and unwavering.

Q: You all have a ministry – in the home or in the neighborhood or at work or...
What is the measure of a successful ministry?

A: Love

How do you measure Love?

- Lives touched
- Hearts changed
- Comfort and encouragement given
- Trials shared
- Seeds planted and watered
- God-honoring decisions made
- "buckets" of compassion poured out
- tongues bitten vs loosed

Abide in the Vine, Jesus Christ...and be fruitful
Love is the fruit

1 Corinthians

Chapter 14

Ch 13: gifts without love do not represent Jesus Christ

Ch 14: Regarding a public worship service where the love of Jesus is the motivation:

1. the purpose is that edification of the whole Body will take place
2. for that to happen, understanding must be involved
3. and for understanding to happen, order must reign

v1 follow after:

the Gr. Word is sometimes translated “to pursue”...but most times it is translated “persecute”

Acts 9:4 Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

is a VERY active word...a very INTENSE word!

Agape is a VERY active word also

So...zealously pursue God's love

Has nothing to do with our feelings...

Has everything to do with our obedience to our Lord...a high octane obedience

rather than ye prophesy:

Paul has said

- covet earnestly the best gifts (12:31)
- desire spiritual gifts (14:1)

but here he puts a special emphasis on the gift of prophesy – the forthtelling of God's Word

v2-4 tongue speaketh not unto man but he that prophesieth:

Ch 14 deals with only 2 gifts of the spirit – tongues and prophesy

Why? No doubt because these 2 are at the heart of one of the destructive divisions in this very carnal church where there is division...Satan is at work...and correction is needed

<u>gift</u>	<u>target</u>	<u>purpose</u>
tongues (private)	God	self-edification
prophesy (public)	Church	to edify – to build up to exhort – to stir up...”Get busy” to comfort – to lift up, to strengthen us to trust God to rebuke, correct

prophesy is like water to the seed planted in good soil

the speaking forth what God has put on your heart...God’s Word of encouragement, comfort, and strength

- one-on-many: on Sunday morning
- one-on-several in a mid-week study
a small group study
a family study
- one-one-one encouraging, comforting
giving your personal testimony

Paul would rather we all prophesy because it, governed by the law of love,

- builds up
- stirs up
- lifts up

the whole church

v5 but rather that ye prophesied:

there is no greater gift to help with our personal prayer life than tongues... but when it comes to the church, prophesy is clearly the superior gift

Why?

v6 what shall I profit you:

How much building up...stirring up...lifting up...would you get from this teaching from the Word of God...if I delivered it in Danish?

The key concept from here to v32 is: understanding

v7-8 trumpet give an uncertain sound:
even the sounds of lifeless things have meaning...music is a language
an oboe can deliver a beautiful, inspiring message...or one that
only hurts our ears

Israel used trumpets to communicate with the whole nation...to call the
people

- to worship
- to gather
- to go to war

reveille

charge

retreat

each blast had a distinct sound in order to quickly and broadly
communicate the desired message.

If Herb Alpert or Louie Armstrong sounded "Retreat" his own way, the
people would not know what to do...and would ignore the
trumpet...or chaos would reign...and destruction would follow

v9 so like wise ye:

I must communicate God's truth so it is easy to understand

- In everyday language, not a private language
- In simple terms

Otherwise, you wouldn't know what God wants us to do either...and I
would be a strange noise filling the air...and taking up your time

v10 many kinds of voices:

many different languages in the world.

Why? The Tower of Babel

All languages have meaning

v11 if I know not:

language is an agreement between people that certain sounds mean
certain ideas

human interaction requires communication...the exchange of thoughts and
ideas

language is necessary for communication

(communication = talking + listening)

if I have not been schooled in that language, no communication
occurs...no interaction is possible

experience this when you travel to a foreign country...or to a high
school

some languages are universal; e.g. men
“Honey, dinner is ready!”
“Daddy can I borrow your car?”
“Look, dear. All power tools are half price at Home Depot!”

v12 zealous of spiritual gifts:
be zealous for all the gifts of the Spirit...especially those that build up the whole body...
because to build up the Body of Christ is the heart of Jesus Christ, The Head of the Body

v13-15 if I pray:
if I pray in tongues, I do not understand the language.
When my spirit prays, my mind doesn't understand.
Unfruitful = “insulting”
Praying in tongues is insulting to my intelligence
It seems like such a childish thing...sounds like jibberish
But sometimes my mind simply does not understand how to pray...so I pray in the spirit, opening my mouth and letting the Spirit speak

- Tongues (of men...and angels)
- Groans
- Tears
- As led by the Holy Spirit when He impresses upon my heart to pray for someone

2 ways to pray...2 ways to sing
there is a time and a place for both

v16-17 how shall he say...Amen:
the gift of tongues (which cannot be taught, only received by faith) helps me to give thanks to God in a way that is superior to English and that's a beautiful thing!

But if I pray or speak in tongues in a public worship service...and there is not an interpretation...no one can say, “Amen, brother! PTL!”
all I've done in that case is to steal for myself the attention being given to Jesus

v18 I speak with tongues more:

Paul was a very highly educated man

- he spoke multiple languages
- he was taught the Scriptures by Gamaliel...then by Jesus Himself
- was very intelligent...had a great mind

yet language restricted his ability to praise and worship the Lord...
so he was gifted to speak and pray in tongues...for which he was very
thankful

please note that Paul is NOT putting down the gift of tongues

Tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit, which we are to desire

The gift whereby God enables us to communicate with Him in the
realm of the Spirit...bypassing the logjam of our intellect
it is a personal prayer language, a great gift for one's personal
devotional life

prayer is a battlefield of defeat for Satan...

so Satan has so corrupted this gift as to make it controversial and
divisive in the Body of Christ

listen to the truth of God...not the lie from the father of lies!
covet this gift...and if you receive it, use it!

