

The First Epistle To The Corinthians



Sermon Outlines

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To God Be The Glory!

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The First Epistle To The Corinthians

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The Problem Of Religious Division

1 Corinthians 1:10-13

INTRODUCTION

1. The picture the world sees of “Christianity” is one with much religious division...
 - a. Between Catholics and Protestants
 - b. Between various Protestant denominations
 - c. Between liberal and conservative factions of any denomination
 - d. Between members of the same congregation
2. Many people do not take the problem of religious division seriously...
 - a. Content to perpetuate the denominational names and doctrines that divide so many
 - b. Considering such differences as not important, often praising such diversity as commendable

[Yet in the early church, “**The Problem Of Religious Division**” was not taken lightly. As we turn to our text (**1 Co 1:10-13**), we are immediately struck with...]

I. THE SEVERITY OF THE PROBLEM

A. IN THE WORDS OF PAUL...

1. Prompting the apostle to beg (“I plead with you, brethren...”) - **1 Co 1:10**
 2. Appealing to the authority of Christ - **1 Co 1:10**
 3. For the contention division creates - **1 Co 1:11**
 4. For the impression such division gives - **1 Co 1:12-13**
 - a. That Christ is somehow divided
 - b. That their allegiance is to some man rather than to Christ
 5. For such division is indicative of carnality and spiritual immaturity - cf. **1 Co 3:1-4**
- **Paul certainly took the problem of religious division seriously!**

B. IN THE WORDS AND DEEDS OF JESUS...

1. Jesus prayed for unity among those who would believe in Him - **Jn 17:20-21**
 - a. Unity akin to that between the Father and the Son - **Jn 17:21b, 22b**
 - b. Participating in the unity between the Father and the Son - **Jn 17:21c, 23a**
 2. For two reasons Jesus prays for unity among believers
 - a. “that the world may believe that you sent Me” - **Jn 17:21**
 - b. “that the world may know that you sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” - **Jn 17:23**
 3. He even passed along glory from the Father to make unity possible! - cf. **Jn 17:22**
 4. He also died to bring about unity between Jew and Gentile - cf. **Ep 2:13-16**
- **Jesus prayed and died for unity...He certainly took religious division seriously!**

[How can we who profess to be Christians today take “**The Problem Of Religious Division**” lightly? If we appreciate the concern of both Jesus and Paul, what can we do about it? In our text, we find...]

II. THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

A. SPEAK THE SAME THING...

1. So the apostle enjoins in our text - **1 Co 1:10**
 - a. Of course, it is easier said than done
 - b. But this is the goal to which we are to strive
 2. The goal is more likely if we heed the words of Peter - **1 Pe 4:11**
 - a. "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God..."
 - b. Let those who teach or preach do so in accordance with the Word of God
 - c. Too many teach or preach their opinions, rather than the Word of God
- **I.e., "Speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent"**

B. HAVE THE SAME MIND...

1. Again the apostle so enjoins in our text - **1 Co 1:10**
 - a. Those of the same mind will more likely speak the same thing
 - b. Striving to be of the same mind) will help us speak the same thing
 2. The "same mind" we should have is the "mind of Christ" - **Ph 2:1-5**
 - a. Which results in consolation, comfort, fellowship, affection and mercy
 - b. Which requires lowliness of mind, thinking highly of others, concern for others
- **As we develop the mind of Christ, the more likely we will be of one mind**

C. HAVE THE SAME JUDGMENT...

1. As stressed in our text - **1 Co 1:10**
 - a. Where we have the same knowledge, similar processes of reasoning
 - b. Which leads us to the same conclusions on various issues
 2. Much religious division is the result of different standards of authority
 - a. Many appeal to majority rule, traditions of men, personal feelings, etc.
 - b. Christians in the New Testament were expected to abide in the apostles' doctrine, as taught in every church - cf. **Ac 2:42; 1 Co 4:17; 14:37; 1 Ti 3:15**
- **Where different conclusions are drawn, someone, somehow, is not submitting to the mind of Christ as revealed through His apostles!**

CONCLUSION

1. We should not be surprised when people do not...
 - a. Speak the same thing
 - b. Have the same mind
 - c. Have the same judgment
2. We should expect that it will require...
 - a. Time for people to develop the mind of Christ
 - b. Patience and love to give each other time to grow

But wherever "**The Problem Of Religious Division**" exists, we should not rest content. With the same fervency of Paul's words and Jesus' prayer, we should strive to overcome it...!

Christ Did Not Send Me To Baptize

1 Corinthians 1:14-17

INTRODUCTION

1. An objection commonly raised concerning the necessity of baptism is based on Paul's statement to the church at Corinth - cf. **1 Co 1:14-17**
 - a. Note Paul's words: "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel..." - **1 Co 1:17**
 - b. From which some conclude baptism must not be essential to salvation
2. However, when one takes into account the context...
 - a. The **immediate** context of his words in this epistle - **1 Co 1:10-13**
 - b. The **remote** context of Paul's ministry in Corinth - **Ac 18:1-18**-- **Paul preached baptism, and his comments should not be taken out of context**

[In this study, let's take a closer look at the context in which we find Paul's statement. Note that...]

I. PAUL WAS ADDRESSING A PROBLEM AT CORINTH

A. WITH THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD PREACHERS...

1. They were divided - **1 Co 1:10-11**
2. Their division was a result of "preacher-itis" - **1 Co 1:12**
 - a. They were claiming, "I am of Paul", "I am of Apollos", etc.
 - b. As Paul expounded later, they were thinking too highly of the different preachers
 - 1) Their attitude was a mark of carnality - **1 Co 3:3-4**
 - 2) Preachers were simply fellow servants - **1 Co 3:5-9**
 - 3) Thus they were not to boast in men - **1 Co 3:21-23**

B. IT APPEARS RELATED TO WHO BAPTIZED THEM...

1. As indicated by Paul's rhetorical questions - **1 Co 1:13**
2. E.g., "Were you baptized in the name of Paul?"
3. Some evidently claimed to be disciples of those who personally baptized them

C. THUS PAUL WAS GRATEFUL HE PERSONALLY BAPTIZED FEW...

1. Thankful that he baptized only Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas
2. Lest any should say that he was baptizing in his own name - **1 Co 1:14-15**

[So Paul was addressing a problem at Corinth. Are we to construe from this that Paul didn't preach baptism, or didn't think it necessary? To the contrary...]

II. PAUL'S PREACHING HAD RESULTED IN MANY BAPTISMS

A. LUKE RECORDS PAUL'S WORK AT CORINTH...

1. How he worked with Aquila and Priscilla - **Ac 18:1-3**
2. How he reasoned in the synagogues, testified that Jesus is the Christ, and persisted despite rejection by unbelieving Jews - **Ac 18:4-7**

B. LUKE RECORDS THE SUCCESS OF PAUL'S PREACHING...

1. Crispus, ruler of the synagogue, and his household believed on the Lord (and whom Paul personally baptized) - **Ac 18:8**; cf. **1 Co 1:14**
2. But also "many" of the Corinthians believed and were baptized - **Ac 18:8**

[Though Paul personally baptized few, his preaching resulted in many baptisms! Baptism must have played a significant role in his preaching. That is one reason why we must not twist Paul's words to the church at Corinth as implying that it was not necessary. As we return to **1 Co 1:13**, we should also note that...]

III. PAUL'S WORDS DEMONSTRATE THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

A. NOTE CAREFULLY PAUL'S REASONING...

1. For one to call himself after Paul (or any other man) required two things:
 - a. Paul would have to be crucified for the person - **1 Co 1:13**
 - b. One would have to be baptized in the name of Paul - **1 Co 1:13**
2. Neither happened, of course, which is why they should not be calling themselves after men

[But consider what Paul's argument means positively...]

B. TO BE CALLED AFTER CHRIST, TWO THINGS ARE REQUIRED...

1. Christ would have to die for the person (which of course He did)
2. The person would have to be baptized in the name of Christ!
 - a. Have you been baptized in the name of Christ?
 - b. If not, then you cannot rightfully be called a Christian!

[In the very context of a passage which many use to claim that baptism is not essential, Paul implies one cannot be called a Christian unless they have been baptized in the name of Christ!]

How then are we to understand Paul's statement ("For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel...")? The answer is easy...]

IV. PAUL WAS EMPHASIZING HIS ROLE AS AN APOSTLE

A. PAUL WAS SENT TO PREACH, NOT BAPTIZE...

1. As an apostle (which means "one sent"), Paul's role was to proclaim the gospel
 - a. As explained to the Ephesians, he was given the task to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" - **Ep 3:8**
 - b. Which he did by inspiration - cf. **Ga 1:11-12**
2. Though his preaching resulted in baptism (cf. **Ac 18:8**), it was not imperative that **he** do it
 - a. Others could easily do the baptizing (such as his traveling companions)
 - b. Which happened at Corinth, for while many were baptized, he personally baptized few

B. PAUL USED A COMMON STYLE OF SPEAKING...

1. Notice the words of Jesus in **Jn 6:27**...
 - a. "Do not labor for the food which perishes"
 - b. "but for the food which endures to everlasting life"
 - c. Jesus was not saying one should not work, but rather was emphasizing the importance

of seeking after spiritual food over physical food

2. In a similar way Paul says **1 Co 1:17**...
 - a. “For Christ did not send me to baptize”
 - b. “but to preach the gospel”
 - c. Paul was not saying he was not to baptize, but that his role as an apostle to preach the gospel was more important!

C. HOW OTHERS HAVE UNDERSTOOD PAUL...

1. “That is, not to baptize as my main business. Baptism was not his principle employment, though he had a commission in common with others to administer the ordinance, and occasionally did it.” - **Barnes** (Notes, on **1 Co 1:17**)
2. “According to Semitic idiom, ‘not so much to baptize, as...’. The word ‘sent’ involves the meaning ‘made me an apostle’. The primary function of an apostle was ‘to bear witness’.” - **Farrar** (Commentary on **1 Co 1:17**)
3. “Baptism was not his principal work, not the main business for which Paul was sent, it was part of his work, otherwise he would not have baptized Crispus, or Gaius, or ‘the household of Stephanas,’ but preaching was his principle work.” - **Poole** (Annotations, **1 Co 1:17**)
4. “...bearing mind Paul’s other utterances about baptism, v.17 is to be interpreted in the light of the Semitic manner of laying stress on an issue: Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel rather than to baptize. But this is no depreciation of the value of baptism.” - **Beasley-Murray** (Baptism In The New Testament, p.181)

CONCLUSION

1. When one considers all the evidence we have about the situation at Corinth, we learn...
 - a. Many were baptized as a result of Paul’s preaching - **Ac 18:8**
 - b. Paul was glad that he did personally baptized few, because of the problem that later arose in Corinth - **1 Co 1:14-15**
2. In the passage so many use to say that baptism is not important...
 - a. Paul emphasizes his role as an apostle - **1 Co 1:17**
 - b. Paul’s reasoning implies the necessity of baptism (to be called after Christ, one must be baptized into the name of Christ) - **1 Co 1:13**

Can you rightfully be called a Christian? True, Jesus Christ was crucified for you; but have you been baptized in the name of Christ...?

The Folly Of Trusting In Human Wisdom

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

INTRODUCTION

1. Today we are faced with many issues over which people disagree...
 - a. **Moral issues** related to what is good or evil
 - b. **Doctrinal issues** related to what is right or wrong
2. It is not uncommon to hear people appeal to certain “authorities”...
 - a. Those considered experts in the areas of science, philosophy, and religion
 - b. Who share the results of their experiments, research, or careful thinking
3. Many place their faith in such “authorities”...
 - a. Especially in areas of morality and spiritual truth
 - b. Is that a wise thing to do?

[In our text for this lesson (**1 Co 1:18-31**), the apostle Paul warns against “**The Folly Of Trusting In Human Wisdom**”. In this passage of Scripture we learn that...]

I. GOD HAS MADE FOOLISH THE WISDOM OF THE WISE

A. CONSIDER THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS...

1. I.e., the idea of a crucified Savior, dying for the sins of the world
2. To those who are perishing, it is foolishness - **1 Co 1:18a**
3. To those being saved, it is the power of God! - **1 Co 1:18b**

B. THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE MESSAGE IS BY DESIGN...

1. God proclaimed that He would destroy the wisdom of the wise - **1 Co 1:19**
2. God has made foolish the wisdom of this world - **1 Co 1:20**
3. **Why?** Because the world in its own wisdom rejects God - **1 Co 1:21**
 - a. We see that in the **idolatry** of Paul’s day - cf. **Ro 1:18-23**
 - b. We see it today in the theories of **evolution, humanism, immorality**
4. So God chose to save man through faith in a message that seems foolish - **1 Co 1:21**
 - a. While the Jews were seeking signs, and the Greeks sought after wisdom - **1 Co 1:22**
 - b. But for those who accept the call of the message of Christ crucified, there is both power and wisdom! - **1 Co 1:23-24**
 - c. For God’s foolishness is wiser than man, His weakness stronger than man - **1 Co 1:25**

C. THUS NOT MANY WISE, MIGHTY, NOBLE ARE CALLED...

1. At Corinth, there were not many wise (according to the flesh), mighty, noble who had responded to the call of the gospel - **1 Co 1:26**
2. The same is true today: those receptive to the gospel are usually not the wise, mighty, noble
3. Again, this is part of God’s design to shame the arrogant wisdom and might of those who reject God - **1 Co 1:27-28**
4. Otherwise, the wise and mighty would boast of themselves in the presence of God - **1 Co 1:29**

[This should make us cautious about anything based solely on the wisdom or strength of man. Man in his wisdom and strength cannot begin to compare to the foolishness and weakness of God! Thus...]

