

Divisions in the Church 1 Corinthians 1:1-17

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Spiritual gifts do not make believers spiritual.

2. Baptism is not necessary for salvation.

Practical Application

1. Watch out for a sectarian spirit.

Questions

1. When was the church at Corinth founded?

2. When did Paul write this epistle to the Corinthian church? What prompted his writing?

3. What good news did Paul commend the Corinthians for?

4. What makes a believer spiritual?

5. What is the purpose of baptism?

Answers

1. During Paul's second missionary journey, in the early 50s A.D.
2. Paul wrote to the Corinthians during his third missionary journey, while staying in Ephesus. Some folks from Chloe's family had visited or written to Paul there about quarrels in the church at Corinth.
3. The Corinthian believers were set apart for God. They were enriched with spiritual gifts. They were eagerly awaiting the return of the Lord.
4. A believer is spiritual when the fruit of the Spirit is evident in that believer's life.
5. When you are baptized as a believer you are publicly announcing that you are now a Christian and you have identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Discuss / Consider

1. Division and lack of unity was a common problem in the Corinthian church and in many churches today. In fact, many unbelievers say they are turned off to church because of this hypocrisy. How is the feeling of unity among your local body of believers? What can you personally do to promote unity?

2. Spiritual gifts do not make a believer spiritual, but the Fruit of the Spirit does. See Galatians 5:22-23. How is the Fruit of the Spirit seen in your life? How can you grow the fruit this week?

Challenge

1. It is not wrong to enjoy listening to certain preachers or teachers because their ministry has been a help to you. But be careful not to cross the line into factions and divisions.

Understanding the Message of the Cross
1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The message of the cross is foolishness and powerless for the unbeliever.

2. The message of the cross is the wisdom and power of God for the believer.

Practical Application

1. If you're well off in this world, be glad for the letter "m."

2. Let's boast in the Lord.

Questions

1. What do we know about the ancient city of Corinth?

2. Why is unity within the Church so crucial?

3. What is the true message of the cross?

4. Give at least two Old Testament examples of God making foolish the wisdom of the world.

5. When is it okay to boast?

Answers

1. Corinth was a pagan society which was characterized by idolatry and immorality. It was a port city and wealthy center of commerce, and the Corinthians were known for their loose living.
2. Divisions and cliques within the Church fracture the visible body of Christ, tear down the testimony of Christ, and ultimately split the Church. Ephesians 4:3 says we must be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
3. The message of the cross, properly understood, is a message of self-renunciation and dying to self and serving others. The Corinthian believers were putting too much emphasis on the wisdom and glory of man.
4. The Tower of Babel and Israel's alliance with Egypt against Assyria.
5. When you are boasting in the Lord!

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss how a proper understanding of the message of the cross would eliminate the divisions in the church at Corinth and in any Christian fellowship today.

2. The unbeliever thinks that the message of the cross is foolish and weak - he cannot understand it! Reflect on the message of the cross and salvation. Then take a few minutes to thank God for enlightening your mind to this truth.

Challenge

1. Are you glad that God doesn't say that not any wise, mighty, or noble people are called to salvation? He says not many. Thank Him for calling you.

The Wisdom of This World Contrasted with the Wisdom of God
1 Corinthians 2

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is both the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of God.

2. There is both the natural man and the spiritual man.

Practical Application

1. Don't say, "It's too deep for me!"

Questions

1. What was the root of the problem that was causing disunity and divisions in the Corinthian church?

2. What was Paul's attitude when he went to Corinth?

3. How does James 3:15-17 relate to this passage?

4. What is a "mystery" in the Bible?

5. Who is the "natural man" of 1 Corinthians 2:14?

6. Who is the "spiritual man"?

Answers

1. The Corinthian Christians did not properly understand the message of the cross and the ways of God.
2. Paul was determined to present God's truth in God's way—not with impressive eloquence and worldly wisdom, but in a simple, straightforward, humble presentation—depending totally on the Holy Spirit and the power of God for results.
3. It further defines the wisdom of man as earthly, sensual, and demonic, and the wisdom of God as pure, peaceable, and gentle.
4. A biblical mystery is truth that was hidden in Old Testament times, but has now been revealed with the coming of Christ and New Testament times.
5. The natural man is the unbeliever who does not understand the truth that God has revealed.
6. The spiritual man is the mature believer who is led and taught by the Holy Spirit.

Discuss / Consider

1. The wisdom of God involves God's plan and purpose for mankind and the world, which is centered in Christ. How are we as believers able to understand this wisdom? This is related to the Holy Spirit's actions of revelation, inspiration, and illumination.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 2:9—the blessings of our inheritance are available to believers now! What are some of these blessings? Discuss how you can experience and enjoy them now.

Challenge

1. If you're a believer you have the Holy Spirit in you to help you understand the things of God. God did not give His Word to hide the truth from you, but to reveal His truth to you! So study what God says and thank the Holy Spirit for His help!

The Spiritual Christian and the Carnal Christian
1 Corinthians 3

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. A believer can decide to be either spiritual or carnal.