Paul is not anti-tongues, he is just coming down against the improper use
of the gift

v19 yet in the church:

Paul was a very prayerful man with a dynamic personal prayer life...but
he never spoke in tongues in a public church service
he would rather speak one short sentence in the common language of the
people than speak for hours in tongues

issue: understanding...in order to build up, stir up, lift up the whole Body

v20 be not children:

this is a rebuke

“You are speaking in tongues in your public worship service and you think you are spiritual because you do...

but you are

- divided on almost every issue
- suing each other in the pagan courts
- involved in sexual immorality
- getting drunk at the communion table
- exercising gifts of the Holy Spirit improperly

you are NOT spiritual, you are carnal...and a very bad witness of Jesus Christ...the love of Jesus is not your motive

More than anything, you need understanding of spiritual things.”

For us today...be innocent and pure when it comes to evil

- today’s movies...PG-13, even PG...should shock you!
- Halloween is not an innocent celebration...it is Satan’s high holy day...a celebration of death

Never let evil all around us desensitize us! Never compromise with evil!

v21-25 just what is Paul saying? On the surface it seem contradictory

- Tongues are a sign for unbelievers...yet if unbelievers hear believers speaking in tongues, they think believer are nuts
- Prophecy is for believers...but an unbeliever could hear prophesying and get saved!

context is the public worship service

Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit came upon the Church, was not a public worship service...it was a sign for the unbelievers (17 languages) result: “These men are drunk!” i.e.. hear not (v21)

then came Peter’s prophesying about that, in a language all hearers understood...and 3000 were saved!

true today as well

if we are worshipping the Lord, thanking Him for His

- love
- grace
- mercies, which are new every morning
- death as our substitute
- longsuffering and faithfulness
- imminent return

and are doing so in the gift of tongues...what will the unbeliever think when he walks in?!

“These people are nuts! Let’s get out of here! And we are never coming back!”

on the other hand, if we are praising and worshipping the Lord in English,
the unbeliever might

- feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit
- be drawn to the love of the Lord
- agree with the Word of God
- confess his sins and repent
- get saved (Rom 10:17, Is 55:8-11)

v26 How is it then:

Another rebuke: that was not how the Corinthian church was conducting
themselves in their public worship service.

Theirs was more of a “spiritual free-for-all.”

Every part of the Body wanted to be prominent...to be seen and
heard...none wanted to be meek and covered

Let it not be so. Let every aspect of the worship service be done to edify
the whole body

an exhortation: this is a worship service. We worship in

- Song
- Prayer
- The Word

If you come late and miss the songs, which serve to prepare your heart to
receive The Word of God, you have missed the point

I exhort (v3) you, “stir you up”

- to be early vs late
- to participate with a joyful and loud voice
in worship, there is a dynamic difference between hearing a
song...and singing a song!
In heaven will be singing...not just hearing!

v27-28 if any man speak in tongues:

where does the gift of tongues fit in an orderly worship service?

- It must be accompanied by the gift of interpretation
If it isn't...just sit there silently and pray to God

Note: tongues is communication from man to God, NOT
from God to man

bear in mind when judging an interpretation of
tongues...not to be confused with prophesy,
word of knowledge, word of wisdom

- Preferably only 2, but at the most 3, messages to be given in
Tongues

Note: the early church did not own and meet in church
buildings...they met in people's houses
so in that setting, 2 or 3 messages in tongues, and
accompanying interpretations, fit
this is fitted to a "HF" (small group)
gathering...would be disorderly in a
"formal" gathering

The gathering should be "believers only", when let
the Holy Spirit move and the gifts of the
Spirit to be exercised in a non-disruptive
way

v29-31 let the prophet speak:

where does the gift of prophesy fit in an orderly worship service?

- all speakers are to speak in a known language
(with the understanding of the mind)
- 2 or 3 speak...all others judge it (Acts 17:11)
- all may participate...
"You will all get your turn...be patient"
Order is essential for understanding
again, the context suggests a HF style where it would fit
(we are more formal on Sunday A.M...no fit)
the gathering is for both believers and unbelievers

v32 spirit of the prophet:
scenario: someone burst into tongues...or starts prophesying...while I'm
teaching:
Error...contrary to God's rules of order in a public worship service

"The Holy Spirit made me do it!"...not true
"I was moved by the Holy Spirit to do that...you are quenching the Spirit
by confronting me"...not true
the Holy Spirit NEVER moves in and takes over
ala demon-possession
we are always in control...the Holy Spirit, our Helper and Comforter,
comes alongside to help us
the Holy Spirit brings order...not disorder...and He never interrupts
Himself...because that is disorderly

Again, Satan corrupts the exercise of this gift to cast dispersion upon the
Holy Spirit...who gets blamed for a lot of very strange things
We cannot blame the Holy Spirit for our actions

v33 God is not the author of confusion:
order vs chaos...
God is a God of order...and peace

So...holy laughter, barking, growling, convulsions, etc...which is chaos in
a public worship service...is not from God
men are blaming the Holy Spirit for their behavior

v34-35 let your women keep silent:
hmmm...if only I could just go right on by these verses
why are they here? To see how well I can dance?
context: order...understanding...building up, stirring up, lifting up
we need to understand our roots...which are Jewish
the order of worship in the early church was borne out
of...Jerusalem...where the genders were separated
can see it today at the Wailing Wall with fence to separate

Paul does not want women shouting across the room to their
husbands in the middle of service

- "Honey, what is he talking about?"
- "Hey, Marvin. That was pretty weird, wasn't it!"
- "Oh, Sylvester, that word was for you! Were you listening?"

Paul is NOT disparaging women, or their value in the Body (11:5)

v36-38 What!:

“Did the Word of God come from you...or to you?!”

“You think you are so spiritual. Hear this:

- the Holy Spirit came witnessing of Jesus Christ, not Himself
- the Holy Spirit brings unity, not division
- the Holy Spirit comes bearing gifts so the whole church can be built up, stirred up, and lifted up.