II. WE SHOULD BOAST IN THE LORD, NOT MAN

A. FOR IN A CRUCIFIED, RISEN SAVIOR...

1. There is to be found **wisdom** from God - **1 Co 1:30**; cf. **Co 2:3**
2. There is both **righteousness** and **sanctification** - **1 Co 1:30**; cf. **Ph 3:9**; **1 Co 6:11**
3. There is **redemption** from sin - **1 Co 1:30**; cf. **Ep 1:7**

B. THUS WE SHOULD GLORY IN THE LORD...

1. Just as it written in the Scriptures - **1 Co 1:31**
2. Not in our **own** wisdom, might, or riches - **Jer 9:23**
3. But in understanding and knowing **God**, who delights in lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth - **Jer 9:24**

C. PAUL PROVIDES HIMSELF AS AN EXAMPLE...

1. He had plenty of reasons to boast in himself - cf. **Ga 1:13-14**; **Ph 3:4-6**
2. Yet he counted such things as dung, in comparison to the excellence of knowing Christ and His salvation - cf. **Ph 3:7-11**
3. Thus his boast was in the cross of Christ- cf. **Ga 6:14**

D. IN WHAT DO YOU BOAST...?

1. You may think **yourself** wise, strong, or self-sufficient because of your wealth
2. You may think **others** worthy to guide you in matters of truth and morality
3. But unless it is ultimately **the Lord** who guides us, it is folly!

CONCLUSION

1. Every time we hear or read...
 - a. Some expert or authority gives their learned opinion
 - b. Some poll in which the majority expresses their beliefs-- **We do well to remember: "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"**
2. The only true and ultimate source of wisdom is from the Lord Himself...
 - a. In Him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" - **Co 2:3**
 - b. In Him "you are complete" - **Co 2:10**-- **So as Paul warns: "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy or vain deceit..." - Co 2:8**

Are you willing to place your trust, your life, your eternal security, in the hands of **mere men**? How much better to trust the words and wisdom of the **Creator** and **Redeemer**...!

The Hidden Wisdom Of God

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

INTRODUCTION

1. In **1 Co 1:18-31**, Paul wrote of the folly of trusting in human wisdom...
 - a. For God chose to make foolish the wisdom of the wise
 - b. And He chose to save man through a message that appears foolish to many
2. In **1 Co 2:1-5**, Paul thus explains the nature of his preaching when he came to Corinth...
 - a. Appealing not through excellence of speech or of wisdom
 - b. Proclaiming only Jesus Christ and Him crucified
 - c. That their faith not be in human wisdom, but in the power of God
3. Yet that does not mean he did not have wisdom to offer; indeed, he offered them...
 - a. A **mature** wisdom - **1 Co 2:6**
 - b. A **hidden** wisdom - **1 Co 2:7**

[The nature of this wisdom, and how it can be known, is revealed in our text (**1 Co 2:6-16**). Note first of all, that **“The Hidden Wisdom Of God”** was...]

I. UNKNOWN TO MEN IN THE PAST

A. IT WAS NOT THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD...

1. A wisdom not known by the rulers of this age (world, KJV) - **1 Co 2:6**
2. As evidenced by their crucifixion of the Christ - **1 Co 2:8**
- **Further illustrating why we can not place all our trust in human wisdom**

B. IT WAS A MYSTERY, HIDDEN FROM MAN...

1. As God ordained before the ages (i.e., before the world began) - **1 Co 2:7**
2. Which He did “for our glory” (intending to glorify those who accept Him) - cf. **2 Th 1:10**
3. Pertaining to things man cannot perceive on his own - **1 Co 2:9**
 - a. Either through sight or sound
 - b. Or through one’s own inspiration
- **Man left to his own devices cannot know all that God wants us to know!**

[Thus Paul contends that there is a **mature** wisdom from God that has been **hidden** from mankind. Yet in four distinct steps **“The Hidden Wisdom Of God”** has now been...]

II. REVEALED THROUGH SPIRIT-LED MEN

A. GOD PREPARED...

1. Things not seen, heard, nor entered into the heart of man - **1 Co 2:9**
2. Things prepared for those who love Him - **ibid.**
- **The first step: God prepared things we could not discern on our own**

B. GOD REVEALED...

1. Through His Spirit, to the apostles and prophets - **1 Co 2:10**
 - a. As Jesus promised His apostles - **Jn 16:12-14**
 - b. As Paul professed in his epistle - **Ep 3:1-5**
 2. Through His Spirit, who searches the deep things of God - **1 Co 2:10**
 - a. Who alone knows the things of God - **1 Co 2:11**
 - b. Just as no man knows what is in the heart of another - **ibid.**
- **The second step: God revealed through His Spirit what He wants us to know**

C. THE APOSTLES RECEIVED...

1. The Spirit of God - **1 Co 2:12**
 - a. Not the spirit of the world
 - b. But the Spirit who is from God
 2. Knowledge of things freely given by God - **ibid.**
 - a. Which had been kept hidden from man for ages
 - b. Which was now made known to the apostles and prophets of Christ
- **The third step: the apostles received God's wisdom through the Holy Spirit**

D. THE APOSTLES SPOKE...

1. Not in words which man's wisdom teaches - **1 Co 2:13**
 2. But in words which the Holy Spirit teaches - **ibid.**
 - a. "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (NKJV)
 - b. "combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words" (NASB)
 - c. "combining spiritual things with spiritual words" (ASV)
 - d. "interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual" (ESV)
 3. And wrote them that others might also know - cf. **Ep 3:3-4**
- **The fourth step: the apostles' writings make known God's revealed wisdom**

[So "**The Hidden Wisdom Of God**" has been revealed through God's servants (cf. **Ro 16:25-26**). Yet it is a wisdom most appreciated by those who are "**mature**" (cf. **1 Co 2:6**). I.e., it is...]

III. COMPREHENDED BY SPIRITUAL PERSONS

A. NOT BY THE NATURAL MAN...

1. The "natural" man is one:
 - a. "governed and influenced by the natural instincts; the animal passions and desires, in opposition to those who are influenced by the Spirit of God" - **Barnes**
 - b. Who depends only on his own senses and own reasoning
 2. The "natural" man in such a state:
 - a. Does not receive the things of the Spirit, for they seem foolish to him - **1 Co 2:14a**
 - b. Cannot know them, because such must be spiritually discerned - **1 Co 2:14b**
- **This helps explain why many people think the Bible is foolish**

B. BUT BY THE SPIRITUAL MAN...

1. The "spiritual" man is one:
 - a. "who is enlightened by the Holy Spirit in contradistinction from him who is under the influence of the senses only" - **Barnes**
 - b. Who is open to the teaching of the Spirit revealed through the apostles - cf. **Ep 3:3-4**
2. The "spiritual" man in such a state:
 - a. Is able to make judgment (discernment), for he has had his senses exercised concerning

what is good and evil - **1 Co 2:15a**; cf. **He 5:12-15**

b. Is rightly judged by no one (other than the Lord Himself) - **1 Co 2:15b**; cf. **1 Co 4:3-4**

-- **Through the inspired Word, the Spirit leads one to true spiritual enlightenment**

CONCLUSION

1. We have seen that **“The Hidden Wisdom Of God”**...
 - a. Was **unknown** to men of this world
 - b. Was **revealed** through men led by the Spirit of God
 - c. Is **comprehended** by those willing to heed what the Spirit has revealed through such men
2. To a limited extent, **“The Hidden Wisdom Of God”** has been made known to all...
 - a. Through the gospel and preaching of Jesus Christ - **Ro 16:25-26**
 - b. Which Jesus wanted everyone to hear - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**
3. We should not assume because we are Christians that we fully comprehend such wisdom...
 - a. There was more for which the **Corinthians** were not quite ready - cf. **1 Co 3:1-3**
 - b. There was more for which the **Hebrews** were not quite ready - cf. **He 5:11-14**
4. To truly benefit from all **“The Hidden Wisdom Of God”** has to offer...
 - a. We must stop being carnal, “natural” men, influenced more by our humanly senses
 - b. We must grow in grace and knowledge by feeding on the Word - cf. **1 Pe 2:1-2; Ja 1:21**

Only then, by the grace of God, will we be capable of...

“...attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” - Co 2:2-3

Do you desire the “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” found only in Christ? Then heed **not** the voices and wisdom of the world, **but** the voices and wisdom of the apostles of our Lord and Savior...!

Are You Still Carnal?

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

INTRODUCTION

1. As Paul sought to teach the Christians at Corinth, it was not easy...
 - a. While with them, he could not speak to them as spiritual people - **1 Co 3:1-2**
 - b. When he wrote to them, they were still carnal - **1 Co 3:3-4**
 - **Despite the passing of time, they were still “babes in Christ”**
2. The example of the Corinthians should challenge our thinking...
 - a. You may have been a Christian for some time now
 - b. But that does not necessarily mean you have become mature
 - **Despite the passing of time, “Are You Still Carnal?”**

[Hopefully not. But to be sure, let's make clear what it means to be carnal...]

I. CARNALITY DEFINED

A. THE WORD “CARNAL”...

1. Comes from the Greek word **sarkikos** (fleshly, carnal)
2. “having the nature of flesh, i.e. under the control of the animal appetites” - **Thayer**

B. DISTINGUISHED FROM “NATURAL” AND “SPIRITUAL”...

1. The natural man (**psuchikos**) “refers to one who is unrenewed, and who is wholly under the influence of his sensual or animal nature, and is no where applied to Christians” - **Barnes**, cf. **1 Co 2:14**
2. The carnal man (**sarkikos**) “is applied here to Christians - but to those who have much of the remains of corruption, and who are imperfectly acquainted with the nature of religion; babes in Christ” - **ibid.**, cf. **1 Co 3:1-4**
3. The spiritual man (**pneumatikos**) - is one led by the Spirit (via the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God), capable of understanding spiritual truths and producing the fruit of the Spirit in one's life; i.e., a mature Christian - cf. **1 Co 2:15; Ga 5:22-23; 6:1**

[As Christians we are no longer “natural”, but we may still be “carnal” and not yet “spiritual”. To answer the question “Are You Still Carnal?”, it helps to see...]

II. CARNALITY DEPICTED

A. IN THE LIVES OF THE CORINTHIANS...

1. Their inability to receive solid food - **1 Co 3:1-2**
 - a. Paul had to feed them with the milk of the Word
 - b. They were like the Hebrew Christians in this regard - cf. **He 5:11-14**
2. Their envy, strife, and divisions - **1 Co 3:3-4**
 - a. Their religious division addressed earlier - cf. **1 Co 1:10-13**
 - b. What does this say of the spiritual condition when religious division exists today?

B. IN THE WORKS OF THE FLESH...

1. Sins of immorality: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness - cf. **Ga 5:19**
2. Sins of false religion: idolatry, sorcery - cf. **Ga 5:20a**
3. Sins contrary to love: hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries - cf. **Ga 5:20b-21**

[We may not be guilty of immorality, but if we are unable to receive the solid food of God's Word, or if we are given to envy and strife, then we are still carnal! If such be case, what can one do...?]

III. CARNALITY DEFEATED

A. AS COUNSELED BY JAMES...

1. Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness - **Ja 1:21a**
2. Receive with meekness the implanted word - **Ja 1:21b**
3. Be doers of the word, and not hearers only - **Ja 1:22**

B. AS COUNSELED BY PETER...

1. Lay aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking - **1 Pe 2:1**
2. Desire the pure milk of the Word, as newborn babes - **1 Pe 2:2**

C. AS COUNSELED BY PAUL...

1. Seek those things which are above - **Co 3:1-2**
2. Put off the old man by crucifying your members on the earth - **Co 3:5-9**
3. Put on the new man by adorning yourself with Christ-like graces - **Co 3:10-14**
4. Let peace and gratitude reign in your heart - **Co 3:15**
5. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you through song - **Co 3:16**
6. Do all in the name of the Lord - **Co 3:17**
7. Walk in the Spirit, and be led by the Spirit - **Ga 5:16-26**

CONCLUSION

1. Those who walk in the Spirit...
 - a. Will not be conceited, provoking others, envious of others - cf. **Ga 5:25-26**
 - b. They will not be carnal! - cf. **1 Co 3:3**
2. Those who produce the fruit of the Spirit...
 - a. Will display a spirit of gentleness in their interaction with others
 - b. They will be truly spiritual! - cf. **Ga 6:1**

If the apostle Paul were to write to us today, would he say we are still carnal? May the example of the Corinthians motivate us to become more spiritual and mature in our service to the Lord...!

Fellow Workers With God

1 Corinthians 3:5-15

INTRODUCTION

1. In the church at Corinth, some had an improper estimation of preachers...
 - a. Resulting in strife and division - cf. **1 Co 1:10-13**
 - b. Manifesting a spirit of carnality - cf. **1 Co 3:3-4**
2. Paul wrote to correct their improper estimation of preachers...
 - a. They were simply servants - **1 Co 3:5**
 - b. They should be regarded as such - **1 Co 4:1**

[In revealing the proper estimation of preachers, Paul mentions that those who share God's Word with others are "**Fellow Workers With God**" (cf. **1 Co 3:9**). In our text, we learn of God's role...]

I. GOD PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY

A. GOD OPENS DOORS FOR PREPARED WORKERS...

1. God provides the opportunity for those who serve Him - **1 Co 3:5**
2. The Lord opens doors of opportunity to be of service - **1 Co 16:9**
3. Especially for those who have shown themselves ready - **Re 3:8**
4. Even when sometimes it is not used - **2 Co 2:12-13**
5. Our roles may not be the same (some plant, others water) - **1 Co 3:6a**
- **Shall we prepare ourselves to be useful to the Master? - cf. 2 Ti 2:20-21**

B. SEARCHING SOULS WILL FIND THE TRUTH...

1. The Lord seeks to show Himself strong to those who are loyal to Him - **2 Chr 16:9**
2. Those who hunger and thirst will be filled - **Mt 5:6**
3. Those who seek shall find - **Mt 7:7-11**
- **Will the Lord be able to use us to help them? - cf. Ac 13:2-3**

[Indeed, the providence of God is at work. Let us pray as we sometimes sing: "**Lord, Lead Me To Some Soul Today**". As we cooperate with God's providence, we also take comfort in knowing...]

