

1 Corinthians – Section 1

A Study in 1 Corinthians 7 weeks

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This was originally an expository series of sermons given in the church where I was serving as Pastor. A few years later, they were edited to be used as a Bible Study. There are a few things I feel I should share with you before using this material:

First: I had no intent of sharing or publishing this material until encouraged to do so by some friends. While I did consult several commentaries as I was preparing the original sermon series, I did not make notes of the references used in the messages. There was not in the beginning, nor is there now, any intent to plagiarize. Should you see anything you feel is the original thought of another, I ask for your grace and mercy.

Second: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I tend to spell certain words phonetically for the purpose of emphasis. When transforming these notes from sermon notes to teaching notes, I felt inclined to leave a number of these phonetic spellings. They help me to make emphasis in the lesson at particular points.

Third: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I make little effort to conform to rules of grammar. One example is that I often use a hyphen (-) to indicate a point where I may want to pause slightly and to keep certain thoughts connected as I speak. Another example is that I will use local colloquialisms to make points in the message.

Please accept that these notes are not an academic work. But I do hope they will help the preacher or teacher to be able to more quickly prepare their own sermon or teaching.

1 Corinthians - 01 - Problem In The Church

There is a Problem In The Church at large in America Today! The Church At Large is divided. There are many people who claim to be Christians - they claim to have Jesus Christ as their Savior – and yet they separate themselves from others who claiming to be Christians.

See if you recognize the groups being described:

One group rallies behind the name of a prominent Christian minister. His ministry has included a number of reported miracles and signs and wonders. He has traveled to several countries and helped to start churches in these countries. This group places a strong emphasis upon miracles.

Those who claim to be followers of this great minister - feel they are somehow a little closer to what God wants His children to be - and they do look down - in varying degrees - upon others who claim to be Christians but don't follow their leader and don't try to do the miracles and things he has done.

Another group has rallied behind the name of another very prominent Christian minister. His ministry has been marked by the intellectual and eloquent way he is able to state the things of the gospel and God's Word. He is considered by many to be a man of great wisdom as well as intellect.

Those who claim to be followers of this great minister strive toward increasing the knowledge of God's Word and increasing their Godly wisdom – and they place an emphasis on education. They also feel they are somehow closer to what God desires of His children than are those who settle for personal experience - and who are basically good people.

There is another group who has rallied behind the name of yet another prominent Christian minister. His ministry has had a few reported miracles, but that has not been the main aspect of his ministry. His ministry has been marked by large numbers of people being saved. His ministry has been more evangelistic that anything else. He is not highly educated, before he went into the ministry, he earned a living by working with his hands.

Those who claim to be followers of this ministry put great emphasis on winning the lost to Christ and believe everyone who does not make this the number one effort of their life is falling way short of being the Christian God desires us to be. Like the previous two groups, those in this one also look down on people who-do not belong to their group.

There is another group who have rallied behind the name of Jesus Christ. They proudly proclaim that they don't follow any man- they just follow Jesus - and they don't want the label of any organization laid on them. While they try to follow the ways of Jesus and emphasis the best they understand them, - they look down on those who have decided to follow in the way of one of these other groups who have a human being named as the head or at least being looked at as the head of their group. These who claim simply to be followers of Jesus believe they are somehow closer to what God desires His children to be.

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As you read these descriptions – you probably thought you know who the group is that make up the the first description. But you may not be thinking of the group that I was describing in group one. You were probably thinking of one of the many contemporary church groups or denominations – but I was describing the church in Corinth.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-16 and make notes:

The church at Corinth was in a sad state. The fellowship among believers had deteriorated to such a degree that it was no longer fellowship at all. There were serious and strong division and dissension - verbal accusations, - differing opinions, - competitive positions, - power struggles, - envy, - contentions, - grumblings, - griping,- complaining, - murmuring, - quarreling, - attacking, - and gossiping! Believer stood against believer. The Church was divided - very divided. "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

The ministry and the mission of the church cannot go out effectively until this is resolved. Worship, exhortation, missions, reaching and ministering to people, - the very cause of Christ - the reason He came - will suffer until the church is brought together in unity and harmony.

There were at least 4 major divisions among the Believers at Corinth. Each one had it's own emphasis, basically following the personality of it's own leader and acting in antagonism toward the others. Each of these division had centered themselves around a prominent leader or minister.

There were those who claimed to be faithful adherents of Paul. He had a ministry that had an emphasis toward the Gentiles and one which commonly experienced miracles, signs and wonders. In 2 Corinthians 10: 10 and 11: 6, Paul confesses that he is not a great orator - but he sure can preach with the pen can't he.