Your spiritual pride is grieving the Holy Spirit”

be ignorant:

ignorant: “to ignore thru disinclination” i.e. to not receive truth knowing the truth and accepting the truth are 2 very different things
ignorance is a choice

v39 covet...forbid not:

covet God’s truth, desire to know what God says, share it zealously...in love (Ch 13)

tongues are to be restricted, they are not to be forbidden

v40 decently and in order:

this is the bottom line, the litmus test for all questions regarding public worship services

our worship must reflect our God

- love
- grace
- decent
- orderly

Ch 14

1. order
2. understanding
3. build up...stir up...lift up

1 Corinthians

Chapter 15

The church at Corinth, camouflaged in the world, was characterized by

- Division
- Disorder

Neither of which are the work of the Holy Spirit...but of Satan...who is seeking to

- Corrupt
- Destroy

The body of Christ...the Church...in order to nullify the witness in the world of

As we have seen in previous chapters of this letter, there was a part of the Corinthian church that indulged the flesh

- involved in sexual immorality
- getting drunk at the communion table

another part of the Corinthian church had adopted one of the Greek philosophies that said

1. The body was evil
2. The soul is immortal
3. There is no physical resurrection
 - Because the body is evil
 - That is except for Jesus...he alone is bodily resurrected

Like on every other issue, the Corinthians were divided over the doctrine of the resurrection

So now Paul turns his attention to the division and the disorder in the church regarding the very heart of Christianity...

he corrects the Corinthians on many issues...he saves the most important for last

before we start we must define the word "resurrection"

the Gr. Word means "the standing up of a corpse"

clearly, the issue is bodily resurrection, not a spiritual resurrection

there are many philosophies of men concerning life after death

What does the Bible say?

- the spirit never ceases to exist
2 Cor 5:7
- the physical body dies...ceases to exist...but one day, it will stand up again
- the spirit is not...cannot be...resurrected
- resurrection is bodily

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTERS IN THE BIBLE

v1-2 the gospel

The gospel – there is only one true Gospel, that is “good news.”

All other gospels are false

Gal 1:6-9

God is pure...holy...perfect...and accepts only those who are pure and holy and perfect

I fall desperately short of God’s requirements...I desperately need help
God offers to help me...

if I accept His help, He sees me as pure and holy and perfect

the gospel that we preach is very simple...is not difficult.

1. the gospel is about God’s grace

We must...we cannot...He did...He offers...we accept

2. The gospel is about life and death

We are dead...He died...He lives...we can live...we do live

between “offers” and “accept”...“can live” and “do live” is...

a personal decision to accept God’s help

“Who do you say that I am?”

“I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by Me. I AM the Resurrection and the Life. Do you believe this?”

Simple enough for a child to understand

But out of pride, men reject the simple...in favor of something

- more difficult and complicated
- he can do himself

thereby saying “No” to the Gospel...and rejecting God’s help

Most of you have received the good news and are standing in that good news...that is why you are here this morning

Others have not...and may not know why you are here this morning

By God’s grace, that personal decision still lies before you today...and today is the accepted time to decide...today is the day of salvation

God’s way is the only way to bridge the chasm between life and death

believed in vain:

the person who calls himself a Christian...“follower of Jesus Christ”...but does not believe in the bodily resurrection

- is not really following Jesus Christ
- believes a lie
- has a faith that is empty and meaningless

v3-4 that which I also received:

so what is *the* Gospel...what is God's way?

Jesus Christ, God the Son, died for my sins, was buried, and
rose again on the third day

this is the Gospel that Paul received and delivered:

Paul gave to the Corinthians that which was given him...he didn't
make this message up!

how did Paul receive it?

By his great intellect?

As a reward for his own performance of being pure and
holy and perfect?

No...by faith...supernaturally (Acts 9)

The Gospel, the only true Gospel, the only good news

- saves...is for sinners...is for impure, unholy, and imperfect
people...is for me and you
- can be stood upon...is solid rock, not sinking sand
- is to be received and believed...by faith...cannot be attained

Christ died for our sins

What does that mean?

God died in my place...God died instead of me...God died so that I need
not die

No one else has ever died for my sins...let alone God Almighty Himself!
That is Good News!

But that is not the whole story

the Gospel starts with the crucifixion of Jesus...but it ends with the
resurrection of Jesus

this is more than rising from the dead...because others did that
resurrection is to rise from death...never to die again

That's REALLY Good News!

And every man is asked whether or not he/she believes (accepts) that Good News

Our Creator has not put before us a proposition of BLIND faith

He has given us abundant REASON to accept the Good News by faith...

He showers us with proof that what He says is true

so what is the proof of the resurrection?

evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus

1. transformed lives (v1-2)

we who believe God

- have faced our impurity and imperfection
- have heard and received what God said and did about our condition
- have accepted His gift
- are saved by the Gospel...
- then we are changed by it

Saul of Tarsus is a prime example...but a common example

Every true Christian is “make-over”

the radical difference between “Before” and “After” is
Jesus Christ

the transformed life of a Christian is proof that

- what God said is true
- Jesus Christ is God
- Jesus is alive

People say we “got religion”

No! Jesus got us!

These transformations can only be explained by the certain,
objective truth that Jesus is alive

2. the Word of God (v3)

according to the Scriptures

it was according to the determined purpose and
foreknowledge of God Almighty, that Jesus was
crucified and slain for us sinners

the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is something God
planned...and told us in advance

Gen 22 2000 years

Ps 22 1000 years

Ps 16:10 “ ”

Ps 110 “ ”

Is 53 750 years

But the “rest of the story” is equally important...that Jesus was
raised from the dead on the third day.

This was also planned in advance

Gen 22:8-14

John 10:15-18

3. eyewitnesses (v5-8)

Jesus bodily appeared to many...only 2 or 3 are needed to establish
the truth

v5-8 he was seen

The fact of Jesus' resurrection is established in the eyewitness accounts
and personal testimonies

the Risen Lord appeared to:

1. Peter
2. the 12 (now 11...but still called the 12)
3. 500 at the same time
4. James
5. the Apostles
6. Paul (Acts 9)

at a minimum, the resurrected Jesus was seen by 512 eyewitnesses, most
of whom were still alive when Paul wrote this about 30 years later.

asleep

dead believers are asleep...they are not dead

- resting
- being ministered to by the Lord
- expect to get up in the morning (new day)

James

half brother of Jesus...same Mom, different Dad

previously thought big Brother was a lunatic

imagine finding out...after 30 years or so...that big Brother was
the God of AI&J...the voice in the burning bush!

is why James is so sensitive to favoritism

James 2:9 with Is 53:1-2

is why James is so emphatic about the tongue

James 3:6-8

v9 I persecuted the church

The Gospel...is God's way...Paul didn't make it up!