2. A believer can decide to build for either reward or loss.

Practical Application

1. Don't deceive yourself.

Questions

1. What is the difference between having spiritual gifts and being spiritual?

2. Review the contrast between the spiritual man and the natural man in 1 Corinthians 2.

3. What category did the Corinthian believers fall into when they chose not to be spiritual?

4. Why can believers still be carnal or fleshly?

5. What building is being built in 1 Corinthians 3? What is the foundation for this building?

Answers

1. Spiritual gifts are received as part of the package of salvation and are developed with use. Being spiritual is a matter of walking in close fellowship with the Lord and obeying His Word.
2. The natural man is the unbeliever who does not understand God's Word or God's ways. The spiritual man is the mature believer who is led by the Holy Spirit to understand the Word and ways of God.
3. They were in the category of carnal or worldly believers who could only handle the milk of God's word.
4. Because Christians still have the flesh, the sinful nature. We now have new natures in Christ, but until we get our resurrected bodies, we also have the sinful nature.
5. The building here is the Church. The foundation of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. When a believer today chooses to walk according to the flesh, rather than according to the Spirit, the result will be like that in Corinth. There will be jealousy, strife, and division in the body of Christ. We will be worldly in our thinking and selfish in our ministry. And we will be rewarded according to our actions. How do these thoughts motivate you to walk according to the Spirit?

2. Review the three categories of builders in the Church. We see that these builders correspond to the three categories of people: natural, spiritual, and carnal.

Challenge

1. As you go through this week, think about the building materials that you are using to build upon the foundation of Christ. Will these materials withstand fire? Will you receive reward?

Paul Exhorts the Corinthians Not to Judge or Boast
1 Corinthians 4

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Everything we do will be reviewed, so don't judge now.
2. Everything we have has been received, so don't boast now.
3. Everything we are is being reviled, so don't reign now.

Practical Application

1. Can we say as Paul said, "Imitate me"?

Questions

1. Why is Paul's epistle to the Corinthians good for us to study today?
2. What does it mean to be a steward of the mysteries of God?
3. What was Paul's point in mentioning Apollos in verse 6?
4. What tone was Paul using when he wrote verses 8-10?
5. Why did Paul want to warn the Corinthians that he was coming to see them?

Answers

1. Because the Corinthian church was not a perfect church. No church is perfect, so we can all learn from Paul's exhortations.
2. It means we are responsible to care for the truth that God has revealed to us.
3. Paul used himself and Apollos as examples of the fact that the Corinthian Christians were wrongly picking favorite speakers and leaders and as a result were creating divisions in the church.
4. Paul was using irony to communicate his point that the carnal and worldly Corinthian believers did not have the right viewpoint and lifestyle that Christians should have now.
5. Because as their spiritual father he wanted to come to them with love and gentleness, but because of their arrogance and carnality, he might have to come to them with a rod of discipline if they continued in their worldly ways.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss how focusing on our role as stewards of God's truth can keep us from being judgmental. Remember that the Lord is the Judge, and He will review our actions and motives.

2. "The cross must come before the crown." Discuss what you have learned in this lesson that would contradict the "health and wealth" gospel that says all Christians deserve prosperity in this life. Review 1 Corinthians 4:8-13, and also refer to 2 Timothy 3:12 and 1 John 3:13.

Challenge

1. Do you say to your children or others you influence, "Do as I say, not as I do"? Or can you say as Paul, "Imitate me"?

Discipline for Immorality within the Church **1 Corinthians 5**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Churches should put out of fellowship believers who continue in sin.**

- 2. Christians should not have fellowship with believers who continue in sin.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's clean out the old leaven.**

Questions

1. What terrible sin was being practiced by one of the Corinthian believers?
2. What was the Corinthian church's response to this sin in their midst?
3. What is the highest form of church discipline?
4. What is the purpose of church discipline?
5. Explain 1 Corinthians 5:5
6. Should we separate ourselves from all Christians who sin?

Answers

1. One of the Christian men was living in incest with his stepmother. Such a sin was prohibited in Old Testament Law as well as Roman law.
2. The Corinthian church was wrongly taking not only a tolerant attitude toward the whole situation, but an arrogant attitude as well.
3. Excommunication, or putting someone out of fellowship with the church
4. Discipline from the church is meant to help the believer, just as good parents discipline their children in love. The ultimate goal of church discipline is always restoration.
5. When a person is put out of fellowship, he is put out into the realm of the world which is Satan's domain. As a result, the sinner reaps what he sows.
6. Of course not, because we all sin. But we should break fellowship with believers who are living a life of flagrant sin and are unwilling to repent of their sin.

Discuss / Consider

1. Church discipline is not a popular subject, nor a practice often followed today. Yet the process is biblical and is crucial for the health of the church. Discuss whether your thinking has changed in the area of church discipline.

2. Christians should not have fellowship with believers who continue in sin. The act of breaking fellowship with an unrepentant believer is very difficult, but it is an act of love. Have you ever had cause to make such a decision? What was the result?

Challenge

1. We must clean out of our lives and churches all known sin which will spread like leaven and corrupt the body of Christ. Let's live our lives as holy people.