Another group was faithfully following the ways of Apollos. His ministry was one of eloquence of speech and he exhibited the evidence of being a very well educated man. His ministry was one where intelligence, insight of the Word, and Wisdom were prevalent. Acts 18:24 tells us that Apollos was an eloquent speaker and he was mighty in the Scriptures.

Another group was made up of those who rallied behind the name of Cephas (the Aramaic name of Peter). Peter had a style that appealed to the working man. Peter had a very manly or masculine style of preaching which no doubt connected with the men especially. Peter also had the reputation of having preached so powerfully that literally thousands had come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah on the day of Pentecost. From other N. T. Scriptures, we also know that Peter tended to have an emphasis toward the Jews. So perhaps those who claimed to be followers of Peter were trying to make sure they adhered faithfully to the Jewish rules and traditions.

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Then there were those who declared themselves to be simply the followers of Christ and no one else. So here in Corinth, the believers are dividing from one another. Some of the believers wanted to emphasize the miracles and signs and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some of the people had begun to intellectualize the gospel and socialize it. Some were de-emphasizing the doctrine of salvation in Christ and the necessity to walk in Him daily. Some preferred the traditions and rituals of the Jews be stressed more.

All of these groups claimed to "be of Christ." Thank God there is an answer to division in the church - no matter how severe and threatening it is. The Holy Spirit has revealed several answers to the problem of division in the church. These answers will pull the church together IF the people of God are willing. And we are going to look at these answers over the next lessons.

In this lesson, let's look closer at the problem - because the Church in America today is suffering the same problem. Division in the church is one of the most serious problems we can face. Division in the church destroys the ministry of the church. Every local church - every minister and teacher- needs to look at this and keep these passages forever in memory.

Look at verse 10 - "I appeal" - "I beg" - that all of you agree! The strong exhortation is that "you all" agree. As we read in these Scriptures - Paul addresses this very serious problem in the church - There is no "fire in his eyes" - not a spirit of rebuke - not even a trace of anger. I believe he is addressing this problem in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. His heart is tender and full of love and grace

The Greek word translated "appeal" is the word "*parakalo*" = which means "to call to one's side." Paul calls these people "brothers" twice in verse 10 & 11. He begs them in the Name of Jesus - he calls for them to consider Their Love For Jesus. They must put aside divisions - do away with-divisions - for the sake of Jesus Christ. For the cause of Christ - we must obey Him in a unified body (the church) in one Spirit and in one mind.

It is way past time for ministers and teachers to stop lambasting and attacking one another - and to stop censuring those who differ with them in style or method. It is time for ministers and teachers and all Christians to approach those with whom we differ in a spirit of tenderness. love, and grace in the name of Jesus.

This may be difficult at certain times – with certain people - or in certain situations. But we must not forget that the heart of Jesus Christ is Love and Restoration. We are told in Matthew 5:7, those who are merciful “will be shown mercy.”

The exhortation is strong - it is direct and straight forward - it is plainly and simply stated. "I appeal to you" - "in the name of Jesus" - "all of you agree" - "no divisions" - "be perfectly united." The exhortation and the appeal is for Believers in Jesus to AGREE - Quit quarreling - accusing, attacking, murmuring, grumbling, griping, complaining, gossiping. Leaders - Christians - quit using the tongue to stir up dissension and division! Use the tongue to exhort others to love and restore one another In The Name of Jesus Christ!

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Read James 4:11; Proverbs 21:23 and make notes:

The exhortation is to Allow No Division or dissension in the Church. The Greek word translated "division" is "*schismata*" - which means "to split, to tear."

Note the words "among you." He is clearly not addressing divisions outside of the Church - not division in the world. Divisions - Dissensions in the Church. The Church is not seen ministering to the starving, diseased, lost people of the world! The Church is seen fussing and fighting among it's members. The Church is seen splitting and tearing itself apart. We are told in Luke 11:17, "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall." The exhortation To The Church - not the world - is to "be perfectly united."

This means simply what it says. The Greek words used here relay the concept of torn fishing nets being repaired and mended - or a broken or dislocated limb being reset into it's proper place. We are to "be perfectly united in Mind and Thought." We are to repair and mend those places where we are divided - even in our minds and thoughts. The Mind involves reasoning, affections, emotion, motives, and intentions. Thought involves conclusion, purposes, goals, and objectives.