He would have scripted God's will very differently

In fact, Saul of Tarsus fought against this message, thinking he was
doing God's will by eradicating Christians

But the risen Lord transformed Saul's life...re-named him Paul...and from
the transformed murderer of God's children we get the truth of

God's grace

Titus 2:11-14

v10a by the grace of God I am what I am
not just Paul's testimony, but all of ours...it is most certainly my
testimony!
I most assuredly do not deserve to be His friend, preaching and teaching
the Word of God

v10b I labored more abundantly
the one who is forgiven the most...

- loves God the most
- understands God's grace the best

Paul, the man least worthy of being used by God, was the one used the
mightiest by God
spreading the Gospel of grace is not a work of men...on behalf of God
it is a work of God...using imperfect men
make no mistake...we are merely vessels...the Lord does all the
work...and gets all the glory

v11 we preach...you have believed
the name of the preacher is not important...
the Gospel is of the utmost importance
and my personal decision regarding the Gospel is all that matters
Rom 10:17

Paul shows that the resurrection is logical

v12-19

how say some among you

“Since Jesus is risen...how can some of you deny the resurrection?

What is the point of being a Christian if there is no resurrection?”

the resurrection of Christ is foundational to:

- our faith
- the preaching of God’s Word (the central theme of every sermon in the Book of Acts)
- the atonement of our sins (Matt 26:28)
- eternal life (victory over death)
- witnessing to the lost

no crucifixion, no Christianity...

no resurrection, no Christianity

it is what separates Jesus from Buddha, Mohammed, Joseph Smith,
every religious leader

if there is no resurrection, then:

1. Jesus isn’t risen. (v13)
Cannot say that Jesus alone is risen...and no others will be
2. our preaching is vain – empty...meaningless (v14)
3. our faith is vain – God is a liar (v14)
But God cannot lie
Num 23:19
Titus 1:2
Heb 6:18
4. we are liars – in fact the worst kind of liar since we would be false witnesses of God (v15)
5. There is no forgiveness...there is no redemption...we are still dead in our sins...with a false hope (v17)
Eph 2:1-3 is still true, in that case
But Eph 2:1-3 is no longer true...so Jesus is risen...
Unlike Buddha, Mohammed...etc
6. There is no hope for the future! (v18-19)
Our loved ones who were believers are dead...we will never see them again
We are the biggest fools on the planet for putting up with what we put up with...for a lie

v20-22 But now is Christ risen from the dead

“But”...A keyword: “But”!

A 3-letter word at the hinge of life and death.

Jesus is alive.

His resurrection is an established fact, not a fabricated fable
sustained thru the centuries.

But...Jesus is in fact risen and our faith is not in vain.

Note: consider the Roman soldiers

- Were special forces...Navy Seals...Pathfinders
- If one man fell asleep, all were killed

Consider the seal on the tomb...if it were broken

- Culprit was crucified upside down
- If culprit was unknown but his village was...entire
village was crucified upside down

Rome didn't mess around!

So the disciples did not steal the body

Nor did Jesus swoon and walk out

Note: Where's the body?

- You know the Roman soldiers wanted to find it
- The Jews wanted to find it so they could parade it
and say, “See! He is dead, he is not alive!”

the body was not found...the risen Lord showed Himself!

The issue at hand is the nature of God.

firstfruits

Jesus is the First to die...and rise...never to die again

This truth is why we are here this morning!

2 origins of life

1. Adam – physical life...natural
2. Jesus – spiritual life...supernatural

Only 2 men in the history of mankind were ever born alive – Adam and
Jesus

All others were born dead...with death in us

After Jesus, many are born-again

Spiritual life, the part of Adam that died

Adam by his sin brought death upon humanity.
All of us inherited the sinful nature of Adam.
We were born with a sinful nature.
man brought death upon himself thru a bad choice...a man is needed to
bring resurrection from death to those who make a correcting good
choice.
This is why Jesus came (v45)

There are two categories of people
the natural man, who is that way by nature, born with his sinful
nature
the new man, who is after Jesus Christ, born again by the Spirit of
God.

By one man's sin, all were made sinners...so that by one man's
righteousness, all have been made righteous.
we are the victims of Adam's work yet the beneficiaries of Jesus' work.

Born once...die twice
Or
Born twice...and die once

So Jesus has become the first fruits of those who rise from the dead.
Death is not to be feared...Jesus has paved the way thru death to
eternal life

Are you in Adam or are you in Christ?
2 Corinthians 5:17

v23 in his own order

again God's order is a central truth to a church characterized by disorder and division

God has an established order

- in marriage 1 Cor 11:3
- in our families
- in church government
- in our worship service 1 Cor 14:33, 40
- in social government
- in resurrection

in God's order is peace and unity...which is why satan strives to upset God's order

Firstfruits

The Resurrection happened on...fulfilled, the Feast of Firstfruits...just as the crucifixion fulfilled the Feast of Passover

God is a God of order...and of set times and appointments

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, goes before us

He was the first to die, and rise never to die again

2 kinds of resurrection – categories, not events

1. unto Life – of which Jesus is the Firstfruits
2. unto damnation

we pick which group we want to be a part of!

Jesus Christ is the point of decision

A no-brainer decision!

Cost?

- Belief...faith...trust
- Submission
- Surrender
- Obedience
- Denial of self

v24-25 for he must reign

In the beginning God...God created the earth and placed man upon it as caretaker.