Teachings about Lawsuits and The Temple of the Holy Spirit
1 Corinthians 6

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **Because believers will judge the world, they should not sue fellow believers.**

2. **Because believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit, they should glorify God with their bodies.**

Practical Application

1. **Don't let people say in a negative way, "There goes the temple of the Holy Spirit."**

Questions

1. What is the theme of 1 Corinthians?
2. What two additional problems of the Corinthian church are addressed in this chapter?
3. When will saints judge the world and angels?
4. Why did Paul mention the fact that Christians will judge the world and judge angels?
5. What does 1 Corinthians 3:16 teach about the temple of the Holy Spirit?
6. What does 1 Corinthians 6:19 teach about the temple of the Holy Spirit?

Answers

1. Christian conduct
2. The problem of litigation and the problem of moral laxity
3. Believers will rule with Christ during His thousand-year reign on earth. We will be involved with Christ in the judgment of these fallen angels—probably after the millennium.
4. To emphasize how inconsistent it was for Christians to go to court against one another
5. That verse teaches that the temple of the Holy Spirit is the Church, composed of all believers. The Holy Spirit dwells in the midst of the Church which is the body of Christ.
This verse teaches that the body of each individual believer is the temple
6. This verse teaches that the body of each individual believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you ever been in a legal dispute with another believer? Were you able to settle this dispute within the church without going to court? The Apostle Paul said that it was better to be cheated than to go to court!

2. In this chapter, Paul addresses questionable activities that are permissible in of themselves, but may not be good to practice because they might stumble or offend weaker believers, or might even become an addiction. Discuss activities that fall into this category. How have you personally decided to handle these issues?

Challenge

1. In our culture, having a biblical view of sex is not very popular. Yet our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit! What can you do to re-enforce the right view of sex to your kids and family this week?

Responsibilities and Regulations for Marriage **1 Corinthians 7:1-16**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Marriage as God intended it has its responsibilities

2. Marriage as God intended it has its regulations.

Practical Application

1. Remember, you don't have to get married!

Questions

1. How does Paul's epistle to the Corinthians change with this chapter?
2. Is it more holy to be celibate or to be married?
3. Is divorce a biblical option in the case of an unhappy marriage?
4. When a husband or wife gets saved should they divorce or separate from the unbelieving spouse?
5. Explain 1 Corinthians 7:14.

Answers

1. In the first six chapters Paul wrote about certain problems in the church at Corinth which had been reported to him. Now here in Chapter 7 he begins to answer questions that the Corinthians themselves had raised in a letter that they had written to Paul.
2. Paul wrote that it was good and even commendable to stay single and celibate as he was. However, celibacy is not for everyone. If God did not give you the gift of celibacy, then it is good and proper to get married.
3. No, see 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.
4. Absolutely not. Many times, the unbelieving spouse may get saved because of the life and testimony of the believing spouse. If the unbelieving spouse insists on leaving the marriage, the believing spouse should let them leave.
5. God sees a household in which one spouse has become a believer, as sanctified, not saved, but set apart and special because of the Christian influence in the home.

Discuss / Consider

1. Husbands and wives should not use sex as a weapon or bargaining chip. Discuss why communication breakdowns often lead to problems in the area of sex.

2. A mixed marriage between a believer and unbeliever is certainly a tough situation. How can you encourage someone you know who is in such a marriage?

Challenge

1. It's okay not to be married. In fact, if you can handle it, celibacy is good because in general you can be more efficient and dedicated in serving the Lord, because you are free from family responsibilities.

Further Teaching on Marriage and Celibacy
1 Corinthians 7:17-40

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Decisions about change should be made in light of one's call.**

- 2. Decisions about marriage should be made in light of one's call.**

Practical Application

- 1. If you marry, marry in the Lord.**

Questions

1. Explain Paul's statements in verses 12 and 25.
2. What is Paul's point in verses 25-35.
3. What "present distress" was Paul speaking of in verse 26?
4. What would be the benefits of remaining unmarried?

Answers

1. Paul's point is that in the gospel record when the Lord Jesus spoke about marriage, He did not address these questions.
2. Celibacy is desirable, but not demanded.
3. At that time there was some kind of persecution or difficult circumstances in Corinth that were not conducive for married life.
4. Married life has responsibilities and concerns that could take away from full commitment to the Lord's work. If you remain single you can be more efficient and dedicated in serving the Lord, because you are free from family responsibilities.

Discuss / Consider

1. In 1 Corinthians 7:17, Paul expanded his directives on marriage into a more general principle: When you become a Christian, start where you are. Don't expect a big change in your circumstances. How has the Lord used your background and experiences to bring about a blessing for you?

2. "Decisions about marriage should be made in light of one's call." Discuss the benefits and disadvantages of remaining single as a Christian.

Challenge

1. It is important not only to marry a Christian, but to marry in the Lord's will. Wait for God's choice!

The Proper Use of Christian Liberty
1 Corinthians 8

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The right use of Christian liberty involves knowledge and love.**

- 2. The wrong use of Christian liberty involves sin against Christ.**

Practical Application

- 1. Don't think "Me first!"**

Questions

1. What is Christian liberty?
2. What are two possible dangers with Christian liberty?
3. What controversial issue were the Corinthians facing in this chapter?
4. What was Paul's answer to this important question?
5. How does Christian love affect our use of Christian liberty?
6. What is the difference between a weak brother and a legalistic brother?