II. GOD PROVIDES THE INCREASE

A. THE POWER IS IN THE SEED...

1. It is God who gives the increase - **1 Co 3:6-7**
2. His Word is powerful, and will accomplish its intended purpose - **Isa 55:10-11; He 4:12**
3. Especially in regards to the gospel of Christ, God's power to save - **Ro 1:16-17**
4. The results will depend upon the soil - cf. **Lk 8:11-15**
- **We must make sure that the weapon we use is the Word of God! - cf. He 4:12**

B. THE PLACE OF THE SOWER...

1. We are really nothing; just seed throwers and water boys! - **1 Co 3:6-7**
2. God can use even 'defective' seed throwers - cf. **Ph 1:15-18**

3. Just as he used Moses and Paul - cf. **Exo 4:10-12; 1 Co 2:3-4; 2 Co 10:10**
- **We must stop making excuses for not doing whatever we can! - cf. Mt 25:24-30**

[Finally, from our text (**1 Co 3:5-15**) we learn that...]

III. GOD PROVIDES THE REWARD

A. ACCORDING TO OUR LABOR...

1. God will reward each one according their labor - **1 Co 3:8**
2. The more we sow, the more we shall reap - cf. **Ga 6:7**
3. Those we lead to Christ will be a source of great joy - cf. **1 Th 2:19-20; 3 Jn 3-4**
- **The key is to build on the right foundation: Jesus Christ! - 1 Co 3:9-11**

B. EVEN IF OUR WORK IS LOST...

1. The materials (i.e., souls) with which we build vary in quality - **1 Co 3:12**
2. Only time and the judgment will reveal the true quality of those we reach - **1 Co 3:13**
3. If our work endures to the end, there will be great reward (joy) - **1 Co 3:14**
4. If our work does not endure, we are still saved - **1 Co 3:15**
- **Like Jeremiah, we might serve many years with little to show; but the Lord knows and will reward our efforts! - cf. 1 Co 15:58**

CONCLUSION

1. During His earthly ministry, Jesus manifested concern for the lost...
 - a. He was moved with compassion - **Mt 9:35-36**
 - b. He called on His disciples to pray for laborers - **Mt 9:37-38**
 - c. He then sent His disciples throughout Israel - **Mt 10:1,5-7**
 - d. He later sent them into all the world - **Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16**
2. What of us who are His disciples today...?
 - a. Do we have compassion for the lost?
 - b. Do we pray for the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into His harvest?
 - c. Do we whatever we can do...either to go or to send? - cf. **Ro 10:13-15**

The Lord is still working to save those who are lost. God will provide the **opportunity**, the **increase**, and the **reward**. Are we willing to be **“Fellow Workers With God”** today...?

Destroying The Temple Of God

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

INTRODUCTION

1. In the NT, the Lord's church is often depicted as the temple of God...
 - a. In our text, in connection with being God's building - **1 Co 3:16**; cf. **3:9**
 - b. Elsewhere in the writings of Paul - **2 Co 6:16**; **Ep 2:19-22**
 - c. Also by Peter - **1 Pe 2:4-5**
2. In our text (**1 Co 3:17**), we read of two terrible possibilities...
 - a. One can be guilty of "defiling" (or "destroying") the temple of God!
 - b. God will "destroy" those who do!
3. The words "defile" and "destroy" both come from the same Greek word...
 - a. **phtheiro** - "to waste, pine. To corrupt, destroy" - **The Complete WordStudy Dictionary**
 - b. "The Greek word is the same in both parts of the sentence. If any man 'destroy' the temple of God, God shall 'destroy' him." - **Barnes**

[The words in our text naturally raise two questions, the first one is...]

I. HOW MIGHT ONE DESTROY THE TEMPLE OF GOD?

A. THROUGH RELIGIOUS STRIFE...

1. This was the problem that existed at Corinth - **1 Co 1:10-13**
2. It prevented many members from receiving spiritual meat - **1 Co 3:1-2**
3. It left such members in a state of carnality - **1 Co 3:3-4**
4. Paul warned the churches of Galatia of the dangers of strife - **Ga 5:15**
- **Where religious strife exists, the temple of God is being destroyed!**

B. THROUGH DESTRUCTIVE DOCTRINES...

1. Peter warned of the destructive influence of false teachers - **2 Pe 2:1**
2. Causing many to follow their destructive ways - **2 Pe 2:2-3**
3. Paul also warned of those who lead many astray - **Ac 20:29-30**
4. The Spirit also expressly warned of such an apostasy - **1 Ti 4:1-3**
- **Where false teaching occurs, the temple of God is being destroyed!**

C. THROUGH SLOTHFUL SERVICE...

1. The slothful person is a brother to one who is a great destroyer - **Pro 18:9**
2. The devastating effect of sloth can be vividly illustrated
 - a. By Solomon, in the book of Proverbs - **Pro 24:30-34**
 - b. By the illustrating the church as a wagon, where some help by pulling or pushing, while others simply go along for the ride, making travel difficult through their dead weight
3. Thus the need for diligent, fervent service to the Lord - **Ro 12:11**
4. Instead of sluggishness, we ought to serve with faith and patience - **He 6:12**
- **Where slothful service is found, the temple of God is being destroyed!**

[There may be other ways to destroy the temple of God, but these suffice to make the point. We now turn to our second question...]

II. HOW WILL GOD DESTROY THOSE WHO DO?

A. BY CUTTING THEM OFF...

1. Jesus warned His disciples they would be cut off if they did not bear fruit - **Jn 15:1-2,6**
2. Paul warned Christians they would be cut off if they did not remain faithful - **Ro 11:19-23**
3. Jesus warned Christians that He would vomit those who were lukewarm - **Re 3:15-19**
- **Destroyers of the temple of God will be cut off before they do too much damage!**

B. BY TAKING AWAY THEIR REWARD...

1. As Jesus illustrated in telling the parable of the talents - **Mt 25:24-29**
2. As the writer to the Hebrews warned his brethren - **He 4:1,11; cf. 3:17-19**
- **Destroyers of the temple of God will not receive the blessings intended for them!**

C. BY CONSIGNING THEM TO ETERNAL DESTRUCTION...

1. So Peter wrote of those teaching destructive doctrines - **2 Pe 2:1-3,9**
2. So Jesus spoke of those who offend and practice lawlessness - **Mt 13:40-42**
3. So He spoke of the lazy servant in the parable of the talents - **Mt 25:30**
4. The same eternal destruction for those who obey not the gospel - **2 Th 1:7-9**
- **Destroyers of the temple of God will themselves be destroyed by God!**

CONCLUSION

1. Being in the temple of God is a wonderful blessing...
 - a. For the Spirit of God dwells in you - **1 Co 3:16**
 - b. We have fellowship with God that foreshadows what is to come - **2 Co 6:16; Re 21:1-7**
2. In one sense the temple of God cannot be destroyed...
 - a. For the kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom - **Lk 1:33**
 - b. It is a kingdom which cannot be shaken - **He 12:28**
3. Yet in another sense, there is a very real danger of destroying the temple of God...
 - a. In the **impact** we have on others through our teaching and conduct
 - b. In the **consequence** of becoming unfaithful and slothful in our service

Thus the need for Paul's warning in **1 Co 3:17**. Are we giving serious consideration to our conduct in the holy temple of God...?

The Three Tribunals

1 Corinthians 4:3-5

INTRODUCTION

1. Among the many problems that existed in the church at Corinth...
 - a. There was the problem of division - **1 Co 1:10-11**
 - b. Which involved “preacher-itis” or “personality cults” - **1 Co 1:12**
2. In dealing with the problem, the apostle Paul...
 - a. Rebuked the spiritual immaturity of such division - **1 Co 3:1-4**
 - b. Revealed how one should view the role of preachers - **1 Co 3:5-9; 4:1-2**
 - c. Remarked that in his own case he was more interested in what the Lord thought - **1 Co 4:3-5**
3. In the text for this study (**1 Co 4:3-5**), we are introduced to three different types of judgment...
 - a. The court of judgment by **men**
 - b. The court of judgment by **one’s conscience**
 - c. The court of judgment by **Christ**
 - **We might call these “The Three Tribunals”**
4. In our federal court system, we have...
 - a. The local federal court
 - b. The federal district court of appeal
 - c. The federal supreme court
 - **In which the judgment of one court is more final than the others**

[So it is with “**The Three Tribunals**” of our text. There is a difference between them, and we do well to see what the Scriptures say about each one. We begin with the lowest “tribunal”...]

I. THE COURT OF JUDGMENT BY MEN

A. PAUL'S VIEW OF THIS “TRIBUNAL”...

1. “... it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court” - **1 Co 4:3a**
2. Note carefully that he said “a very small thing”, not “nothing”
3. Paul was often concerned about what people thought in some matters
 - a. About what his weak brother thought - **1 Co 8:13**
 - b. About what the lost thought - **1 Co 9:19-23; 10:31-33**
4. But what people thought of him personally was “a very small thing”...
 - a. His accomplishments
 - b. His status as a preacher

B. THE REASON FOR PAUL’S VIEW...

1. He knew how fallible the opinions of others could be
 - a. The world loves false teachers - **Lk 6:26; cf. Jer 5:30-31**
 - b. They hate those “not of the world” - **Jn 15:18-19**
2. He knew their criteria for judging was wrong
 - a. They often look at the outward appearance - cf. **1 Sam 16:7**

- b. A problem Paul had to deal with - **2 Co 10:7,10**
- c. Yet he knew what the Lord had said - cf. **Jn 7:24**

[While there are times we should be considerate of what others think, the **final** estimation needs to look to a **higher** court. Some would say “Let your conscience be your guide.” But let’s examine...]

II. THE COURT OF JUDGMENT BY ONE’S CONSCIENCE

A. PAUL’S VIEW OF THIS “TRIBUNAL”...

1. “In fact, I do not even judge myself.” - **1 Co 4:3b**
2. Paul is not totally discounting the need to examine oneself
 - a. We are to examine ourselves at the Lord’s Supper - **1 Co 11:28-31**
 - b. We should periodically examine our own salvation - **2 Co 13:5**
3. He certainly stressed the importance of a good conscience - **1 Ti 1:5,19; 3:9; 4:2**
4. But in the matter at hand (evaluating preachers), Paul refused to depend on this “tribunal”

B. THE REASON FOR PAUL’S VIEW...

1. He knew how fallible one’s conscience or self-estimation can be
 - a. He had always served God with good conscience - **Ac 23:1**
 - b. Even when he was killing Christians - cf. **Ac 26:9-11**
 - c. When misinformed, one can have a clear conscience and still be dead wrong!
2. Paul acknowledged this possibility
 - a. “For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this;” - **1 Co 4:4a**
 - b. While his conscience was clear, he knew that it did not make him right

[Paul knew there remained a **final** and **infallible** judgment...]

III. THE COURT OF JUDGMENT BY CHRIST

A. PAUL’S VIEW OF THIS “TRIBUNAL”...

1. He knew that “He who judges me is the Lord” - **1 Co 4:4b**
 - a. This refers to the judgment by Christ is evident from **verse 5**
 - b. For Christ will judge men at His coming - **2 Co 5:10**
2. He viewed the Lord’s judgment as **superior**, for He will:
 - a. “bring to light the hidden things of darkness” (things a clear conscience might miss)
 - b. “reveal the counsels of the heart” (things often hidden from the view of others)
3. Thus Paul viewed this “tribunal” as **final**, with **no court of appeal!**

B. THE REASON FOR PAUL’S VIEW...

1. He knew the judgment of Christ was **certain**
 - a. For God provided proof through the resurrection of Jesus - **Ac 17:31**
 - b. And so Paul often wrote of this judgment - **Ro 14:10; 2 Co 5:10; 2 Ti 4:1**
2. He knew the judgment of Christ was **superior**
 - a. He knew the Lord was judging even then (cf. the present tense) - **1 Co 4:5; cf. Re 2-3**
 - b. He knew the Lord could know the secrets of men - **Jn 2:24-25; cf. Mt 9:4**

CONCLUSION

1. And so we have “**The Three Tribunals**”...

- a. The court of judgment by **men**
 - b. The court of judgment by **one's conscience**
 - c. The court of judgment by **Christ**
2. To which “tribunal” are we appealing for the hope of salvation...?
- a. Is our hope based on what **fallible men** have said?
 - b. Is our trust based on what we feel in our hearts, or what **our conscience** tells us?
 - c. Or do we place our trust and hope in the words of **the Lord** who will judge us? - **Jn 12:48**;
cf. **Mk 16:16; Re 2:10**

I trust that we have seen there is only one “tribunal” we should look to for the final answer to such questions, and that we might truly have the attitude of Paul...

“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.”
- 2 Co 5:9

Note: The main points of this outline are based on a sermon by **Alexander Maclaren** with a similar title in his **Expositions Of The Holy Scriptures**.

The Spectacle Of The Apostles

1 Corinthians 4:9-16

INTRODUCTION

1. As Christians, we owe a great debt to the apostles of our Lord...
 - a. Men chosen (**Lk 6:12-16**) and sent out by Jesus into the world (**Mk 16:15-16**)
 - b. Who suffered greatly as they carried out the great commission
2. The apostle Paul says that God has made them a “spectacle” to the world (**1 Co 4:9**)...
 - a. The Greek word is **theatron**, from which we get our word “theater”
 - b. “a theatre, a place in which games and dramatic spectacles are exhibited, and public assemblies held (for the Greeks used the theatre also as a forum)” - **Thayer**
 - c. “metaphorically, a man who is exhibited to be gazed at and made sport of” - **ibid.**

[In what way has the Lord presented His apostles a “spectacle”, an exhibition to the world? Especially so in regards to our faith! To see why, consider the basis of our faith..]