God allowed His caretaker to be tested

Adam disobeyed God...he failed the test

So by one man, sin and death entered the world...and God's order was corrupted

Now, no longer is there one kingdom in the universe, but two kingdoms.

1. The kingdom of God--the kingdom of light and life
2. the kingdom of Satan – the kingdom of death and darkness.

When God created Adam, He created him in His image (God is Spirit, God is Light) and in the kingdom of God.

Adam lived and communed with God, he was in fellowship with God but through his sin and disobedience, his spirit died and he was alienated from God...his light went out
he became a part of Satan's kingdom of death and darkness.

Having transferred from the kingdom of God (light and life) into the kingdom of Satan (death and darkness) man found that there was no way back into the kingdom of God...the way was blocked
But God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son who became the Way back into the kingdom of God.

v26 the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death

Heb 2:9-16

Physical death does not destroy us...

Our Creator destroyed death!
Redeemer
Savior
LORD

v27-28 Let's the our roles straight (v27)

He hath put all things: God the Father

His feet: Jesus Christ, God the Son

Manifest: clear, understood

Excepted: God the Father is not including Himself in the things put under
Jesus' feet

all things shall be subdued to Him (v28)

when God the Son's ministry of putting all things right again in God the
Father's order...He will give it all back to the Father...and will
Himself also be subject to the Father

This is not a demotion...this is a complete restoration of God's order
Why did Jesus come?

To make things right again...defeating death was central to His
mission

God may be all

God the Father...God the Son...God the Holy Spirit

v29 baptized for the dead

this is a proof text...taken out of context...for those who teach and
practice baptism for the dead

Is that what Paul is saying? No

Baptism for the dead is a false teaching...it is NEVER taught in Scripture
God's truth is Heb 9:27

Jesus Christ being the point of decision...each man must believe for
himself.

Salvation is a very personal thing...it is relational, not religious

So what does Paul mean?

Key = "they"...those that were practicing baptism for the dead...
even they believe in resurrection

Otherwise, why would they do that?

Paul is challenging the Corinthians on the doctrine of resurrection...even
by using a false teaching and practice to establish the certainty of
resurrection...he is NOT teaching baptism for the dead

v30 why stand we

Paul is speaking personally

"Why would I face the beatings, whippings, stonings, the imprisonments,
perils, and all of the persecution...if there is no resurrection?"

- v31 I protest...I die daily
 "I attest that I die every day."
 Jesus said if you lose your life for His sake, you will find life
 We die to self when we submit to Jesus.
 For the believer, death is a daily event.
- v32 let us eat and drink
 If resurrection is false, I would embrace the philosophy of the Epicureans
 and indulge my flesh to the max!
 but...the certain truth of the resurrection is why believers
- put up with all the things we put up with...things unbelievers
 would never put up with
 e.g. missionaries to Muslim countries seeking to rescue
 people from the kingdom of death and darkness
 - have hope in a hopeless and crazy world...a hope unbelievers
 cannot have
 e.g. widow of Todd Beamer
- v33 be not deceived
 These evil lies and false teachings that is there is no resurrection lead to
 immoral living....so we are to separate ourselves from them
- Not just lies and false teachings about resurrection, but any lie and any
 false teaching
 Evil companionships corrupt us
 Evil rubs off on good
 Bad company corrupts good character
- We must chose our friends...people we confide in, people we seek
 counsel from, people we trust...very carefully
 be wise...
 the evil that destroys is subtle, not blatant
 be not deceived...
- that nice person at work or at school or in the neighborhood...
 who is not a believer...cannot be a good friend...they are
 not equipped with God's love and wisdom
 - that person of the opposite gender...saved or not...cannot be a
 good friend...for the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak
 - a good friend is not just a proclaiming Christian...but someone
 who has fruit in their life to back up their proclamation

- v34 awake to righteousness...sin not
 wake up to the Way, the Truth and the Life!
 John 14:6
 And hang out with those who have done so also
- v35 some man will say
 the objections of the mockers who do not believe and cannot understand
- v36-38 except it die...thou sowest
 evidence of the resurrection is all around us – crops...planted seeds that
 first die and then made alive and fruitful
 a kernel of corn doesn't come forth unto new life until it first is buried and
 dies.
 The process is called germination.
- This seed, my body, is going to be planted in the ground.
 It will die and be planted in the ground.
 I will not have this body in heaven.
 I will have a new body, a building of God not made with hands,
 eternal in the heavens.
- What will my new body be like? I'm not sure.
 But it's going to please God!
 so it will surely please me!
 It's got to be an improvement over this model. Amen?
- v39 all flesh is not the same
 evolution is a lie
- v40 celestial...terrestrial
 heavenly bodies and earthly bodies
- v41 one star differeth from another
 all stars are different...how did Paul know this?
 Scientists didn't know this until very recently!

v42-44 sown in

the very best we can do is...corruption
in spite of diets, health clubs, hair coloring...
the very best we can do is...dishonor
the very best we can be is...weak
every man must come to grips with the best he can do!
I cannot be all that I can be in the Army...only in Jesus

a natural body...a spiritual body:

but the body to come is

1. incorruptible
2. glorious
3. powerful
4. supernatural

There is some kind of a relationship between the two bodies.
I don't understand that yet...but they are both me.
I do know the future one is vastly more beautiful and superior to this one

the true (eternal) me is spirit!
The true me isn't this body.
This body is just an instrument that God has given to me by which
I can express my spirit during my appointed days in space
and time

v45 Adam was made

God formed the body out of the dust of the earth.
God breathed into Adam. He became a living soul.
So the first Adam was made a living soul.
the soul of man comes from Adam...but the spirit comes from
Jesus Christ!
Jesus said, you've got to be born again!
Only Jesus can make alive that which is dead – your spirit.

v46-49 image

Phil 3:20-21

v50 inherit

in the kingdom of God, only “New and improved” bodies are allowed
where the Spirit is the medium of life...not blood

Jesus is bodily risen...but He has no blood, for He offered it up for my
sins!