Answers

1. We obtain and experience Christian liberty when we become Christians. We are free from the penalty of sin, free from the Law, and free to enjoy our new life in Christ.
2.
 - a. We don't stand firm in our Christian liberty. We may slide back into legalism and think we are more spiritual if we keep man-made rules.
 - b. We let our liberty go to license, thinking we can now sin all we want.
3. Whether to eat meat which was left over from pagan sacrifices.
4. Because of Christian liberty, it was okay to eat the meat, since idols are just wood and stone and the Corinthians knew that they were not real gods.
5. If you love God and are in fellowship with Him, you will love your fellow believers and properly use your Christian liberty. You will not flaunt your Christian liberty and stumble a weaker brother in their Christian growth
6. A weaker brother has a tender conscience concerning certain things because of lack of knowledge and past experience. A legalist is not a weaker brother but has a set of rules that he keeps and expects every other Christian to keep.

Discuss / Consider

1. Although you may not face a decision about eating meat offered to idols, as Christians today we do face many areas of moral indifference. Can you give an example of this and discuss how to properly use your Christian liberty?

2. What should your response be when you have exercised your Christian liberty and inadvertently stumbled a weaker brother?

Challenge

1. An important guideline in exercising your Christian liberty is to put the needs of others before your own. Don't think "Me first!"

Financial Support of Christian Workers
1 Corinthians 9:1-14

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Believers involved in Christian ministry have the right to financial remuneration

Practical Application

1. Be an intelligent donor.

Questions

1. What issue does Paul address in the previous chapter, 1 Corinthians 8?
2. How does this chapter relate to Christian liberty?
3. How were some of the Corinthians trying to undermine Paul's authority as an apostle?
4. How is the principle of financial support of the Lord's servants taught in the Old Testament law?
5. Give at least two biblical principles to guide your giving to Christian ministries.

Answers

1. Christian liberty. The Corinthians had questions about eating meat which had been offered to pagan idols.
2. Paul gives an illustration from his own life of the principle of giving up one's rights and restricting oneself in the interest of other believers, and for the sake of the Lord and the gospel.
3. They claimed that Paul was not a true apostle because he was not being supported financially by the Corinthian church.
4. Deuteronomy 25:4 gives a principle that is not only for oxen. Also, just as the priests and Levites were supported by the people in the Old Testament, so the Lord's servants today should be supported by the Lord's people.
5. Give to ministries that have been a blessing in your own life. b. Give to ministries that emphasize the gospel.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the right that believers in Christian ministry have to financial remuneration. Think of the Christian ministries you are involved in. Do they have a proper attitude toward supporting the workers?

Challenge

1. Are you an intelligent donor?

How to Be a Successful Christian Servant
1 Corinthians 9:15-27

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Christian servants should practice self-denial.**

- 2. Christian servants should practice accommodation**

- 3. Christian servants should practice self-discipline.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's earn the right to be heard!**

Questions

1. What was Paul teaching in the first half of Chapter 9?
2. Was Paul receiving financial support from the Corinthians?
3. How were some of the Corinthians trying to undermine Paul's authority as an apostle?
4. Why is Paul committed to preaching the gospel, regardless of whether he receives financial support?
5. What happens when athletes do not practice self-discipline?

Answers

1. Christian workers have the right to receive financial remuneration for their service in the Lord's work.
2. No, Paul had given up this right when ministering to the Corinthians, so no questions could be raised as to his true motives for preaching the gospel.
3. They claimed that Paul was not a true apostle because he was not being supported financially by the Corinthian church.
4. Because there will be an eternal reward from the Lord. And he is obligated before the Lord to preach the gospel because this is part of the stewardship that has been entrusted to him.
5. They will not be winners.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the difference between compromise and accommodation. How can you practice accommodation as you seek to serve others with the gospel?

2. Discuss Paul's illustration of athletes practicing self-discipline. Discuss areas of life in which Christian servants should practice self-discipline.

Challenge

1. When non-believers look at you do they see you practicing self-denial, accommodation, and self-discipline? Have you earned the right to be heard?

A Warning for Christians
1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The events from Egypt to Canaan are a spiritual picture of God's people.**

- 2. The events from Egypt to Canaan are a spiritual warning to God's people.**

Practical Application

- 1. Look for the way of escape.**

Questions

1. Review the teaching on Christian liberty in the last few chapters.
2. How do the Children of Israel fit into the surrounding context?
3. What is a "type"?
4. Why were the manna and water from the rock called "spiritual" food?
5. Why is the account of the Children of Israel a warning for us as believers?

Answers

1. In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul began a teaching on the proper use of Christian liberty. As believers, we enjoy certain freedoms in Christ. However Christian liberty does not free us from the moral laws of God and even in non-moral areas we should restrict our Christian liberty so that weaker believers are not stumbled in their growth. In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul gave himself as an example of restricting Christian liberty in the interest of serving the Lord and His people. He showed that serving the Lord and using Christian liberty in the proper way takes a lot of self-denial and self-discipline
2. Paul uses the Children of Israel and their Wilderness Wandering as a negative example. They did not practice self-denial and self-discipline and were thus disqualified from entering the Promised Land.
3. A type is an Old Testament person, place, thing, or event, which illustrates a New Testament truth.
4. This real food and drink were spiritual because they were pictures of Christ as the living bread from heaven and the living water for our souls
5. So that we don't make the same mistakes that the Children of Israel made and fall short of the blessings and victories God has for us.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the Children of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan. How is their journey a picture of the Christian life?