I. OUR FAITH DEPENDENT ON THEIR TESTIMONY

A. THE BASIS FOR OUR FAITH...

1. We know virtually nothing of Jesus without the apostles
2. Outside the NT there is scant evidence of who He was
3. Without the apostles we would know only:
 - a. That He lived, died, and had many disciples, as attested to by historians
 - b. Tales told many years after the events occurred, by fanciful storytellers

B. THROUGH THE APOSTLES WE LEARN ABOUT JESUS...

1. They reveal what we know of His life, teachings, death and resurrection
 - a. Either through their own writings (e.g., Matthew, John)
 - b. Or through the writings of close associates (e.g., Mark, Luke)
2. Our faith is truly dependent on the apostles
 - a. As Jesus indicated in His prayer - cf. **Jn 17:20**
 - b. We come to believe in Jesus through the words of the apostles

[Like Muslims, our faith is dependent upon the testimony of first-generation followers. In the case of the apostles, however, we see...]

II. THEIR TESTIMONY STRENGTHENED BY THEIR SACRIFICE

A. THE NATURE OF THEIR TESTIMONY...

1. The apostles were eyewitnesses to the events - cf. **2 Pe 1:16-18; Ac 10:39-42**
2. They present empirical testimony (derived from observation rather than theory)
 - a. They saw Jesus, they touched Him, ate with Him - **Ac 10:41; 1 Jn 1:1-3**
 - b. For forty days they were given infallible proofs of His resurrection - **Ac 1:1-3**
3. Their testimony strengthened by additional eyewitnesses - **1 Co 15:3-8**

B. MADE CREDITABLE BY THEIR SACRIFICE...

1. They were telling the truth, or a boldface lie (nature of their testimony leaves no alternative)
2. Some will tell a lie, if they can gain fame, fortune, or power (e.g., first-generation Muslims)
3. During their life, the apostles of Christ gained neither fame, fortune, or power
4. They suffered greatly, even appointed for such - **1 Co 4:9-10; Ph 1:29-30**

[Why would God allow, even ordain, the apostles of Christ to suffer so much? Because of how their sacrifice serves as a spectacle to us and to the world...]

III. THEIR SACRIFICE A SPECTACLE FOR OUR FAITH

A. CONSIDER THE SACRIFICES THEY MADE...

1. By the apostles in general - **1 Co 4:11-13**
 - a. They hungered and thirsted, poorly clothed, beaten and homeless
 - b. They supported themselves, blessed when reviled, endured when persecuted
 - c. When defamed, they entreated, though made the filth and offscouring of the world
2. By Paul in particular - **2 Co 11:23-28**
 - a. Imprisoned, beaten, shipwrecked
 - b. Imperiled by dangerous journeys, false brethren, lack of food, sleep, and clothing
 - c. Filled with anxiety for his brethren

B. THE IMPACT IT SHOULD HAVE ON US...

1. Believe in their testimony, if you have not done so already!
 - a. Their testimony in the resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - b. Offered by qualified and trustworthy eyewitnesses
 - c. Their gospel of salvation from the condemnation to come - **Ac 10:42; 17:30-31**
2. Be inspired to imitate their example
 - a. If we let little things hinder our service, we should be ashamed!
 - b. Yet the sufferings of the apostles are presented as a spectacle, not to shame, but to admonish and inspire - **1 Co 4:14-16**

CONCLUSION

1. As we gaze upon “**The Spectacle Of The Apostles**”, what do we see...?
 - a. Men suffering greatly, but not defeated - cf. **2 Co 4:8-9**
 - b. Men demonstrating the power of Christ living in them - cf. **2 Co 4:10-11**
2. Having seen “**The Spectacle Of The Apostles**”, what will we do...?
 - a. Believe in the Lord Jesus with a much stronger faith!
 - b. Serve the Lord with a willingness to press on, no matter the cost!

That would certainly accomplish God’s design in allowing them to suffer. Why not heed the apostle’s urging (**1 Co 4:16**) to imitate him and his brethren...!

Flee Fornication

1 Corinthians 6:18

INTRODUCTION

1. The Christians at Corinth faced great challenges in living holy lives...
 - a. The city was known for its immorality
 - b. The temple of Venus hosted 1000 priestesses dedicated to prostitution in the name of religion
 - c. Some Christians had been quite immoral prior to their conversion - **1 Co 6:9-11**
 - **And so Paul warned them to “Flee fornication” (KJV) - 1 Co 6:18**
2. The admonition is needed just as much today...
 - a. Fornication (sexual immorality) is rampant in our culture
 - b. Morality is being loosely defined (and redefined), causing many to engage in dangerous behavior
 - c. Those who follow Christ must have a clear understanding of what is wrong
 - **And so today people need to be warned, Flee fornication!”**

[Because many are redefining morality today, we do well to first notice the Biblical definition of that conduct which we are to flee...]

I. DEFINITION OF FORNICATION

A. GENERAL TERM...

1. The Greek word translated fornication (KJV), sexual immorality (NKJV) is **porneia**
2. “Used generally to refer to any sexual sin” - **The Complete WordStudy Dictionary**
3. Thus it includes any form of “illicit sexual intercourse - adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals, etc.” - **Thayer**

B. SPECIFIC TERMS...

1. Adultery (**moichao**) - to have unlawful intercourse with another’s wife - **Thayer**
2. Homosexuality (**arsenokoites**) - one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual, cf. **1 Co 6:9; 1 Ti 1:10 - ibid.**
3. Bestiality - lie carnally with an animal, cf. **Lev 18:23**
4. Lewdness (**aselgia**) - Lasciviousness, license, debauchery, sexual excess, absence of restraint, insatiable desire for pleasure, cf. **Ro 13:13 - Complete WordStudy Dictionary**
 - a. This word would include oral sex, which many have sought to redefine as not sex
 - b. Which has become a major problem among many youths (with terrifying consequences)

[Fornication is a general term for sexual immorality; i.e., sexual behavior between unmarried that rightly belongs only to husbands and wives (cf. **He 13:4**). Prohibitions against fornication can be appreciated when we understand...]

II. DEVASTATION OF FORNICATION

A. DESTROYS THE BODY...

1. Bacterial STDs (e.g., chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea) are often brought on by fornication
2. Viral STDs (e.g., genital herpes, Hepatitis B, AIDS) are incurable

3. Many people have learned the hard way, what Solomon warned his son - cf. **Pro 5:11-12**

B. DESTROYS THE HOME...

1. Marriages intended for life are broken, often beyond repair - cf. **Mt 19:4-6**
2. Children are devastated, with emotional effects lasting into adulthood - cf. **Mal 2:16**
3. Potential for future marriages is lessened (who desires “damaged goods” due to STDs?)

C. DESTROYS THE SOUL...

1. It will be hard to forgive oneself, there will be self-recrimination - cf. **Pro 5:12-13**
2. Your soul will be deprived of good friends, whose trust you violated - cf. **Pro 6:30-35**
3. If unrepented and unforgiven, there is no hope - cf. **1 Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:19-21; He 13:4**

[We see why Paul would write “**Flee fornication.**” It is not to be taken lightly! That we might succeed in fleeing fornication, here are some thoughts on the...]

III. DETERRENCE OF FORNICATION

A. LEARN FROM JOSEPH...

1. He was successful in fleeing fornication with Potiphar’s wife - **Gen 39:7-12**
2. Most importantly, he valued his relationship with God - cf. **Gen 39:9**
3. So flee youthful lusts, pursuing godliness instead - cf. **2 Ti 2:22**

B. LEARN FROM SOLOMON...

1. Who warned his son of the price of fornication - **Pro 5:1-6,9-14,20-23**
2. Who counseled his children to avoid the immoral person - **Pro 5:7-8; 7:24-27**
3. Who encouraged his son to love the wife of his youth - **Pro 5:18-10; Ecc 9:9**

C. LEARN FROM DAVID...

1. Who made a terrible mistake with Bathsheba - **2 Sam 11:3-5**
2. Which led to the murder of Uriah, and the death of the child - **2 Sam 11:6-17; 12:9-19**
3. But David confessed his sin, and repented - cf. **2 Sam 12:13; Psa 51:1-4**

CONCLUSION

1. To flee fornication and its devastating effects...
 - a. We need to have the fortitude of Joseph, and apply the wisdom of Solomon
 - b. When necessary, we need the penitence of David
2. Fornication is too serious to take lightly...
 - a. It can destroy your body, home, and soul
 - b. Forgiveness is possible (cf. **1 Co 6:11**), but physical consequences of sin often remain (STDs)

So flee fornication, and abstain from sexual immorality, which is God’s will for you... - cf. **1 Th 4:1-8**

Our Bodies Belong To God

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

INTRODUCTION

1. The name of a popular book for women is “**Our Bodies, Ourselves**”...
 - a. Self-described as “a book by and for women about health and sexuality”
 - b. Which among other things approves of abortion and lesbianism-- **The premise is that women are free to do with their bodies as they wish**

2. The Bible contradicts such a premise for both men and women in Christ...
 - a. We do not have the right to do whatever we desire with our bodies
 - b. We belong to God, both body and spirit-- **We are not ourselves, but God’s!**

[Nowhere is this stated more clearly than in our text (1 Co 6:19-20), where Christians are told...]

I. OUR BODIES ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. IN WHICH THE SPIRIT INDWELLS...

1. Written elsewhere of the church in general - **1 Co 3:16-17; 2 Co 6:16; Ep 2:21-22**
 2. Applied in our text to our bodies individually - **1 Co 6:19**
 3. As motivation for holy living, to flee sexual immorality - cf. **1 Co 6:13-19**
-
- The fact of the Spirit’s indwelling should affect how we use our bodies!**

B. THE SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO US FROM GOD...

1. Promised to those who believe, repent and are baptized - **Jn 7:37-39; Ac 2:38-39**
 2. Received by those who obey God - **Ac 5:32; Ga 3:26-27; 4:6**
 3. An earnest (down payment) of our ultimate redemption - **Ep 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Co 1:22**
-
- The blessing of the Spirit’s indwelling should impact how we use our bodies!**

[To drive the point home that we are not free to use our bodies however we wish, our text also says...]

II. OUR BODIES WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE

A. WE HAVE BEEN BOUGHT...

1. By the blood of Christ - **Ac 20:28; 1 Pe 1:18-19**
 2. Both body and soul - **1 Co 6:19-20**
 3. Thus we also look for the redemption of the body (i.e., resurrection) - **Ro 8:23**
-
- God purchased our bodies for both now and the future!**

B. WE ARE NOT OUR OWN...

1. As Paul clearly states in our text - **1 Co 6:19c**
 2. As Paul stresses time and again elsewhere - **Ro 14:7-8; 2 Co 5:15; Ti 2:14**
-
- We were redeemed to be the Lord’s special people!**

[Redeemed by the blood of Christ, our bodies are not our own. Indeed, as our text reveals...]

III. OUR BODIES ARE TO GLORIFY GOD

A. OUR BODIES...

1. Are now members of Christ - **1 Co 6:13-15**
 - a. To be used for the Lord, not immorality
 - b. Otherwise we make members of Christ members of a harlot!
 2. Are now to be instruments of righteousness - **Ro 6:12-13,19**
 - a. No longer instruments of unrighteousness to sin
 - b. No longer slaves of uncleanness leading to lawlessness
- **Clearly they are not to be used for sin or self!**

B. TO GLORIFY GOD...

1. By how we **live** - **Ro 12:1-2**
 - a. Living sacrificial, holy lives, acceptable to God
 - b. Demonstrating that God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect
 2. By how we **die** - **Ph 1:20-21**
 - a. Magnifying God in how we die (e.g., with faith and hope)
 - b. Knowing that to die is gain for the Christian - cf. **Ph 1:23**
- **Clearly our bodies are to glorify God, not self!**

CONCLUSION

1. The world would have us view our bodies...
 - a. As owned by ourselves, and no one has a right to tell us how to use it
 - b. As an instrument of pleasure, to be used as we please
 - c. As something to be discarded at death, needed no more

2. God would have us view our bodies...
 - a. As the temple of the Holy Spirit
 - b. As belonging to God, purchased at a price
 - c. As an instrument through which we are to glorify Him
 - d. As that which will be redeemed, when raised and given immortality as a spiritual body for the soul

Indeed, our bodies are gifts from God of which we must be wise stewards. Are we using our bodies in ways that glorify Him...?

“...therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

- 1 Co 6:20

Keeping The Commandments Of God

1 Corinthians 7:19

INTRODUCTION

1. The idea of “commandment-keeping” is not a popular one among many people today...
 - a. Some equate it with what they call “legalism”
 - b. Others look at keeping any kind of commandment as an unpleasant task
 - 1) Perhaps a carry-over from childhood?
 - 2) Where they feel like they were constantly being “commanded” to do things?
2. Yet keeping the commandments of God should not be looked upon by Christians in this way...

“Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.” (1 Co 7:19)

[In this lesson, I want us to consider some things about keeping the commandments of God, which I hope will change any adverse feelings we may have towards doing so...]

I. WHAT IS THE PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD COMMANDMENT-KEEPING?

A. IT SHOULD NOT BE ONE OF “LEGALISM”...

1. Legalism is that idea that one earns or merits salvation by their obedience
2. Such an attitude would be wrong on the part of Christians - **Ti 3:3-7**
3. Unfortunately, many react to legalism by going to the extreme of saying keeping commandments is not important
4. Yet Paul, whom none could accuse of being a legalist, penned the words of our text!

[Here is a different perspective, based on two verses that start out like our text, but end differently...]

B. THINK OF IT AS “FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE”...

1. Compare **1 Co 7:19** with **Ga 5:6**
2. Cannot keeping the commandments of God be an expression of “faith working love”?
 - a. By keeping the commandments I demonstrate my **faith** - **Ja 2:14-18**
 - b. By keeping the commandments I show my **love**
 - 1) To Jesus - **Jn 14:15; 15:14**
 - 2) To God - **1 Jn 5:3**
 - 3) To the children of God - **1 Jn 5:2**
3. Thought of in this way, keeping the commandments of God is very important!