The exhortation to the Church is for the Church to Restore itself - not just to be joined together - But to be perfectly joined, united, together in mind and thought. The desire that the believers be of the same mind and thought is only in regard to the fundamentals of the gospel message in Christ Jesus. Paul does not believe, - teach, - or imply - that Christians should all be clones of one another - or that unity and oneness means uniformity. Paul, himself, makes a strong argument in in favor of diversity in Chapter 12 of this same letter as he also does in chapter 2 of the letter to the Galatians.

What he is saying clearly and concisely - is that there should not be any dividing taking place. While we may do things differently - we can still work together and encourage and support one another.

It happens all the time in our physical bodies. We have some very different parts within our body. Some of the body's organs work very differently from the other organs and body parts. And yet, in a healthy living body, they do not divide themselves against the other body parts. Each one does what it does well - and it also supports and encourages the other body parts.

Paul was saying, that's the way it's supposed to be in the Church. We may be separate in our methods and styles - but we should not be divided - certainly not divided against one another. Ephesians 4:3 instructs us to make every effort "to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

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The depth and seriousness of the division in the Corinthian Church is noted in verse 11 - "there are quarrels among you." The Greek word used here is "*erides*" - means "strife, quarrels, factions."

The church did not just have a difference of opinion - it had become so divided that now it was arguing and splitting - people were taking sides. And there was contending, wrangling which had led to severe strife between some of the groups. Galatians 5:19-21 tells us that "discord, dissensions, and factions" are acts of the "sinful nature" and "those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." The Church cannot afford division and dissension - not even if it is brought about in a spiritual cause.

The quarrels appear to be generated in the name of the various leaders each of the groups claim to be following. Some here were becoming "Super Spiritual" - Some were exalting some former minister who had come through - Paul, Apollos, Peter - and yet as we read the Scriptures we see the message by these three - was essentially the same gospel message.

What are these Christians taking sides over? These three ministers brought and taught the same doctrine of Jesus Christ as the Savior. The difference was in style of preaching and ministering. Each group began to see itself as "more spiritual" than the others. Many of the Corinthians considered themselves to be so advanced in maturity that they had attained a privileged position. They had set themselves up as spiritual judge over others. They usurped God's authority when they did this.

In verse 12 - for them to be aligning themselves behind one teacher - or preacher - over another means this - they had begun to judge the teachers, preachers, and ministers of God's Word. They were now judging "the wise and unwise" - They were judging moral standards - They were judging the spiritual gifts that God gives to mans "as He wills." Romans 2:1 tells us that "at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself."

Cliques divide the Church. A clique thinks it is right and others are wrong. A clique within a Church - dethrones Christ.

Verse 13 asks the question, "Is Christ divided?" Regardless of which ministry style we may prefer - or which ministry organization we may be affiliated with - if we are in fact believers in Christ Jesus for Salvation - are we all not one in Christ?

Cliques elevate men - organizations - programs. Cliques make a person follower out of God's Children. Believers Do Not owe their allegiance to preachers or teachers. Believers owe their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ!

Paul asked straightforwardly - "was Paul crucified for you?" While Paul was very loving and considerate to not ask the question of the others - it had to be apparent to everyone - that the same question applied to the others as well. No Preacher - has been crucified for you. No Organization - died for you.

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Read 1 Peter 3:8 and make notes:

In the Name of Jesus – we need to stop being of such a mind that we are above others in the Kingdom Be united in Mind and in Thought. We need to tear down the strongholds of division - where ever we find them. And we need to release the Spirit of Unity, Harmony, and Peace.

God said in the O.T. - when people speak with one heart, mind, and voice – that there will be No-Thing impossible to them. If we want the church to be a church of miracles – then we wee to be in one mind, thought, and purpose. This is what we “need to be”, but the reality is so few Believers are here. There are six things we need to do to correct the problem of division within our contemporary church. These will be discussed in the next few lessons.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

1 Corinthians - 02 - Answer #1 - The Cross

There's a problem in the Church at large in America Today - There's Division in the Church! Division is the most dangerous and deadly problem the church can face. It's not a new problem - the church has been afflicted with this problem before. Satan has used Division in a carefully calculated way - knowing full well that it has the potential to destroy the life of the church and render it completely ineffective.

This is what the Apostle Paul was addressing in the First Letter to the Corinthians. We are going to look into this letter for the answers to the problem of Division in the Church today. The First Answer to the Problem in the Church:

Read 1 Corinthians 1: 17-25 and make notes:

Note the contrast found in verse 17 between the "words of human wisdom" and the "Cross of Christ." The Cross - and the Cross alone - is the Number 1 answer to the Church's problem of Division! The Cross is the Primary Mission Of The Church! The Cross is the Primary Mission of the Preacher. The Cross is the Primary Mission of the Teacher. The Cross is the Primary Mission of every Christian Believer.