2. Do you need to heed the warning of the Children of Israel? Are you wandering in the wilderness of Christian experience? Review 1 Corinthians 10:5-12.

Challenge

1. Praise our faithful God—He always provides a way of escape. Memorize the threefold promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13.

The Proper Use of Christian Liberty
1 Corinthians 10:14-33

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Celebrating the Lord's Supper portrays the unity of the Christian body.
2. Considering the Lord's Body governs the use of Christian liberty.

Practical Application

1. Would you go to New Orleans for Mardi Gras?

Questions

1. Was it alright for the Corinthian believers to eat food that had been dedicated to idols?
2. How did Paul address the danger of Christian liberty turning into license?
3. Since it was alright to eat meat offered to idols, was it alright to participate in the Greek/Roman feasts?
4. Explain 1 Corinthians 10:23.

Answers

1. Yes, there was plenty of liberty for believers in this area. However, their Christian liberty should be restricted if there was the possibility that a weaker, less mature, Christian might be stumbled and hindered in their Christian growth as a result.
2. Paul taught that the Christian life involves self-restraint, self-denial, and self-discipline. He used himself as a positive example of this and the Children of Israel as a negative example.
3. No, this was idolatry. The food itself was not evil or contaminated, and the idols themselves were only wood and stone. But participating in the pagan feasts and eating there identified the person with the whole idolatrous system, which was demonic.
4. This verse is not saying that any sinful activity is lawful. This is talking about non-moral areas.

Discuss / Consider

1. When we participate in the Lord's Supper, we share in fellowship with each other and with the Lord Himself. What is your attitude towards the Lord's Supper? Do you value this time?

2. Discuss the two guidelines to keep in mind when practicing your Christian liberty. First, we should not stumble weaker fellow believers. Secondly, we should try not to offend anyone- whether it be unbelievers or believers in the Church.

Challenge

1. You will encounter decisions involving your Christian liberty this week. Be aware of them and consider this teaching.

Recognizing God’s Authority Structure in the Church **1 Corinthians 11:1-16**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Recognizing God’s structure of authority in the Church brings glory to God.**

- 2. Recognizing God’s structure of authority in the Church brings glory to mankind.**

Practical Application

- 1. Don’t pull the “traditions” of verse 2 out of context.**

Questions

1. How does 1 Corinthians 11:1 fit into the context?
2. What is God’s structure of authority in the Church?
3. Review the symbols practiced in the New Testament church.
4. How does 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 argue against the view that head coverings were strictly cultural?
5. What “traditions” was Paul speaking of in 1 Corinthians 11:2?

Answers

1. Verse 1 is really a conclusion of Chapter 10, where Paul was addressing Christian liberty.
2. God the Father to Christ, the Head of the Church, to man, to woman
Water used in baptism, bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper, and
3. Water used in baptism, bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper, and the head covering used in public worship
4. This argument from Creation transcends cultural. Since this structure was established at Creation, it applies to all cultures.
5. These were the central teachings and doctrines of the Christian faith that Paul had communicated to the Corinthians.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review the 4 common views on the head covering. Is this your first time to learn this teaching? How will you respond?
 - a. The head covering is strictly cultural.
 - b. The head covering was a cultural symbol for a transcultural principle.
 - c. The head covering is a transcultural symbol for a transcultural principle and the transcultural symbol is the covering of the hair.
 - d. The head covering is a transcultural symbol for a transcultural principle and the transcultural symbol is the covering in addition to the hair.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 11:3. It is critical to remember that subordination does not mean inferiority. Christ, the Son of God was subordinate to God the Father, but He was in no way inferior. Likewise within the function and roles of the Church, women are to be subordinate to men. Can you handle this teaching?

Challenge

1. Think about this- angels learn about God's glory and proper submission to authority by watching us! What an important role we have!

**A Rebuke for Abuses of the Lord's Supper
1 Corinthians 11:17-34**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Treating the Lord's Supper lightly brings dishonor to the Lord.

2. Treating the Lord's Supper lightly brings discipline from the Lord.

Practical Application

1. Don't jump to hasty conclusions concerning sick Christians.

Questions

1. What is the topic of 1 Corinthians 11?
2. What kind of problems were the Corinthians having with public worship?
3. How did the Corinthians celebrate the Lord's Supper?
4. How were the Corinthians abusing the love feast?
5. Who takes part in the New Covenant?
6. True or False: When a believer unexpectedly dies, it is a punishment from God for sin.

Answers

1. Public worship in the church
2. Problems recognizing God's structure of authority in the church and problems celebrating the Lord's Supper
3. In the early church, the Lord's Supper was celebrated in connection with a fellowship meal called the love feast.
4. They were not drawing enough distinction between the love feast and the Lord's Supper and thus they were lowering the important significance of the Lord's Supper. Others were getting drunk at the love feast, not sharing with one another, and not waiting to eat together.
5. The New Covenant was made with Israel (Jeremiah 31), and it will be kept with Israel (Romans 11). The blessings of the New Covenant have been extended to all believers (Hebrews 8).
6. We cannot know for certain, and we shouldn't jump to hasty conclusions.