C. THINK OF IT AS PRODUCING “A NEW CREATION”...

1. Compare **1 Co 7:19** with **Ga 6:15**
2. Cannot keeping the commandments be thought of as helping to produce a “new creation”?
 - a. Becoming a new creation is a blessing we enjoy by being in Christ - **2 Co 5:17**
 - b. But to enjoy this blessing involves keeping certain commandments...
 - 1) For example, baptism to receive Christ - cf. **Ga 3:27**

- 2) Also, putting off and putting on qualities to become like Christ - cf. **Co 3:5-17**
3. Again, when we think of keeping the commandments of God as necessary to become a new creation in Christ, then it becomes very important!

[This I believe is **the proper attitude** toward “commandment-keeping”:

- A demonstration of our faith and love!
- Part of the process by which we can become a new creation in Christ!

But is “commandment-keeping” hard, laborious? Is it something unpleasant...?]

II. IS COMMANDMENT-KEEPING A DIFFICULT TASK?

A. NOT ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONE IT LONGEST...!

1. Like the apostle John - **1 Jn 5:3**
2. I strongly suspect that if you were to ask some of our elderly saints, that they would concur with both John and the psalmist - **Psa 119:129-136**

B. THE HARDEST PART IS DECIDING TO DO IT...!

1. Laboring over whether to make a decision is often harder than carrying it out
2. For example, keeping commandments given by parents to children
 - a. E.g., to clean the room, take out the garbage
 - b. The hardest part is making the decision to do it willingly
 - c. Once that is done, the “chore” really isn’t one!
3. The same is true with keeping the commandments of God (e.g., baptism)

C. IT IS MADE EASY FOR US WITH THE HELP OF GOD AND CHRIST...!

1. God will protect and provide as we try to keep His commandments - **1 Co 10:13**
 - a. Protect you from what you are unable to overcome
 - b. Provide you with ways of escape for that which you do face
2. Yes, we are not alone as we try to keep the commandments of God - **Ph 2:12-13; 4:13**
3. Even if forsaken by all others in times of greatest need, God is still there! - **2 Ti 4:16-18**

CONCLUSION

1. But such blessings, and such assurance of faith, comes only to those who like Paul live as though “keeping the commandments of God is what matters”!
2. How important is keeping the commandments of God...?
 - a. It is essential to receiving **mercy** from God - **Psa 103:15-18; Mt 7:21-23**
 - b. It is essential to receiving the **love** and the **abiding presence** of God - **Jn 14:21,23**
 - c. It is essential to having our **prayers answered** - **1 Jn 3:22**

Dear friends and brethren, are you keeping the commandments of God?

Obtaining The Prize

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

INTRODUCTION

1. In our text (**1 Co 9:24-27**), Paul alludes to the ancient Grecian games...
 - a. Running in a race
 - b. Fighting as a boxer
 - c. Competing for a prize

2. He observes that there are principles common to both athletes and Christians...
 - a. The need for **motivation**
 - b. The need for **self-control**
 - c. The need for **exercise**

3. These are necessary to “obtain” the prize...
 - a. The Greek word translated “obtain” is **katalambano**
 - b. It means “to apprehend, attain, obtain, find” - **Complete WordStudy Dictionary**
 - c. “In allusion to the public games, to obtain the prize with the idea of eager and strenuous exertion, to grasp, seize upon” - **ibid.**

[Whether one is an athlete or a Christian, there are three things necessary to “**Obtaining The Prize**”...]

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION

A. IN THE LIFE OF THE ATHLETE...

1. The proper motivation is necessary to win
2. Different motives make a difference in a race
 - a. Some run to win
 - b. Others run for their health
 - c. The latter really don’t care if they win or not
3. The successful athlete is motivated by the gold medal or wreath - **1 Co 9:25b**
 - a. A perishable crown, to be sure
 - b. But one representing fame and glory, that motivates the athlete to excel

B. IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. The proper motivation is likewise necessary to win
2. Different motives can make a big difference
 - a. Some are Christians to please their conscience, or to please others
 - b. Some are Christians because of the present blessings (peace of mind, fellowship)
 - c. Such motives may have their place in the life of the Christian
3. But the successful Christian is motivated by what lies at the **end** of the race
 - a. An imperishable crown - **1 Co 9:25c**
 - b. The crown of righteousness, which motivated Paul - **2 Ti 4:7-8**
 - c. The incorruptible inheritance that awaits us - **1 Pe 1:3-4; 2 Pe 3:13-14**
 - d. Just as Jesus endured the cross “for the joy that was set before Him” - **He 12:1-2**

[What **motivates** you as a Christian, running the race of faith? Is it “**Obtaining The Prize**” at the end? If so, then you should also take note of...]

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CONTROL

A. IN THE LIFE OF THE ATHLETE...

1. Successful athletes are ‘temperate’ in all things - **1 Co 9:25a**
2. They exercise ‘self-control’ in such things as:
 - a. Their diet
 - b. The amount of sleep
 - c. Following their training schedules
 - d. Often foregoing many social activities
3. Self-control means doing it even when one doesn’t feel like it: “When it’s pouring rain and you have to go and ride six hours in the mountains, there’s no fun in doing that.” - **Lance Armstrong**

B. IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. Self-control is just as necessary - **1 Co 9:27**
2. It is necessary to overcoming “the works of the flesh” - **Ga 5:19-24**
3. The indwelling Spirit is given to the Christian to aid us - **Ga 5:16; Ro 8:11-13**
4. But the aid of the Spirit does not remove any sense of struggle - cf. **1 Pe 2:11**
 - a. We must still do things that seem difficult
 - b. We must still do things even when we don’t “feel like it”

[**Self-control** is a necessary complement to proper **motivation**. Without it, motivation alone will not succeed. Along with motivation and self-control is...]

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF EXERCISE

A. IN THE LIFE OF THE ATHLETE...

1. The exercise performed by athletes is impressive
 - a. Long distance runners train 10-20 miles a day
 - b. Swimmers swim 10 miles a day to be competitive
 - c. Gymnasts work out 8-9 hours a day
2. Such exercise is essential
 - a. To be competitive
 - b. To endure the hardships of the competition
 - c. To gain the victory!

B. IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. There is the need for godly exercise - **1 Ti 4:8**
 - a. Offering benefits for the life which now is
 - b. With promise for the life to come
2. Examples of good spiritual exercise
 - a. Diligence in rightly handling the word of truth - **2 Ti 2:15**
 - b. Communing with the Lord in prayer - **Ph 4:6-7**
 - c. Meditating on things worthy of virtue and praise - **Ph 4:8**
 - d. Loving the brethren with sincerity - **Ro 12:9-10**
 - e. Offering diligent, fervent service to the Lord and brethren - **Ro 12:11-13**

CONCLUSION

1. Certainly one engaged in such ‘exercises’ is a true spiritual athlete...
 - a. Running the race of faith with certainty - **1 Co 9:26**
 - b. Fighting the good fight with purpose - **ibid.**
2. Such efforts will not be in vain...
 - a. When accompanied by the right motivation
 - b. When joined with self-control

Are you “**Obtaining The Prize**”? Make sure that you heed Paul’s words to “run in such a way that you may obtain it” (**1 Co 9:24b**). Also take heart from his words found later in this same epistle:

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

- 1 Co 15:58

Not Seeking My Own Profit

1 Corinthians 10:31-33

INTRODUCTION

1. In his writings, the apostle Paul often offered himself as an example...
 - a. To the brethren at Philippi - **Ph 3:17; 4:9**
 - b. To the brethren at Corinth - **1 Co 11:1**
2. His call to imitation in **1 Co 11:1** has reference to his attitude mentioned in the previous chapter...
 - a. To do all things to the glory of God - **1 Co 10:31**
 - b. To give no offense to Jews, Greeks, or to the church of God - **1 Co 10:32**
 - c. To not seek one's own profit, but rather the salvation of others - **1 Co 10:33**

[We find in these verses (**1 Co 10:31-33**) a **principle** that governed Paul's actions in dealing with others. To fully appreciate that principle, it helps to first understand...]

I. PAUL'S MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION

A. THAT ALL MEN MIGHT BE SAVED...

1. Mentioned in **1 Co 10:31**
2. As expressed to the brethren at Colosse
 - a. His desire and labor to present every man perfect in Christ - **Co 1:28-29**
 - b. His anguish for the spiritual growth of all men - **Co 2:1-7**

B. COMPASSION PROMPTED BY HIS SAVIOR...

1. For Paul was allowing Christ to live in Him - **Ga 2:20**
2. And Christ was certainly one who had compassion for the lost - **Mt 9:35-38**

[Thus Paul developed a **Christ-like obsession of concern for others**, which in turn motivated him to apply the magnificent principle in his dealings with others...]

II. PAUL'S MAGNIFICENT PRINCIPLE

A. AS EXPRESSED IN OUR TEXT...

1. "not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" - **1 Co 10:33**
2. This is not to say that Paul would compromise on matters of truth
 - a. E.g., his stand for truth regarding circumcision - **Ga 2:3-5**
 - b. E.g., his stand for truth regarding the truth of the gospel - **Ga 2:11-14**
3. But he would not allow his personal feelings, preferences, or opinions hinder...
 - a. The salvation of souls outside of Christ
 - b. The spiritual progress of brethren weak in faith

B. AS EXEMPLIFIED IN OTHER TEXTS...

1. In regards to eating meats sacrificed to idols - **1 Co 8:7-13**
 - a. Paul makes clear the possible consequence of abusing one's liberty
 - b. Thus the application of his magnificent principle ("not seeking my own profit")

2. In regards to reaching the lost - **1 Co 9:19-22**
 - a. He had made himself a servant to others, that he might save some
 - b. Again, applying his magnificent principle (“not seeking my own profit”)
3. In regards to brethren whose faith was weak - **Ro 14:13-23**
 - a. Making every effort not to put stumbling blocks in a brother’s way
 - b. Again, applying his magnificent principle (“not seeking my own profit”)

C. AS EXPLAINED IN OTHER TEXTS...

1. To the brethren at Rome - **Ro 15:1-3**
 - a. The strong should bear with the scruples of the weak
 - b. We should seek to please our neighbor for his good
 - c. We should follow the example of Christ Himself
2. To the brethren at Corinth - **1 Co 10:23-24**
 - a. It is not enough that a matter be lawful; does it also edify (build up)?
 - b. We should not seek our own, but one another’s well-being
3. To the brethren in Galatia - **Ga 5:1,13**
 - a. We may be free in Christ (free from the Law, from sin, etc.)
 - b. But we must use our liberty to serve one another in love!

D. AS EMPLOYED IN OUR LIVES...

1. It requires that we possess **Paul’s magnificent obsession**
 - a. That is, to save souls (both the lost and the spiritually immature)
 - b. Otherwise there will be insufficient motivation to sacrifice personal preferences, opinions and feelings, our liberty to save and serve others!
2. It requires prayerful evaluation and discernment
 - a. We must examine ourselves honestly
 - 1) Regarding our impact as individuals in daily contact with others
 - 2) Regarding our influence as a congregation in our work and worship
 - b. We must consider whether or not our actions...
 - 1) Keep people from becoming Christians
 - 2) Hinder brethren from their spiritual growth in Christ
 - 3) Destroy the peace and unity that ought to exist in the church
3. It requires understanding the parameters of our conduct
 - a. We must never compromise the truth of the gospel
 - b. We must be willing to refrain our personal liberty in Christ - cf. **1 Co 8:13; Ro 14:21**
4. Some modern-day circumstances that call for **Paul’s magnificent principle**
 - a. You may think nothing of certain recreational activities; but if you know it would cause a brother to stumble, what do you do?
 - b. You may think your ideas for a congregation are better; but if you know it might cause division, what do you do?
 - c. You may have different ideas as to what constitutes modest apparel; but if you know it might encourage lust in others, what do you do?

CONCLUSION

1. We know how Paul would respond...
 - a. “Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.” - **Ro 14:19**
 - b. “It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or

is offended or is made weak.” - **Ro 14:21**

- c. “Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.” - **1 Co 8:13**

2. Or as he summarized it in our text...

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” - 1 Co 10:31-33

We know that Paul’s attitude (“**Not Seeking My Own Profit**”) was because he imitated Christ (**1 Co 11:1**). Are we willing to do the same for the sake of saving and serving others...?

The Issue Of The Head Covering

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians addresses many issues...
 - a. Some related to conduct as Christians in Corinthian society
 - b. Others pertained to conduct in the assemblies of the saints
2. One issue involved women praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered...
 - a. Covered in depth in **1 Co 11:2-16**
 - b. About which brethren have different views regarding its application today
3. Views concerning "The Head Covering" generally fall into two camps...
 - a. It was **a custom of the church** - intended for universal and permanent application
 - b. It was **a custom of society** - and Paul's instructions were limited and temporary in application

[I understand that Paul was addressing a custom of society, not a custom commanded by God for the church. Here are reasons why I believe that...]

I. THE ISSUE PERTAINED TO SOCIETAL CUSTOM

A. PAUL'S COMMENDATION...

1. Note carefully Paul's commendation as he begins - cf. **1 Co 11:2**
 2. "Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you."
 3. If the wearing of a veil while praying or prophesying is something required of Christian women because it is God's law and not a social custom, it seems strange that he would begin by praising them for keeping apostolic traditions when in fact they were not!
- **What they failed to keep was not apostolic tradition, but something else**

B. PAUL'S COMMENTS...

1. Note carefully his comments regarding shame - cf. **1 Co 11:5-6**
 2. "But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaven. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered."
 3. Paul argues on the basis of "if it is shameful..."
 - a. If it was **not** shameful for a woman to have shorn hair (as is the case of some cultures), then Paul's argument here does not hold up
 - b. He is evidently basing his argument on the cultural attitudes of their day, not on what is the revelation of God's will on the matter
- **Paul's argument was contingent on what was considered shameful in their society**

C. PAUL'S APPEAL...

1. Note carefully his appeal to propriety - cf. **1 Co 11:13**
2. "Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?"