Heb 10:10, 12, 14, 19-20

Heb 9:11-12, 22, 24-25

Luke 24:39

Paul now turns our attention from the certainty of resurrection...to the power of the
resurrection

v51 not all sleep...shall all be changed
the theme for our nursery!

mystery:

Something hinted at but not revealed in OT...now revealed in Jesus
Christ...to those who believe in Him

changed:

metamorphosis...changed from the inside out

1. spirit

all the born-again have eternal life now...the kingdom of
God is now

John 10:10b

2. body

v52 in a moment, twinkling of the eye

moment: the indivisible unit of time...when time can not longer be
divided...much faster than a fraction of a second

the blink of an eye was the smallest unit of time they could characterize

Paul is speaking of the day when Jesus is going to come and meet His
Bride in the clouds...the Rapture

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

a time that happens when:

- we least expect it...
- Jesus comes like a thief in the night...
- The Church is half asleep (parable of 10 virgins)...

We shall not all sleep...all of us won't die...*but we shall all be changed*
Notice that Paul expected to be caught up to the Lord!

However, this trump of God is different from the trumpet of the angels, heard in Revelation 11.

1. Notice the trump of God versus the seven angels,
2. this happens in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

It's an instantaneous thing.

The seventh trumpet of Revelation, the judgment trumpet, and in the days of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, it's over a period of days.

3. when this trumpet sound, it's not going to be woe, it's going to be glory and comfort!

Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the three trumpets yet to sound...it's going to be a judgment trumpet.

But this is going to be glory and comfort, when trump of God shall sound, the last trump!

And we, the dead, raised incorruptible...and we shall be changed. A metamorphosis!

v53 must

in order for it to be made right...the physical body MUST...

v54 death is swallowed up in victory

Is 25:18

At the end of the Day...Death, the final foe, is swallowed up...not life!

Jesus came to bring victory over death.

In His resurrection, we have that victory over death

v55-56 death, where is thy sting

the end of the law is sin...

for no man can live up to the Law

and the end of sin is death...

all men die because all men are sinners...helpless and hopeless

v57 victory

man's greatest fear is death...the result of sin against our Creator
Is 59:1-2

Man's greatest need is the forgiveness of God...to be restored to Him

God's way of restoration: Man must die...in order to live

But man is already dead...so Who must die...in order for man to live?

The Source of Life

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are essential for man's
restoration to God

Jesus alone has given us victory over sin and death

1 John 4:4

Victory is ours!

Not Satan's

The world's

Death's

Sin's

Overwhelming circumstances or memories

worldly people cannot claim victory

the bottom line on the Gospel of Jesus Christ (v3-4):

God the Father intervening in my life to spare me from certain and
eternal death...because He loves me

e.g. from "the glass house" this week

1. Brett – prayer for many years, a flare (cry for help), this week's rescue mission
2. Hayley – driver's permit confiscation...preventative action due to repeated poor judgment regarding safety...hers and others

The father intervening to save the kids he loves from destruction...
because our Heavenly Father desires to intervene in their
lives in an eternal way

Q: Can the kids see it...or are they blind?

The immature can see only this instant...the father sees far
ahead

we are just like our kids in spiritual matters

God the Father intervenes to save the kids He loves

who could say "No" to a love like that?

Only a fool

Acts 17:30-31

e.g. from newspaper this week
moving truck in Plymouth, MA dumping furniture behind
pizza joint
called into police...took off
police find...operated by 2 middle easterners with falsified
documentation
search of truck: partial load of furniture and household
goods...
including a video camera...with in-depth video of
Chicago's Sears Tower
Possible scenario: moving a family from MA to ???...get
rid of some of their stuff to make room for
explosives to be used on Sears Tower

v58 your labor is not in vain

Resurrection is true, it is bodily

So what?

Look around...the Lord is coming soon!

Be strong, be steadfast!

Occupy until He comes, doing His work of the Lord

Labor: to the point of exhaustion

so many of the things that we get involved in are temporary and are
wasted time.

People devote their entire lives to things that are going away

That never happens when you give yourself to the work of the Lord.

Because Paul said, for *knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

How fulfilling to give yourself to things that are eternal!

the fruit may not be obvious or even invisible but God sees all things

the labor is not in vain – God uses all labor

Lay not up for yourself treasures on earth, Jesus said, where moths and
rust can corrupt and decay, where thieves can break through and
steal.

But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven.

For where your treasure is, there is your heart also.

We have

The greatest news in the world

The greatest gift in the universe

A future that is certain...that cannot be taken away

But do we live our lives like that...floating on air...on top of the world?

Why do we let the background noise of things
circumstances
our emotions

dictate how we live?

Keep your eyes on Jesus...risen and seated on the throne

Let the Lord dictate how you live!

This life is so temporary

Eternal life is so...forever!

As long as the Lord sees fit to leave us here, work profitably, tirelessly

Phil 4:13

1 Corinthians

Chapter 16

From the spiritual heights of the resurrection in Ch 15 Paul brings us back to earth...to close out his letter with some practical matters...a fitting end when we worship the Lord, we are lifted to heavenly heights...but the Christian walk is worked out day-to-day in practical things

15:58 stead fast:

“Stick to it-iveness”, unwavering

speaks of commitment and faithfulness in our walk with Christ

unmovable:

under constant pressure (from the world...or teenagers)

abounding:

ever growing (2 Peter 3:18)

because...the things we do for Christ are the only things that will last

“given the truth of the resurrection, go out and be a bright light in the world, be the salt of the world”

v1 collection for the saints:

the church in Jerusalem was going thru some very desperate financial times...believers there were suffering

- Acts 4:33-35 was exhausted
- Excommunication from the Temple (social, economic death)
- Famine and draught

Paul had a burden for the starving church in Jerusalem, the church he so fervently persecuted before being transformed by the Lord

So on his missionary journeys to the uttermost parts of the world, Paul is gathering material support for the church in Jerusalem

Rom 15:25-27 (written while in Corinth)