Discuss / Consider

1. Praise the Lord that the atoning work of Christ was finished on the cross! The Lord's Supper remembers and proclaims Christ's finished work. Do you celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly? Do you use the opportunity to remember Christ's work for you?

2. Discuss how you should prepare yourself for the Lord's Supper. What does it mean to take communion "in an unworthy manner"?

Challenge

1. Spend some time in reflection and prayer to prepare yourself for taking the Lord's Supper this week.

The Proper Use of Spiritual Gifts
1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Spiritual gifts are given in diversity by the One Triune God.**

- 2. Spiritual gifts are given for edification by the sovereign will of God.**

Practical Application

- 1. Split your church rather than split your church!**

Questions

1. Name the 4 key New Testament chapters addressing spiritual gifts.
2. Why are believers given spiritual gifts?
3. How were the Corinthian believers misusing their spiritual gifts?
4. What is the true test of whether a spiritual manifestation is from God or not?
5. List and describe the spiritual gifts mentioned in this section (we will see more later).

Answers

1. Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4
2. For the edification, or building up, of the Church, the Body of Christ
3. Some were claiming spiritual authority if they had certain sign gifts and placing more emphasis on these gifts. Because of their pagan background, some Corinthians were confused as to what spiritual manifestations were of God and what were not of God.
4. The test of Jesus—No one speaking by the Holy Spirit will deny that Jesus is fully God and fully man and Lord. See also 1 John 4:2-3.
5. The word of wisdom—insight into divine truth The word of knowledge—the ability to communicate divine truth The gift of faith—an unusual measure of trust in the Lord’s ability to answer prayer and remove obstacles to the ministry and provide for the needs of God’s people The gift of healing—the miraculous power to heal diseases and restore to health The gift of miracles—the ability to exercise power temporarily over natural laws and over evil spiritual powers The gift of prophecy—the ability to receive and communicate a message from God for His people The gift of discerning spirits—special sensitivity to false teaching and false teachers The gift of tongues—the ability to speak the things of God in unlearned, foreign languages The gift of interpretation—the ability to translate the languages of the gift of tongues.

Discuss / Consider

1. Not only are there diversities of gifts, but varieties of ministries as well. Discuss how your spiritual gift can be used in different ways. There are not only diversities of gifts and ministries, but also diversities of working, or activity—the effect of the gifts when they are being used properly. What effects have you seen when you used your spiritual gift?

2. God is sovereign, and He decides who gets which spiritual gifts. Have you ever felt prideful or even disappointed with your spiritual gift? Don’t! Trust God and use your gift to build up the church.

Challenge

1. Don’t know what your spiritual gift is? Look over the options, pray about it, and ask others what they think it is. If you are a believer, God has given you at least one spiritual gift.

The Body of Christ Has Many Members
1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is one body with many members.

2. There is one body with many gifts.

Practical Application

1. Don't infect your church with hand, foot, and mouth disease.

Questions

1. What truths about spiritual gifts were taught in the first half of 1 Corinthians 12?

2. When do we receive our natural talents? When do we receive our spiritual gifts?

3. When are believers baptized by the Holy Spirit?

4. What are the foundational gifts of the church

Answers

1. There is a diversity of spiritual gifts given by God, but they are all for the edification of the Church. All believers have at least one spiritual gift and it has been determined and given by God's sovereign will on an individual basis.
2. We were born with our natural talents which should be dedicated to the Lord when we become believers. But we were given our spiritual gifts at salvation.
3. The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the Body of Christ at the time of salvation.
4. Apostles and prophets

Discuss / Consider

1. Review and discuss the illustrations Paul gives comparing the church with a body. Does your body or local church need to learn some of these truths? a. vs. 14-16 Every believer is a member with a function that has already been predetermined. b. vs. 17-19 If the body was just one member it would be dysfunctional and helpless. c. vs. 20-22 Every member of the body is needed—even the weak and unattractive members. d. vs. 23-27 Mutual care and respect of the members is expected.

Challenge

1. It can be very damaging to a church if the members are jealous of one another's gifts and try to function outside of their capacity. Use the gift that God has given you and build up your local church!

The Great Love Chapter 1 Corinthians 13

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Love is more important than having spiritual gifts.**

- 2. Love is more important than doing Christian service.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's put away our childish things.**

Questions

1. How does this chapter fit into the subject of spiritual gifts?
2. How was the Corinthian church like a dysfunctional body?
3. Discuss the various views of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, specifically addressing the meaning of verse 10.
4. What is agape love?

Answers

1. Love is essential for the proper use of spiritual gifts.
2. There was jealousy of one another's gift, pride and self-display, the wrong emphasis on certain spiritual gifts, and a despising of the less dramatic gifts.
3. a. The more traditional view says this refers to the eternal state. At that time there will be no more need for spiritual gifts, and they will cease. Love will continue, because love is eternal. b. In the other view, the need for the special gifts Paul mentions, prophecy, tongues, and knowledge, would cease when the New Testament was complete. These gifts would not be needed then because the full revelation of God in Scripture would be complete.
4. This Greek word for love means "a determined denial of self in the interest of others." Agape love is more of an act of the will than of the emotions. It is the kind of love that God has shown us (1 John 4:10). Agape love is the kind of love that we are to show others.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss: Love is more important than having a spiritual gift.