3. He asks “Is it proper...?”
 - a. Again, he reasoned from a sense of cultural propriety, i.e., what was considered proper or shameful in their culture
 - b. When it was a matter of divine will, Paul exercised his apostolic authority to command, not ask people to “judge among yourselves” - cf. with **1 Co 1:10**
- **Paul’s appeal was based on their own judgment, not God’s will**

D. PAUL’S CONCLUSION...

1. Now consider his conclusion when all was said and done - cf. **1 Co 11:16**
 2. “But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.”
 3. Paul sought to reason with them on the basis of such things as what is proper according to their culture - **1 Co 11:6,13**
 4. He also reasoned on the basis of what is certainly in harmony with scriptural principles
 - a. E.g., the headship of man - **1 Co 11:3-5**
 - b. E.g., the subjection of angels - **1 Co 11:10**
 5. But in the final analysis, if anyone one wanted to be contentious...
 - a. It was not an apostolic or church custom
 - b. It was a cultural issue in which Paul sought to give his advice
- **Neither the apostles or the church of God had a custom related to the issue at hand**

[Thus I believe Paul dealt with a **social custom** important to the brethren at Corinth, but limited and temporary in application. This understanding is further confirmed by answering this question:

Were the women prophesying and praying with heads uncovered in the assembly of the saints, or in public places such as the marketplace?

Most assume that the issue involved conduct of women in church. I believe the evidence suggests...]

II. THE ISSUE PERTAINED TO CONDUCT IN PUBLIC

A. PAUL’S QUESTION...

1. Note carefully Paul’s question later on in his discussion - cf. **1 Co 11:13**
 2. “Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?”
 3. This question implies a “no” answer; but if they were being asked concerning women in a religious assembly in Corinth, they would have answered “yes”, for apparently Greek women worshipped in the temples with heads uncovered (**Nicoll**, The Expositors’ Greek Testament)
 4. However, in Corinth it was a shame to take off the veil in public places
- **The answer (“no”) to his question makes sense only if he referred to conduct in public places like the market place, and not to conduct in a religious assembly**

B. PAUL’S REMARKS...

1. Note carefully Paul’s remarks after concluding his discussion - cf. **1 Co 11:17-18**
2. “Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.”
3. It is at **verse 17** that he begins to discuss matters related to the assembly, such as their abuse of the Lord’s Supper (**11:17-34**) and the exercise of spiritual gifts (**chs. 12-14**)

4. Matters discussed beforehand, such as eating meats sacrificed to idols (**chs. 8-10**) and women prophesying with heads uncovered (**11:2-16**), were issues of conduct outside the assemblies of the saints
- **Paul does not begin discussing matters related to the assembly until verse 17**

C. PAUL'S COMMANDMENTS...

1. Note carefully his commandments concerning women in the assembly - cf. **1 Co 14:34-37**
2. "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord."
3. Since it was shameful for women to speak in church, it is unlikely that Paul in chapter 11 was saying that women could prophesy in church as long as they wore the veil
- **Women could not prophesy in the assembly, whether veiled or not**

CONCLUSION

1. As I understand the circumstances that prompted Paul's discussion...
 - a. Christian women were taking their veils off in public places to pray and prophesy
 - b. Perhaps those with the gift of prophesy felt they were free to disregard societal norms
 - c. While not considered shameful in Corinthian society to do so in a religious assembly, it was scandalous for a woman to remove the veil in public places like the market place
2. The circumstances in Corinth appear to have been similar to those in some Muslim countries...
 - a. Where Muslim women will veil their faces when they walk in public
 - b. But often remove the veils when they enter a private home, or a store that caters to women
3. If my understanding is correct, the issue was...
 - a. **Not:** "Should women **put on the veil** to prophesy and pray in church?"
 - b. **But:** "Should women **take off the veil** to prophesy and pray in public?"
4. Paul sought to encourage them to act in harmony with the customs of their day...
 - a. Customs that were in harmony with the scriptural principles of headship and subjection
 - b. But he acknowledges that the head covering was not custom of the apostles or the church

Thus I take his words regarding women and the head covering per se to be limited and temporary in application. But the idea of honoring societal customs that reflect scriptural principles certainly has universal and permanent application for Christians who seek to glorify God in this world. As Paul wrote in the previous chapter...

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." - 1 Co 10:31-33

The More Excellent Way Of Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

INTRODUCTION

1. In **1st Corinthians 12-14** Paul discusses spiritual gifts...
 1. In chapter **twelve** he describes the gifts
 2. In chapter **thirteen** he reveals how long they will last
 3. In chapter **fourteen** he provides guidelines for their use in the assembly
2. In the course of his discussion, he proposes “a more excellent way”...
 - a. While encouraging them to desire the better gifts - cf. **1 Co 12:31**
 - b. The more excellent way is the way of love - cf. **1 Co 13:1-13**

[In **chapter 13** we find “**The More Excellent Way Of Love**” carefully and beautifully defined for us. Paul’s discourse on love is divided into three parts, the first being...]

I. THE NECESSITY OF LOVE

A. DESCRIBED BY PAUL...

1. Necessary in the exercise of spiritual gifts - **1 Co 13:1-2**
2. Necessary in the exercise of great sacrifice - **1 Co 13:3**
- **Without love, such things are of no value!**

B. APPLIED BY US TODAY...

1. Without love, any **ability** we have is of little value (such as teaching, preaching, etc.)
2. Without love, any **knowledge** we obtain will only hurt us - cf. **1 Co 8:1**
3. Without love, any **service** rendered is not pleasing to God - cf. **Re 2:1-5**
- **Love is truly a necessary virtue!**

[But what exactly what is love? That leads us to the second part of Paul’s discussion of “**The More Excellent Way Of Love**”, in which he describes...]

II. THE QUALITIES OF LOVE

A. LOVE’S POSITIVE QUALITIES...

1. Suffers longs - endures slights and wrongs patiently and long, like God Himself (**Psa 103:8**) - **B. W. Johnson**
2. Is kind - obliging, willing to help or assist - **Complete WordStudy Dictionary**

B. LOVE’S NEGATIVE QUALITIES...

1. Does not envy - is not jealous of what others have or have become - **Pulpit Commentary**
2. Does not parade itself - does not brag or boast of one’s abilities or possessions - **Barnes**
3. Is not puffed up - swelled with pride and elated with a vain conceit of himself - **Gill**
4. Does not behave rudely - to behave in an ugly, indecent, unseemly or unbecoming manner (cf. **1 Pe 3:8**, “be courteous”) - **The Complete WordStudy Dictionary**
5. Does not seek its own - does not seek its own happiness to the injury of others (cf. **1 Co**

10:24,33) - Barnes

6. Is not provoked - does not fly into a rage, but keeps the temper under control - **B.W. Johnson**
7. Thinks no evil - puts the best possible construction on the motives and the conduct of others; not malicious, censorious, disposed to find fault, or to impute improper motives to others - **Barnes**
8. Does not rejoice in iniquity - Does not rejoice over the “vices” of other people; does not take delight when they are guilty of crime, or when, in any manner, they fall into sin. It does not find pleasure in hearing others accused of sin, and in having it proved that they committed it. - **ibid.**

C. LOVE’S POSITIVE QUALITIES (CONT.)...

1. Rejoices in the truth - lit., “with the truth”; truth is personified as is love, and when love sees truth manifested in the lives of others, love greatly rejoices along with it, cf. **2 Jn 4; 3 Jn 3-4**
2. Bears all things - lit., “covers, protects”; but as used by Paul elsewhere, it can also mean to endure, suffer (cf. **1 Co 9:12; 1 Th 3:1,5**); thus in regards to the sins or failings of others, there is willingness to bear with them patiently - **Barnes**
3. Believes all things - in regard to the conduct of others, there is a disposition to put the best construction on it; to believe that they may be actuated by good motives, and that they intend no injury; and that there is a willingness to suppose, as far as can be, that what is done is done consistently with friendship, good feeling, and virtue. Love produces this, because it rejoices in the happiness and virtue of others, and will not believe the contrary except on irrefragable evidence. - **ibid.**
4. Hopes all things - that all will turn out well. This must also refer to the conduct of others; and it means, that however dark may be appearances; how much so ever there may be to produce the fear that others are actuated by improper motives or are bad people, yet that there is a “hope” that matters may be explained and made clear; that the difficulties may be made to vanish; and that the conduct of others may be made to “appear” to be fair and pure. Love will “hold on to this hope” until all possibility of such a result has vanished and it is compelled to believe that the conduct is not susceptible of a fair explanation. This hope will extend to “all things” - to words and actions, and plans; to public and to private contact; to what is said and done in our own presence, and to what is said and done in our absence. Love will do this, because it delights in the virtue and happiness of others, and will not credit anything to the contrary unless compelled to do so. - **ibid.**
5. Endures all things - bears up under, sustains, and does not complain. Bears up under all persecutions at the hand of man; all efforts to injure the person, property, or reputation... The connection requires us to understand it principally of our treatment at the hands of our fellowmen. - **ibid.**

[The final quality of love introduces us to the third and last section of “**The More Excellent Way Of Love**”...]

III. THE PERMANENCY OF LOVE**A. LOVE NEVER FAILS...**

1. Love never fails - to fall away, to fail; to be without effect, to cease to be in existence.
 - a. While other endowments of the Holy Spirit must soon cease and be valueless, love would abide, and would always exist.
 - b. The “argument” is, that we ought to seek that which is of enduring value; and that,

therefore, love should be preferred to those endowments of the Spirit on which so high a value had been set by the Corinthians. - **Barnes**

2. Spiritual gifts (e.g., prophecies, tongues, and knowledge) will fail, cease, vanish away - **1 Co 13:8-12**
 - a. Such gifts were to reveal and confirm the Word - cf. **Mk 16:19-20; He 2:3-4**
 - b. Once the Word was completely revealed and confirmed, the need for such gifts ceased - cf. **2 Ti 3:16-17; 2 Pe 1:3; Ju 3**

B. LOVE ABIDES...

1. Along with faith and hope - **1 Co 13:13a**
 - a. Spiritual gifts like prophecies, tongues, and knowledge would cease
 - b. Yet the virtues of faith, hope and love would “abide” (Grk., **meno** - remain, dwell, continue, tarry, endure)
 - c. Implying a period of time between the cessation of spiritual gifts and the fulfillment of faith and hope
2. Greater than faith and hope - **1 Co 13:13b**
 - a. We now walk by faith, not by sight - **2 Co 5:7**
 - b. We now hope for what is unseen - **Ro 8:24-25**
 - c. When Christ comes, the need for **faith and hope will be no more!**
 - 1) We will then walk by sight, not faith!
 - 2) We will see that for which we eagerly await, and no longer need hope!
 - d. Yet throughout eternity, in the presence of Christ, **“love never fails!”**

CONCLUSION

1. Love is truly **“a more excellent way”** (**1 Co 12:31**), what Paul describes elsewhere as...
 - a. The fulfillment of the Law - **Ro 13:8**
 - b. The bond of perfection - **Co 3:14**
2. When properly defined and understood, love is also **“the way of Christ”**...
 - a. For in Paul’s description of love, we see a picture of the character of Christ
 - b. As disciples of Christ, we are to walk in the way of love as well - cf. **Ep 5:1-2**
3. How does our conduct measure up to Paul’s description of love...?
 - a. In our dealings with others, whether they be friends or foes?
 - b. Remember, without love, our labor means nothing!

Are we committed to walking in **“The More Excellent Way Of Love”**...?

The Greatest Of These Is Love

1 Corinthians 13:13

INTRODUCTION

1. In his discourse on spiritual gifts, Paul praised the value of love...
 - a. Introducing it as “a more excellent way” - **1 Co 12:31**
 - b. Emphasizing its necessity along with any ability or service we might have - **1 Co 13:1-3**
 - c. Explaining its abiding superiority over spiritual gifts - **1 Co 13:8**
2. He even praised its value over faith and hope...
 - a. Abiding virtues in of themselves - **1 Co 13:13a**
 - b. Yet love is “the greatest of these” virtues - **1 Co 13:13b**

[Why is love so highly valued by Paul? And if it is such a great virtue, how should we manifest in our lives? These questions I wish to address in this study, first by summarizing...]

I. THE GREATNESS OF LOVE

A. LOVE MOTIVATED GOD TO SAVE US...

1. Out of love for the world, God gave His Son - **Jn 3:16-17; 1 Jn 4:9-10**
2. The magnitude of God’s love is seen when we consider that it was expressed while we were yet sinners - **Ro 5:6-8**

B. LOVE MOTIVATED CHRIST TO DIE FOR US...

1. The Father’s love toward the Son motivated the Son to love us - **Jn 15:9**
2. Such love then motivated Christ to die for us - **Jn 15:13; Ep 5:2**

C. LOVE MOTIVATES US TO LIVE FOR CHRIST...

1. The love of Christ compelled Paul to live for Him - **2 Co 5:14-15**
2. Paul’s life of faith was thus influenced by Christ’s love for him - **Ga 2:20**

D. LOVE MOTIVATES US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER...

1. The love of Christ should inspire us to love one another - **Jn 13:34**
2. The love of God should likewise move us to love one another - **1 Jn 4:11**

[Love can and should be a very powerful, motivating force in our lives. We have seen how it prompted God and Christ to express their love for us. The greatness of love can also be seen in how we should express it in our lives...]