- v2 on the first day...lay up:
to God goes the firstfruits
1. first day
the early church met on Sunday, the first day of the week...
because that was the day Jesus was resurrected
 2. first prosperity
the offering of thanks
 - came from their firstfruits vs their “leftovers”
God did not give us His leftovers!
 - was to reflect the provision received

Tithing in NT

- Only references to “Tithe/Tithes/Tithing” are OT references
Matt 23 (Pharisees tithed on everything, even on their
mint...10% of even their spice cabinet...but their
heart was all wrong so Jesus rebuked them)
Book of Hebrews (re: Levitical priesthood)
- Tithing is not mandated in NT...
- ...but “giving” is...and we are ALL to give
Freely
Cheerfully (2 Cor 8-9)
Regularly

Christian giving is more than money, it is all of our

- Resources
- Time
- Talents
- Life

But in context of this text, we will look at material giving

Perspective: God does not need our money...it’s already His

Ps 24:1

James 1:17

God is not interested in our wallets...He is consummately, passionately
interested in our hearts

Christian giving reflects the heart of the Christian giver

This is a very important truth to understand

Christian giving is not a money thing, it is a heart thing
giving from the heart is worship...to express our

- thanksgiving for all He has done and is doing in our lives
- faith in God’s provision vs error of “our” provision
- dependence upon Him...Who knows what we need

giving from the heart is worship...

- is a joy and a blessing...never a burden
- to be done freely...not as an obligation
- to be done cheerfully...not under pressure

if the giving is a burden...or an obligation...or under pressure...we are better off not giving

God doesn't need it...and doesn't want it if it is being given that way

Here at CCA, the purpose of the Agape Box on the back table is to provide everyone an opportunity

- to worship the Lord in giving
- to freely...cheerfully...regularly...participate in this work of God

If you make \$10,000...don't give 10%...feed and clothe your family

If you make \$10,000,000...don't give 10%...give half!

You can surely live on \$5,000,000!

God gives some men...not all men...the ability to prosper financially... and He wants to use them to support His work of taking the Gospel to a dying world that He loves

Worship the Lord in your giving...freely...cheerfully...regularly...as led by the Holy Spirit

Giving is

- a matter of the heart
- to be as God lays it upon your heart

no collections when I come:

Paul does not want a special offering when he comes to town...

He wants it to be given in advance of his coming...so it reflects the hearts of the Gentile Christians in Corinth for the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem...not the influence of his presence

v3-4 bring your liberality:

liberality = “gift”

a subtle aspect of “liberality”: motive counts

- Is our giving of works...or of faith?
To earn God’s acceptance...or...
to lovingly reflect what God has lovingly given you
- Are we giving in order to get?
Position and influence in the church?
Not in this church!
With strings attached?
a gift with strings attached...is really a debt in
disguise

They will go with me:

1. accountability

When it came to money, Paul was above reproach

I have 3 people looking over my shoulder

Also, Paul didn’t want any personal involvement with the money

His was a “hands-off” policy

He wants the church to select 2 men to take their offering to
Jerusalem and present it themselves...

2. Division in the church was not just a Corinthian issue...

The church at Jerusalem (Jewish) was biased against the churches
elsewhere (Gentiles)

Paul stood against division in Corinth...he stood against division
in the universal church

division is a spiritual malady...self-centeredness is the root...the
best way to heal a division...to unify...is to show love to
another...a sacrificial, giving love

so Paul is hoping to heal the divisions in

- the Corinthian church by prompting them to minister to
others
- the universal church by showing the church at
Jerusalem that their Gentile brothers and sisters in
Christ loved them and desired to help them in their
time of need

Each church was to assign a person to personally deliver its
offering to the church in Jerusalem

the personal, loving touch is a practical way to heal division

Paul would go along, but it must be understood by the Jewish brethren that
the offering came from the Gentile brethren

v5-8 I will come...I will remain...I hope to stay...if the Lord permits:

Paul was in Ephesus...where he was going to stay until Pentecost
i.e. thru June

then he planned to travel during the summer (when travel was safe) thru
Macedonia to Corinth...where he would like to spend the winter
(when travel by sea was dangerous)

But notice: "If the Lord wills."

in the laying out of his travel plans, Paul shows us how to travel:

1. make plans...don't just sit on your hands...but don't "wing it"
either...and then...
2. be flexible...be interruptible...be led by the Spirit...let the
Lord direct your steps
he who is not flexible...is rigid
he who is rigid...breaks
being flexible is a less painful way to travel!

Blessed are the flexible...for they shall not be broken

When you have a decision to make

- Seek the Lord
- Set a course...what seems best to you
- Be flexible
God's way
God's timing

leave the Final Itinerary to the Lord...He may have something different in
mind than what you planned

e.g. Paul desired to visit the church in Rome...and planned accordingly...
and he did visit Rome...but

- in God's way (as a prisoner)
- in God's timing (during the winter when it was dangerous...
and years later than he had hoped)

Consider the fruit of God's way vs Paul's way

- All the sailors
- The people of Malta

When you have a decision to make

- Seek the Lord
- Set a course...what seems best to you
- Be flexible

v9

great and effectual door:

why is Paul staying in Ephesus thru Pentecost?

The Lord has opened a door for Paul there

the Lord wants to do a powerful work in Ephesus thru Paul

great door: wide

speaking not only of the city but also of the surrounding territory

effectual = "powerful"

ala Heb 4:12...the Word of God is quick (alive) and powerful

notice that Paul needed the Lord to open a door for him to share the Gospel...and so do we

Only the hand of God can open the doors of man's heart

Acts 14:27 trip report in Antioch after 1st journey

2 Cor 2:12

Col 4:2-3

John 6:44 no man can come to Me except the Father draw him

Pray that the Lord open the hearts of your unbelieving family and friends...they key that opens the heart of man is spiritual

2 Cor 4:3-4

...and pray until that door opens...even if it takes 20 or 30 years!

many adversaries:

Paul is also staying in Ephesus because...