2. Agape love is defined by what it does and doesn't do. Read through 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 slowly and examine your heart in reference to your relationship with your spouse, your family, and your fellow believers.

Challenge

1. Where are you in your growth as a Christian? Put away the childish things and be a mature believer who shows agape love.

The Spiritual Gifts of Tongues and Prophecy **1 Corinthians 14:1-25**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The gift of prophecy is greater for the church than the gift of tongues.**

- 2. The gift of tongues should be limited in the church, but not condemned.**

Practical Application

- 1. It's okay to say "Amen" at church.**

Questions

1. What is the topic of 1 Corinthians 12-14?
2. What is the best way to find out your spiritual gift?
3. What is the point of 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1?
4. Why is the gift of tongues not as great as the spiritual gift of prophecy?
5. Define the gift of prophecy.
6. Review the limits put on the gift of tongues in the church.

Answers

1. The proper use of spiritual gifts.
2. Get involved in Christian service and seek feedback from fellow believers about how your ministry best builds up the body.
3. You should pray for the Lord to raise up individuals in your church that have the spiritual gifts that are of the greatest benefit for the body.
4. Because unless the tongues are interpreted, there is no edification of the body (verse 5).
5. Prophecy is telling forth the truth of God in the language of the people.
6. a. The limit of interpretation.
b. The limit of priorities.
c. The limit of order.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review the argument that the gift of prophecy is greater for the church than the gift of tongues. The end result is the edification or building up of the body. This is the goal we should have in mind when we practice our spiritual gifts.

2. Review this teaching on the spiritual gift of tongues. Is it different than what you have heard before? Does it help you have a better understanding of the issue?

Challenge

1. Do you agree with what someone is teaching at church? Go ahead, say, "Amen!"

Further Instructions About Spiritual Gifts in the Church
1 Corinthians 14:26-40

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The priesthood of all believers should be practiced in the church today.

2. God's structure of authority should be practiced in the church today.

Practical Application

1. Don't pull Galatians 3:28 out of context

Questions

1. Why did Paul need to lay out limits and regulations for the use of spiritual gifts in the church?
2. What limits were given in the first half of this chapter?
3. What additional regulations were given for the gift of tongues?
4. What regulations were given for the gift of prophecy?
5. Explain 1 Corinthians 14:32, "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

Answers

1. The Corinthian Christians were placing an undue emphasis on the gift of tongues. Not only was there pride and jealousy concerning the gift of tongues, but they were exercising this gift in a disorderly way in the church.
2. a. The limit of interpretation
b. The limit of priorities c. The limit of order
3. a. At most, only three individuals should speak in tongues at any given worship service.
b. No more than one person should speak in a tongue at one time.
c. There must be an interpretation.
4. a. At most three prophets should speak at a worship service.
b. They were also to speak in turn.
c. One speaker should not monopolize the time, but give way to the other prophets.
5. Both in control and content of the prophecy, the prophet rules what he says. There is no excuse that his spiritual gift went “out of control.” The prophecy should be in line with the Word of God and the way it is delivered should not lead to confusion in the church, but rather peace.

Discuss / Consider

1. The priesthood of all believers should be practiced in the church today. All believers should be encouraged to use their spiritual gifts in various ministries and opportunities. Does your church encourage this? Are you personally fulfilling your opportunity for priesthood?

2. 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Corinthians 14, and 2 Timothy 2 all deal with the role of women in the church. While there is some room for discussion with these passages, the structure of authority with male leadership in the church is to be maintained as God ordained it. Discuss this.

Challenge

1. Galatians 3:28 should not be used to deny the role distinction between men and women in the church. The context of this verse is salvation—praise God that He offers salvation to us all equally!

The Resurrection of Christ is Essential to the Gospel
1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The resurrection of Christ is a part of the gospel.

2. The resurrection of Christ is a fact of history.

Practical Application

1. Don't let God's grace toward you be in vain.

Questions

1. What is the great theme of 1 Corinthians 15?
2. What was the Corinthians' specific problem with resurrection?
3. Why is the resurrection of Christ essential to the message of the gospel?
4. How do Christ's post-resurrection appearances prove that His bodily resurrection was real?
5. How was Paul different from the other apostles?

Answers

1. Resurrection
2. They had some doubts concerning the bodily resurrection of the believer
3. Without the resurrection of Christ there would be no tangible proof that God was satisfied with the work of Christ.
4. There were literally hundreds of eyewitnesses who were still alive at the time that Paul wrote this. They would have confirmed that Christ's bodily resurrection was true.
5. Paul had not walked with the Lord during His earthly ministry as the other apostles had. He had also persecuted the Church before his conversion.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss how the Old Testament Scriptures pointed forward to Christ's death and resurrection. Include in your discussion Isaiah 53, Psalm 16, and types such as in Genesis 22.

2. Paul was frank about his past and used it as a testimony of God's grace in saving a lost sinner. What about your past? Can you give a testimony about God's grace in your life?