II. THE EXPRESSION OF LOVE

A. TOWARD GOD AND CHRIST...

1. By keeping the commandments of God and Christ - **Jn 14:15,21,23-24; 15:10,14**
 2. By loving our brethren in Christ - **Jn 15:12; 1 Jn 4:20-21**
- **Great is God’s love toward us; shall we not love God with great zeal in return?**

B. TOWARD OUR BRETHREN...

1. By helping them when they are in **physical** need - **1 Jn 3:16-18**
 - a. Providing as we have ability and opportunity
 - b. Loving them in deed and in truth
 2. By helping them when they are in **spiritual** need - **1 Pe 4:8; Ja 5:19-20**
 - a. Bringing them back to the Lord
 - b. Loving them with a truly fervent love
 3. By **setting the example** in loving God and keeping His commandments - **1 Jn 5:2**
 - a. If we truly love one another, we will encourage them by providing a good example
 - b. Only then can we really know that we love the children of God
- **Does our example express a proper measure of love toward our brethren?**

C. TOWARD OUR ENEMIES...

1. Remember that God loved us while we were still “enemies” - **Ro 5:6-10**
 - a. While we were “ungodly”
 - b. While we were “sinners”
 2. As children of God, we are to be like our Heavenly Father - **Mt 5:44-48**
 - a. Loving our enemies
 - b. Blessing those who curse us
 - c. Doing good to those who hate us
 - d. Praying for those who spitefully use us and persecute us
 3. Just as Jesus and Stephen did toward their persecutors - **Lk 23:34; Ac 7:60**
- **Loving the unlovable and ungrateful is the highest expression of love!**

CONCLUSION

1. The apostle Paul had experienced the greatness of God’s love...
 - a. In his own conversion, for which he was thankful - **1 Ti 1:12-16**
 - b. In enduring persecution, which gave him great hope - **Ro 8:35-39**
2. We too have experienced the greatness of God’s love...
 - a. In our own conversion...are we thankful?
 - b. In our daily living...presuming that we are walking in love!

Love is indeed the greatest of virtues. When properly understood and manifested in our lives, it serves as the basis for our **faith** and **hope**!

*“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”
- 1 Co 13:13*

Have you responded to the love of God by obeying the gospel of Christ? Are you walking in love, as Christ has loved us and given Himself for us (**Ep 5:2**)...?

Let Your Women Keep Silent

1 Corinthians 14:34-37

INTRODUCTION

1. In recent years the role of women has changed in many churches...
 - a. Many denominations now have women preachers, pastors, bishops, etc.
 - b. The trend is beginning to catch on in some churches of Christ
2. The scriptures certainly reveal that women were involved in the spread of the gospel...
 - a. It was foretold that women would prophesy - **Ac 2:15-18**
 - b. Philip had four daughters who prophesied - **Ac 21:8-9**
 - c. Instructions were given for when women prophesied - **1 Co 11:3-16**
 - d. Priscilla accompanied her husband Aquila in teaching Apollos - **Ac 18:26**
 - e. Older women were to teach the younger women - **Ti 2:3-5**
3. Yet there are scriptures that clearly place limitations on women...
 - a. In Paul's first epistle to Timothy - **1 Ti 2:11-12**
 2. In Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians - **1 Co 14:34-37**

[In this study, we shall examine Paul's remarks to the Corinthians (**1 Co 14:34-37**) by raising several questions that are commonly asked. The first question is...]

I. DOES THE PASSAGE APPLY TODAY?

A. SOME SAY IT DOES NOT...

1. They point out that the context describes a situation where women had husbands with the gift of prophecy - cf. **1 Co 14:29-33**
 2. Such women could (and should) ask questions of their inspired husbands at home
 3. Since we do not have inspired men today, some reason the passage does not apply
- **This view holds that Paul's comments were intended only for the circumstances at Corinth**

B. REASONS TO SAY THAT IT DOES...

1. Note the reason Paul gives for the women to ask their husbands at home
 - a. "for it is shameful for women to speak in church" - **1 Co 14:35b**
 - b. Why should wives of inspired men be silent?
 - c. Because it was shameful for women (i.e., women in general) to speak in church
 - 1) Not a **cultural** shame, for Corinth was known for its many priestesses
 - 2) But a **spiritual** shame, as even taught in the Law of Moses - cf. **1 Co 14:34b**
2. Paul makes a **specific application**, by appealing to a **general principle**
 - a. Evidently the prophets' wives were speaking out in the assembly
 - b. But it was shameful for women to speak in church (general principle)
 - c. So they are told to be silent and ask their husbands at home (specific application)
3. The general principle remains true, even if the specific circumstances are not present
 - a. Women are still to be submissive - **1 Co 14:34**
 - b. They are still not to teach or have authority over a man - cf. **1 Ti 2:11-12; 3:15**

- c. The principle applies whether it is in Europe (Corinth), Asia (Ephesus), or the USA
- 4. We are dealing with a command of the Lord, not Paul's personal bias
 - a. As Paul makes clear in succeeding verses - **1 Co 14:36-38**
 - b. We either acknowledge the Lord's command, or display our spiritual ignorance!
- **The context (immediate and remote) indicates this is a commandment of the Lord intended for all churches and for all times!**

[Having determined that we are dealing with something that applies today, we do well to ask...]

II. WHERE DOES THIS PASSAGE APPLY?

A. WHERE WOMEN ARE TO BE SILENT...

1. Note what Paul says:
 - a. "Let your women keep silent in the churches..." - **1 Co 14:34a**
 - b. "...for it is shameful for women to speak in church" - **1 Co 14:35b**
2. The place is "in the church" (literally, in the assembly)
 - a. When the congregation is assembled; e.g., "the whole church comes together in one place" - **1 Co 14:23a**
 - b. Not necessarily elsewhere, e.g., at the home - **1 Co 14:35a**
- **The principle applies whenever the whole church comes together in one place**

B. WHAT BEARING THIS MIGHT HAVE ON...

1. Bible classes - when the whole church **is not together** in one place?
2. Congregational business meetings - when the whole church **is together** in one place?
3. During announcements - when the whole church **is together** in one place?
- **Whenever the whole church is together, the principle should be followed**

[In seeking to apply this principle whenever the whole church is together, we do well to ask...]

III. WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE REQUIRE?

A. LET YOUR WOMEN KEEP SILENT...

1. Paul says "they are not permitted to speak" - **1 Co 14:34**
2. Not even to ask questions - **1 Co 14:35**
3. But to be as the tongue speaker without an interpreter: "let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God" - cf. **1 Co 14:28**
- **Clearly women are not to preach or teach when the church is assembled**

B. WHAT ABOUT WOMEN SINGING...?

1. We are commanded to sing praises and teach one another in song - **Ep 5:19; Co 3:16**
2. In **1 Co 14**, to "speak" means to "address the assembly" - cf. **1 Co 14:28-31**
 - a. Where the one who speaks is teaching or exercising authority "over" others
 - b. Which if a woman did so, would violate **1 Ti 2:11-12**
3. In congregational singing, women are not teaching or exercising authority "over" men
- **In congregational singing, women may join in the singing of praises**

CONCLUSION

1. I am fully aware that to place any limitation on the role of women sounds...

- a. “sexist”
 - b. “old fashioned”
 - c. “narrow-minded”
- **Many would say the same about the Biblical teaching on marriage and sex**

2. Yet we should be more concerned about...
- a. What the commandments of the Lord
 - b. What is truly “spiritual”
- **And so Paul’s admonition still holds true - cf. 1 Co 14:37-38**

Those who desire not to be spiritually ignorant and disobey the Lord Jesus, will do well to give heed to the teachings of His apostles, whose words are just as relevant today as they were in the first century...

“If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.”

- 1 Co 14:37

The Mystery Of The Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:50-53

INTRODUCTION

1. In his epistle to the Corinthians, Paul argued strongly for the resurrection of the dead...
 - a. He wondered how some could say there is no resurrection of the dead - **1 Co 15:12**
 - b. Indeed, if there is no resurrection, then even Christ is not risen! - **1 Co 15:13**
2. Paul proceeded to reveal much about the resurrection of the dead...
 - a. When and how it would happen
 - b. What kind of resurrected body there would be
3. Toward the end of his discourse on the resurrection (**1 Co 15:50-53**), he called it a “mystery”...
 - a. Not that it was hidden or unintelligible
 - b. But that what was revealed was previously unknown
 - c. Which is how the term “mystery” is often used in the NT - cf. **Ro 16:25-26; Ep 3:3-4**

[What is “**The Mystery Of The Resurrection**”? What has been revealed by Christ and His apostles about the resurrection, though it may have been hidden in times past? They certainly asserted...]

I. THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION

A. JESUS TAUGHT THERE WILL BE A RESURRECTION...

1. In which both those good and evil will come forth from the grave - **Jn 5:28-29**
2. Jesus promised that those who believe in Him will be raised - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**

B. HIS APOSTLES PROCLAIMED A RESURRECTION...

1. Peter and John “preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead” - **Ac 4:1-2**
2. Paul confessed his hope in the resurrection - **Ac 23:6; 24:15**
3. Paul asserted the necessity of the resurrection - **1 Co 15:12-23**
4. He taught the doctrine of the resurrection as a source of comfort - **1 Th 4:16-18**

[While there was a hope for the resurrection among the Jews (cf. **Ac 23:8**), that hope was made stronger by the teaching of Christ and His apostles. They also made clear...]

II. THE AGENT OF THE RESURRECTION

A. JESUS ATTRIBUTED IT TO “THE POWER OF GOD”...

1. As He reminded the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection - **Mt 22:29**
2. For of course, “with God nothing will be impossible” - cf. **Lk 1:37**

B. PAUL ALSO EMPHASIZED “THE POWER OF GOD”...

1. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead - **1 Co 6:14**
2. He who raised Jesus from the dead can certainly raise us up - **2 Co 4:14**

[It may be difficult for us to comprehend how the dead can be raised, but it is not difficult for God to do it (unless your God is too small!). Also taught by Christ and his apostles is...]

III. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE RESURRECTION

A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS...

1. “All who are in the graves will...come forth” - **Jn 5:28-29**
2. **Both** “those who have done good” **and** “those who have done evil” - **ibid.**
 - a. One to experience “a resurrection of life”
 - b. The other “a resurrection of condemnation”

B. PAUL TAUGHT ALL WOULD BE RAISED...

1. “both of the just and the unjust” - **Ac 24:15**
2. “for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” - **1 Co 15:21-22**

[The **fact**, **agent**, and **universality** of the resurrection had been taught in some measure by prophets of God prior to Christ and His apostles (cf. **Job 19:25-26; Dan 12:1-3**). But what had been a mystery and now more clearly revealed included...]

IV. THE TIME OF THE RESURRECTION

A. AT THE LAST DAY, WHEN THE LORD COMES AGAIN...

1. Jesus spoke again and again of raising the dead at “the last day” - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**
2. Paul wrote of it occurring when Jesus comes again, to deliver the kingdom to the Father, having destroyed the last enemy, death itself - **1 Co 15:22-26**
3. He later says that it will occur at “the last trumpet” - **1 Co 15:52**

B. WHAT ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATE RESURRECTIONS...?

1. Premillennialists (and perhaps others) teach there will be more than just one resurrection
 - a. All premillennialists teach at least two resurrections:
 - 1) The resurrection of believers at the **beginning** of the millennium
 - 2) The resurrection of unbelievers at the **end** of the millennium
 - b. Dispensational premillennialists add two more:
 - 1) The resurrection of tribulation saints at the end of the seven-year tribulation
 - 2) The resurrection of millennial saints at the end of the millennium
2. Yet the doctrine of several resurrections is found wanting for several reasons
 - a. The Bible presents the resurrection of believers and unbelievers as occurring together - **Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28-29; Ac 24:14-15; Re 20:11-15**
 - b. The Bible teaches that believers will be raised at “the last day”, not several times (and therefore several days, years, or a millennium) before the last day! - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**
 - c. Passages offered in support of several resurrections do not necessarily teach what premillennialists say they do
 - 1) E.g., **1 Th 4:13-16** concerns itself with the resurrection of the righteous, but that does not demand that the wicked are not being raised at the same time
 - 2) E.g., **Re 20:4-6** describes a resurrection of souls, not bodies, and the reigning with Christ is likely occurring in heaven, not on earth - cf. **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**

[Finally, what was truly a mystery concerning the resurrection but made clearer by Paul in our text is...]

V. THE BODY OF THE RESURRECTION

A. OUR BODY, GLORIOUSLY CHANGED AND DIFFERENT...!

1. Our physical body will serve as the “kernel” from which comes an incorruptible and immortal body in which to house the soul - **1 Co 15:35-37**
2. Our physical body...
 - a. Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption! - **1 Co 15:42**
 - b. Sown in dishonor, raised in glory! - **1 Co 15:43a**
 - c. Sown in weakness, raised in power! - **1 Co 15:43b**
 - d. Sown as a natural body, raised as a spiritual body! - **1 Co 15:44-49**
3. Those alive at Christ’s coming will undergo this change instantly
 - a. For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God - **1 Co 15:50**
 - b. So a change will take place in one instantaneous moment - **1 Co 15:51-52**
 - c. In which that which is corruptible and mortal will put on incorruption and immortality - **1 Co 15:53-54**

B. OUR BODY, GLORIOUSLY TRANSFORMED AND CONFORMED...!

1. That which is lowly (the body) will be transformed - **Ph 3:20-21**
2. It (the body) will be conformed to His glorious body (His resurrected body) - **ibid.**
3. How is possible?
 - a. “according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself”
 - b. In other words, by the power of God! - cf. **Mt 22:29**

CONCLUSION

1. There is probably much more about the resurrection that we would like to know...
2. But enough of “**The Mystery Of The Resurrection**” has been revealed...
 - a. To take away the sting of death, and the victory of Hades
 - b. To give us a victorious hope for the future
 - c. To motivate us to serve the Lord until He comes at the last day

“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” - 1 Co 15:55-57

*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”
- 1 Co 15:58*

Are you making it your aim to be ready for the glorious resurrection to come...?