- there are lots of enemies...
- lots of problems...
- lots of victories waiting-to-happen...
- lots of testimonies in the making

Don't we try to avoid adversity...but it is nothing more than

- victory waiting-to-happen...
- testimony in the making

then when we are faced with adversity...don't we question whether or not we are following the Lord...but everywhere God is working we find God's enemies...God's will involves adversity

Paul would not run from a (spiritual) fight...and neither should we!

Every work of the Lord is ferociously resisted

- Salvation of that lost relative
- the establishment of CCA

why our homes, our marriages, our emotions are under attack

1 John 4:4

Paul's desire is to go to Jerusalem to witness to his people...but he cannot walk away from all those hearts in and around Ephesus that the Lord is opening to the Gospel

Be Spirit-led...be interruptible...do not avoid adversity...the Lord is working

v10-11 Timothy...does the work of the Lord, as I also do:

Paul was a spiritual father to Timothy

Timothy had caught Paul's

- Heart
- Zeal
- Vision
- Love of the ministry

They were like-minded

Timothy was also young...and...

The church at Corinth was a tough crowd...with tough problems they gave Paul, a seasoned warrior, a very hard time... what would they do to this young man?

Paul exhorts the Corinthians to

- Receive him...not terrify him
(and he told Timothy 2 Tim 1:7)
- meet all of his needs just as they did Paul's...so Timothy could minister boldly, without worry or anxiety
- not despise his youth

send him on his journey...for I am waiting for him:

Paul is in Ephesus...Timothy carried this letter from Ephesus to Corinth
"Treat him well and then send him back home to me."

v12 Apollos:

a powerful evangelist and apologist

who established the church in Ephesus...and then went to Corinth

when Paul was in Corinth before he went to Ephesus

where he became very popular...

1 Cor 1:12-13 some say I am of Paul, some Apollos, some Peter

they sent for Paul but he could not come immediately as they desired

So Paul wanted to send Apollos instead...but he didn't feel led to go

"Apollos wants to come...but not at this time. Expect him later."

Notice that Paul

- Does not "boss around" his co-laborers...
Jesus is Lord
- Does not try to keep his "rival" away from Corinth, "his" church
The church belongs to Jesus
I have sown, Apollos has watered (1 Cor 3:5-6)
His secure is in Christ...not in himself or his popularity

v13-14 a series of short admonitions

1. Watch: be watching...always on guard and vigilant
Matt 24:42 we don't know when Jesus returns
1 Peter 5:8 that lion is always prowling
2. stand firm...continually unshakeable in the faith
Eph 6:13-18
Jude 3 contend for the faith
3. be brave...show yourself a man...Grow up!
Joshua 1:6-9 + 3 other times
1 Cor 3:1
4. be strong: mighty in the Spirit
John 15:5 with Phil 4:13
5. in all things, love
John 13:35 this is how men will know we are the Lord's
1 Cor 13

v15 Stephanas

one of Paul's first converts in Corinth...
one of the few Paul baptized
1 Cor 1:16

addicted:

addiction that is acceptable to the Lord
= totally devoted to serve

Note: (Personal) watch for addicts, whose lives are totally given to
God...they are the leaders God is lifting up to come alongside us to
serve in CCA

v16 submit to such:

Paul calls upon the Corinthians to recognize spiritual leadership and
submit to it...again, God's order
Heb 13:17

Labor:

To the point of exhaustion

v17 Stephanas...Fortunatus...Achaicus:
these three guys were probably the ones who delivered the letter from the
Corinthians to Paul...this letter being Paul's response
They also provided for Paul's needs...and God blessed them

God always provides for His people
every part of the Body ministers to the other parts...
don't rob a brother/sister of God's blessing...by proudly refusing God's
blessing thru them!

v18 they refreshed my spirit and yours:
take note of the encouragers in the Body...we need them

be thankful, express your gratitude
ingratitude is a very ugly thing that oozes out of the flesh

v19 Asia:
modern day Turkey

Priscilla and Aquila:
also some of Paul's first converts in Corinth...and fellow tentmakers
they gave Paul a job when he came to town so he could support
himself vs being dependent upon a new church
later, when Paul left Corinth and went to Ephesus, they went with him
when Paul then went on to Jerusalem, they stayed in Ephesus
in Ephesus, the church met in their house

the early church met in people's houses...a Spirit-network of HFs
the church did not own any buildings until the 3rd century

Note: after writing this letter, Paul did return to Corinth
While in Corinth, he wrote to the church in Rome...which was
meeting in the home of Priscilla and Aquila!
These were cool people!

Again, consider God's ways
In 49 AD, Emperor Claudius banished all Jews from Rome
Priscilla and Aquila went to Corinth...where they met Paul...and
were saved
they ended up back in Rome...but this time with the Gospel!
Hear the echoes of Gen 50:20...

v20 holy kiss:
an expression of fraternal affection in that culture...a kiss on the cheek or forehead or hand
but in other cultures, one could not find *holy* kisses...so the custom was abandoned
today, “holy kiss” has been replaced by a hug
and today we need to be very careful with *holy* hugs!

so ladies...don’t let some wolf use this as a proof text for giving you a smooch!
And don’t let a wolf give you a sensual hug either!

v21 with my own hand:
Paul dictated this letter...but signs his name to it

v22 if anyone does not love:
then Paul adds a personal note
Woe to those who do not love Jesus as Lord and Savior...who hears the Gospel and rejects Jesus

Love = *phileo*...not *agapeo*
Speaks of fondness and devotion of heart

anathema = “cursed”
if a person does not love Jesus Christ...he is already accursed

- sin is a terrible curse
- the Law condemns
- rejecting Jesus as Lord is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, the unpardonable sin

maranatha:
“our Lord comes”
the common greeting and good-bye in the early church

in this world it is so easy to lose eternal perspective and get discouraged
this is a word of hope and encouragement and comfort...and it serves to correct our perspective regarding the circumstances of our life
the Lord is coming...soon!
Live accordingly

v23-24 grace...my love:
Paul loves the church at Corinth...that gave him so many headaches
He is not only a Jew’s Jew...he is a man’s man...he is a Godly man