Challenge

1. How do you show appreciation to the Lord for His grace that He has shown to you?

The Resurrection of Christ is Essential to Christian Faith and Hope 1 Corinthians 15:12-34

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The resurrection of Christ is essential to the Christian faith.**

- 2. The resurrection of Christ is essential to the Christian hope.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let the obscure be subject to the clear.**

- 2. Don't endanger your spiritual health.**

Questions

1. Don't endanger your spiritual health.

2. What was Paul's logical argument for the bodily resurrection of human beings?

3. What is the danger of not believing in bodily resurrection?

4. What does it mean that Christ is the "firstfruits" (verse 20)?

5. What doesn't 'baptism for the dead' mean?

Answers

1. Because of their background in Greek philosophy and religious thought, some of them had doubts concerning the future bodily resurrection of the believer.
2. If God raised the Man, Jesus Christ, from the dead, then it was logical that He could raise any person from the dead.
3. If there is no such thing as bodily resurrection of persons from the dead, then even Christ could not have been raised from the dead. If Jesus is still dead and was not resurrected, then there is no foundation to the Christian faith.
4. As the early fruit is the promise of the harvest soon to come, so the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee that death has been conquered for every Christian.
5. It doesn't mean that you can save believers who have died by being baptized for them.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review and discuss the six logical conclusions we must come to if Christ is not risen from the dead: a. If Christ is not risen, our preaching is empty. b. If Christ is not risen, our faith is empty. c. If Christ is not risen, we are false witness of God. d. If Christ is not risen, our faith is worthless, and we are still in our sins. e. If Christ is not risen, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. f. If Christ is not risen, and if only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

2. Discuss how the sequence of wonderful events from the resurrection of Christ until eternity is revealed in 1 Corinthians 15:23-28.

Challenge

1. "Evil company corrupts good habits." 1 Corinthians 15:33 No matter your age or stage in life, this principle holds true. Watch the company you keep this week.

The Resurrection Body and the Rapture of the Church 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The resurrection body will be glorious and spiritual.**

- 2. The resurrection body will be imperishable and immortal.**

Practical Application

- 1. Don't determine your doctrine from illustrations.**

Questions

1. What is the main topic of 1 Corinthians 15?
2. What truths did 1 Corinthians 15 teach about the resurrection of Christ?
3. What does it mean that our resurrection bodies will be spiritual bodies?
4. Besides 1 Corinthians 15, what other scripture passage teaches us about the Rapture?
5. What is a "mystery" in the Bible?

Answers

1. The bodily resurrection of believers
2. The resurrection of Christ is shown to be a fact of history and the foundation of the Christian faith. If Christ is not risen from the dead, the Christian faith has no basis.
3. Not that they will be immaterial, rather our resurrection bodies will be in tune with our renewed spirits in Christ. We will have sinless, eternal bodies like our Lord's glorious resurrection body.
4. 1 Thessalonians 4
5. A biblical mystery is truth that was concealed in the Old Testament, and now is revealed in the New Testament. The mystery here is the Rapture, not the resurrection.

Discuss / Consider

1. Besides what we learn in 1 Corinthians 15, we can learn much about our resurrected bodies by studying Christ's resurrected body (Philippians 3:21). Think back to the Gospel accounts. What was His resurrection body like? What could He do in it?

2. Discuss the wonderful change that will take place at the Rapture. How does the Rapture affect believers who are alive in Christ and those who have already died? When could the Rapture occur?

Challenge

1. Has this study of 1 Corinthians 15 affected your beliefs on resurrection? This is a wonderful truth of Scripture!

Closing Messages and Benediction

1 Corinthians 16

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord's servants should abound in the work of the Lord.
 - a. Put aside as the Lord prospers.

 - b. Plan ahead as the Lord wills.

 - c. Pave the way for other servants.

 - d. Prepare the saints for battle.

 - e. Praise the good works of others.

 - f. Pass on the greetings of the family.

 - g. Pray in line with Scripture.

Practical Application

1. When the door opens wide, expect opposition inside.

Questions

1. How much money should you give? How often should you give?

2. Is it wrong for believers to plan ahead?

3. How did Paul pave the way for Timothy?

4. How did Paul pave the way for Timothy?

5. How did Paul send his own personal greetings?

Answers

1. You should give “as the Lord prospers,” in proportion to your income. You should give regularly, here the Corinthians gave weekly.
2. No, in fact, goal setting in the work of the Lord is scriptural. But all our plans should be subject to the Lord’s will and therefore flexible.
3. He gave the Corinthians notice that Timothy was coming and he commended him to make the Corinthians more familiar with him.
4. Love. See 1 Corinthians 16:14 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8.
5. By writing them himself in verse 21, rather than dictating it as he did the rest of the letter.

Discuss / Consider

1. If we are abounding in the work of the Lord, we should be quick to recognize and commend fellow believers who are also abounding in the work of the Lord. Are you quick to praise the good works of others? Or are you quicker to criticize the mistakes of others?

2. Think back on your study of 1 Corinthians. What is the most interesting thing you have learned? What was the most impactful or surprising?

Challenge

1. When God opens the door for ministry, the Enemy will be active in bringing opposition. Be aware of this and remember what you have learned from Paul’s example in ministry.