Concerning The Collection

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

INTRODUCTION

1. Among many churches of Christ, visitors are often surprised to find...
 - a. That there is not a lot of passing the plate to “take up an offering”
 - b. A collection is taken only once on Sunday, the first day of the week
 - c. No collection is taken during other times, such as midweek services, or special events like gospel meetings (what some may call revivals)
2. The practice reflects a desire to follow the New Testament pattern...
 - a. Not just in giving, but in every aspect of church worship
 - b. To allow the example and principles found in the early church to guide us

[What exactly is revealed “Concerning The Collection” in the New Testament? With **1 Co 16:1-2** as the text for our study, let’s first review the...]

I. HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION

A. EARLY CHURCH NOTED FOR ITS LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER...

1. In the church at Jerusalem, the charity of its members was remarkable - **Ac 2:44-45**
2. Their liberality continued for sometime - **Ac 4:32-35**
3. Granted, there were extenuating circumstances that may explain why selling everything they had did not become normative for the church
4. But they demonstrate the extent to which brethren were willing to go

B. SUCH LOVE WENT BEYOND THE LOCAL CONGREGATION...

1. The church in Antioch took up a collection for the needy saints in Judea - **Ac 11:27-30**
2. The churches in Greece took up a collection for the saints in Jerusalem - **Ro 15:25-26**

C. A SYSTEMATIC COLLECTION WAS ESTABLISHED...

1. Paul gave instructions to churches in Galatia and Corinth - **1 Co 16:1**
2. A weekly collection, gathered on the first day of the week - **1 Co 16:2**

[Thus began a practice that remains to this day among churches of Christ. Note carefully now the...]

II. PURPOSE OF THE COLLECTION

A. TO PROVIDE FOR NEEDY CHRISTIANS...

1. It was “the collection for the saints” - **1 Co 16:1**
2. It was “for the poor among the saints” - **Ro 15:26**
3. It concerns “ministering to the saints” - **2 Co 9:1**
4. It “supplies the needs of the saints” - **2 Co 9:12**

B. BOTH LOCALLY AND ABROAD...

1. As the church in Jerusalem cared for its own - cf. **Ac 2,4,6**

2. As the churches in Antioch, Macedonia, Achaia, and Galatia cared for those in Jerusalem and Judea - cf. **Ac 11, Ro 15, 1 Co 16**

C. INCLUDING PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL...

1. Who were certainly worthy of their support - **1 Co 9:3-14**
2. Paul received support from various churches - **2 Co 11:8,9**
3. One can infer that such support came from the church treasury for needy saints
4. As individuals who devoted their full service to the Lord, becoming dependent on others for support, they would certainly qualify as “needy saints”

[For the work of **benevolence** and **evangelism**, it has become customary for the weekly collection to support what is the proper work of the church (including **edification**). Now consider the...]

III. BLESSINGS OF THE COLLECTION

A. THE GIVERS ARE BLESSED...

1. For it is more blessed to give than receive - **Ac 20:35**
2. Cheerful givers who sow bountifully will reap accordingly - **2 Co 9:6-7**
3. That they might have an abundance for even more good works - **2 Co 9:8-11**

B. THE RECIPIENTS ARE BLESSED...

1. The needs of the saints are supplied - **2 Co 9:12a**
2. They are filled with praise to God and longing for their brethren - **2 Co 9:13-14**

C. GOD IS BLESSED...

1. Such liberality abounds with many thanksgivings to God - **2 Co 9:11-15**
2. By the beneficiaries and those who witness it - **ibid.**

[Thus the collection for the saints has great potential for much good! Lastly, let’s review some...]

IV. GUIDELINES FOR THE COLLECTION

A. WHEN TO GIVE...

1. On the first day of the week - **1 Co 16:1**
2. The day in which disciples came together to break bread - **Ac 20:7**

B. HOW TO GIVE...

1. **Proportionately** - as one may prosper - **1 Co 16:2; 2 Co 8:12-13**
2. **Willingly** - with a willing mind, according to what one has - **2 Co 8:12**
3. **Purposefully** - with thought, as one purposes in his heart - **2 Co 9:7**
4. **Cheerfully** - not grudgingly, or of necessity - **2 Co 9:7**

C. EXAMPLES TO INSPIRE...

1. The Macedonians - who gave sacrificially, beyond their ability - **2 Co 8:1-7**
2. The Achaians - whose zeal stirred up many others to give - **2 Co 9:1-2**
3. Jesus Christ - who though rich, became poor, that we might be rich - **2 Co 8:9**

CONCLUSION

1. The practice of a weekly collection continued after the apostles died...

“On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. **And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.** But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead.” - **Justin Martyr**, First Apology (110-165 A.D.)

2. There is certainly good reason for it to continue today, for it is a practice...
- a. With apostolic approval
 - b. Free from coercion that often accompanies an appeal to give
 - c. Sufficient to supply the church with the funds to do its work

When one properly understands what is revealed in the Scriptures **“Concerning The Collection”**, a Christian will truly give as they have been prospered, with a cheerful heart and willing mind...

Act Like Men

1 Corinthians 16:13

INTRODUCTION

1. In **1 Co 16:13**, Paul commands the Corinthians to “be brave” (NKJV), also translated as...
 - a. “quit you like men” (ASV, KJV)
 - b. “**act like men**” (ESV, NASB)
 - c. “be courageous” (NRSV), “be men of courage” (NIV)
2. The Greek word is **andrizomai**, and is defined by **Thayer**...
 - a. to make a man of or make brave
 - b. to show one’s self a man, be brave
3. For our study, I would like to focus on the idea of acting like men...
 - a. What is involved in showing oneself to be a man (besides bravery)?
 - b. Especially as a man in Christ, what does it mean to be a real man?

[The answer is to be found in the New Testament, where men of God are often commanded to behave a certain way. For example, consider how a man of God should conduct himself...]

I. AS A BACHELOR

A. BE AN EXAMPLE TO OTHER CHRISTIANS...

1. This is the charge given to Timothy, who was single - **1 Ti 4:12**
 2. Likewise to Titus - **Ti 2:7**
 3. Even as Paul did himself - **1 Th 2:10**
- **A single man should provide an example of what it means to serve Christ**

B. USE YOUR FREEDOM FOR THE LORD...

1. Paul wrote that the unmarried can do more for the Lord - **1 Co 7:32-34**
 2. They do not have spousal and parental duties
- **A single man should utilize the extra time and energy they have for the Lord**

[Of course, many men do not remain bachelors, they marry and have a family. How then does one act like a man...]

II. AS A HUSBAND

A. LOVE YOUR WIFE...

1. Husbands are charged to love their wives - **Ep 5:25**
 2. As Christ loved the church - **Ep 5:25-27**
 3. As they love their own bodies - **Ep 5:28-29**
- **A real man is one who unselfishly loves his wife**

B. TREAT HER WITH RESPECT...

1. Render the affection that she is due - **1 Co 7:3-4**

2. Seek to understand her, give her honor - **1 Pe 3:7**
- **A real man is one who is considerate and seeks to exalt his wife**

[When children come along, acting like a man involves accepting responsibilities...]

III. AS A FATHER

A. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN...

1. Fathers have the duty to bring their children up in the ways of the Lord - **Ep 6:4**
2. As God expected of Abraham - **Gen 18:19**
3. As God command Israel - **Deu 6:6-7**
4. Providing the kind of leadership Joshua did for his family - **Josh 24:15**
- **Fathers who act like men will provide spiritual leadership for their children**

B. BE PATIENT WITH THEM...

1. Fathers are not to provoke their children to wrath - **Ep 6:4**
2. Fathers must not be so overbearing as to discourage their children - **Co 3:21**
3. This does not mean there is never discipline - **He 12:5-11**
- **Fathers who act like men will seek to provide the proper balance between love and discipline**

[Even after a man has become a husband and a father, acting like a man still involves some duties...]

IV. AS A SON

A. HONOR YOUR PARENTS...

1. A duty for all children - **Ep 6:1-2**
2. A duty that involves providing for them in old age - cf. **Mk 7:9-13**
- **A son acting like a man will not try to avoid caring for his parents**

B. SUPPORT YOUR WIDOWS...

1. Children (including sons) are to provide for their mothers and grandmothers - **1 Ti 5:4,16**
2. Failure to do so makes one worse than an unbeliever - **1 Ti 5:8**
- **A son will see that his mother or grandmother is cared for - e.g., Jn 19:25-26**

[Finally, some thoughts on what one acting like a man will be...]

V. AS A CHRISTIAN

A. EXERCISE YOURSELF TO GODLINESS...

1. So Paul charged Timothy - **1 Ti 4:7-8**
2. Which involves fleeing some things, while pursuing others - **1 Ti 6:11; 2 Ti 3:16-17**
 - a. Fleeing the love of money and youthful lusts - **1 Ti 6:10; 2 Ti 2:22; 1 Co 6:18**
 - b. Pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness - **1 Ti 6:11; 2 Ti 2:22**
- **A man of God will make every effort to be a true child of God**

B. UTILIZE YOUR GIFTS...

1. By God's grace, we each have gifts, differing abilities - **Ro 12:3-6**

2. We should therefore use them in service to one another - **Ro 12:6-8; 1 Pe 4:10-11**
- **A man of God will make the effort to discover his gift(s) and use them in service to the family of God**

CONCLUSION

1. More can certainly be said, for the scriptures are full of wisdom and instruction of what it means to be a real man of God
2. Sadly, the world often presents an entirely different picture of what it means to be a man, confusing **machismo** (exaggerated masculinity) with true **manliness**

As noted in the beginning, the word translated “act like men” conveys the idea of being “brave, courageous”. Will we who are men be brave enough to behave the way God wants us to, and not just imitate those “models of manhood” who are often spiritually and emotionally immature...?

“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” - 1 Ti 6:12

Addicted To The Ministry Of The Saints

1 Corinthians 16:15

INTRODUCTION

1. Many people have addictions to one thing or another...
 - a. Some are negative addictions: drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gambling, etc.
 - b. Some are positive addictions, such as exercise
2. In the KJV translation of **1 Co 16:15**, we read of a family with a very positive addiction...
 - a. "...ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia"
 - b. "...and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints"
3. The Greek word translated by the KJV as "addicted" is **tasso**...
 - a. Which literally means "to arrange in an orderly manner" - **Strong**
 - b. Most other translations render it as "devoted" (NKJV, NASB, NIV, etc.)
4. Playing on the word "addicted" (for the sake of illustration)...
 - a. If we are addicted to something, what a more noble habit?
 - b. Would it not be wonderful if we were all "addicted" to serving one another?

[In this lesson, we shall see why everyone should have such an addiction, and offer some suggestions on how to get hooked...!]

I. WHY BE ADDICTED TO THE MINISTRY OF THE SAINTS?

A. TO FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST...

1. When we bear one another's burdens, we fulfill the law of Christ - **Ga 6:1-2**
2. Thus we are encouraged to do good to another as we have opportunity - **Ga 6:10**
- **If addicted to the ministry of the saints, we are more likely to utilize our opportunities to fulfill the law of Christ!**

B. TO PROVE THAT WE HAVE THE LOVE OF GOD IN US...

1. We cannot have the love of God in us if we do not love one another - **1 Jn 4:20-21**
2. Loving the brethren indicates that we have passed from death to life - **1 Jn 3:14-20**
- **If addicted to the ministry of the saints, it is a positive sign that we are truly the children of God!**

C. TO FULFILL OUR PART IN THE BODY OF CHRIST...

1. God intends for members of the body to be concerned for one another - **1 Co 12:24-27**
2. For the body to grow as it should, every member must do its part - **Ep 4:15-16**
- **If addicted to the ministry of the saints, we will do our part in the body of Christ!**

[There are both personal and altruistic motives to becoming "addicted" to serving one another as brethren. That being so, here are some thoughts on...]

II. BECOMING ADDICTED TO THE MINISTRY OF THE SAINTS

A. GETTING ACQUAINTED IS REQUIRED...

1. **Will Rogers** once said, “I never met a man I didn’t like”
 2. Allow me to rephrase that: “I never loved a person I never met”
 3. Unless we know each other, there is little hope to becoming addicted to serving one another
 4. Getting acquainted requires some effort; how much?
 - a. More than just seeing each other for a few moments, once or twice a week
 - b. Whatever it takes so that when one is absent from one assembly, others are concerned
 5. It requires being given to hospitality - cf. **Ro 12:13**
 - a. What I knew growing up as “southern hospitality”
 - b. Not the cold, hands off, keep your distance, attitude so prevalent in some circles
 - c. But the love of strangers that opens heart and home, and turns them into friends
 - d. A willingness to visit, and be visited
 - e. Truly believing in the phrase “mi casa, su casa” (my house is your house)
- **We must know each other well enough to like one another if we are going to be truly concerned about each other**

B. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR BECOMING ADDICTED...

1. For addictions to be developed, habits must be formed
 2. Make it a habit to learn the names of the members and others who visit frequently
 - a. Learn a new name each week
 - b. Greet those you know by name each week - cf. **3 Jn 14**
 - c. Continue until you know everyone by name
 3. Make it a habit to practice hospitality with one another - cf. **1 Pe 4:9**
 - a. Invite people into your home, or out for dinner
 - b. Accept invitations when offered, for hospitality is a two-way street!
 4. Whatever abilities you have, use them in service to your brethren - cf. **1 Pe 4:10-11**
 - a. For the goal is to become addicted to **servicing** our brethren
 - b. Whether it be serving through teaching, helping, etc.
- **The more we know one another, and the more we grow in our abilities to serve, the easier it is to become addicted to the ministry of the saints**

CONCLUSION

1. The family of Stephanas left behind a wonderful reputation...
 - a. They were devoted to the ministry of the saints - **1 Co 16:15**
 - b. They made Paul glad and refreshed his spirit when they came to him - **1 Co 16:17-18**
2. What kind of reputation will we leave behind...?
 - a. Devoted to serving our brethren with love and zeal?
 - b. Or unwilling to render loving service because we were too busy or disinterested?

May we all become **“Addicted To The Ministry Of The Saints”**...!