Paul declared, "Christ did not send me to baptize - but to preach the gospel- the Cross of Christ!" The message of the Gospel- is the Cross of Christ! The Content of Preaching - and the Substance of Teaching - and the Heart of Witnessing - Is to be the Cross of Christ Jesus! All other Subjects of the Christian's life- are due to the cleansing and the reconciliation brought to us by the Cross. In all Preaching - Teaching - Witnessing - The glorious love of God - revealed in the Cross is to be the dominant theme.

Let me repeat: The Preacher is to Preach the Cross - The Teacher is to Teach the Cross - The Believer is to bear Witness to the Cross. We should never let the rituals of the church take the place of the Cross - no matter how important these rituals may be. No Ceremony in the church is more important than baptism - and yet, we are not sent to baptize - but to preach - the Cross of Christ.

This point needs to be driven home to our hearts – constantly - The main focus of our ministry - Of our conversation - Of our daily lives - Is to be the Cross of Jesus Christ. It is so easy to let rituals and ceremony and form - replace the Cross in the Church and in our lives. It is easier to administer some ritual - or conduct a ceremony - than it is to spend hours in study and prayer It is easier to perform some ritual than it is to preach the Cross - to a selfish world that rejects the gospel – and rejects the God who send the gospel.

Note also in verse 17 - that the Cross "can be emptied" of it's power! How can this happen - that the Cross could be emptied of power? By “words of human wisdom.”

1 Corinthians - 02 - Answer #1 - The Cross

The preacher - the teacher - and any minister - can focus upon flowery speech - fluency of words - descriptive terms - expressive words - persuasive words - enticing arguments - personal charisma – appearance. The preacher - the teacher - or an minister - can focus upon having a good, dynamic, interesting sermon. They can be presenting a new idea - an intriguing position - stirring up thoughts about some speculation or philosophy.

However - If the person who preachers or teaches the "words of human wisdom" – THEN – they empty the Cross of it's power. When we do this - we make the Cross of "no effect."

When people leave the service - or the meeting - their attention is upon the preacher or the teacher - and it's not upon the Gospel. The Cross being emptied of it's power - no life is changed by God! No preacher - or teacher - or witness - should set out to impress others with their style - their fluency - their charisma - or anything else. We - all of us - have been called of God to preach the Gospel of the Cross of Christ Jesus. We can not allow programs to be our focus – We can not allow social reform to be our focus – We can not allow spiritual gifts to be our focus.

Let me share with you a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: "I come to you - not with eloquence or with superior wisdom - I resolved to know nothing except Jesus - and Him crucified - so that your faith would rest on God's power - not on man's wisdom." The Cross of Jesus Christ - IS the Power of God!

Look at verse 18 - the "preaching" or the "message" is translated from the Greek words "*ho logos*" – which literally means - "the Word of the Cross." A sharp contrast has been made here - between the "words of human wisdom" - and the "word of the Cross."

The World's wisdom includes many words. Note the plurality here concerning human wisdom – "words." The wisdom of human words - tells us there probably are many ways to reach or find God - many ways to find truth and the meaning of life. But the "Word of the Cross" - singular in form - IS the "only way" - the "only truth" - the "only life." No other message has changed lives like the message of the Cross of Christ.

Verse 18 puts us into one of two categories: one - those who are perishing; and two - those who are being saved. Both of these words in the Greek are active words - "perishing" and "being saved." Perishing - is a terrible thing or situation. Perishing means in this present world – we are deteriorating - we are dying - we are losing purpose - we are losing meaning to our life - we are losing peace - we are losing hope. Perishing also means in the world to come - we will have to die again - we will have to suffer separation from God and from our loved ones - we will have to face judgment - we will be condemned - we will have to experience all that hell has to offer. Perishing is terrible!

But "being saved" - is such a wonderful thing or situation. There are three important facets to "being saved." In Luke 7:50, Jesus told a woman that “your faith has saved you.” First, “being saved” - Is a “once for all” experience. “Have been saved” - means that we have been delivered from hell and delivered from being separated from God.

1 Corinthians - 02 - Answer #1 - The Cross

Secondly - note in V18 - it is a continuous experience - "being saved." It is God's day by day work in the Believer's life. The Holy Spirit of God working daily in our life - teaching us - comforting us - and leading us. Look at Romans 13:11.

Thirdly - our salvation is also something that will take place in the future - "going to be saved." The day when God will bring about a new heaven and a new earth - "being saved" - is such a comforting place to be with Jesus Christ.

The "words of human wisdom" takes the power out of the Cross - But - Glory to God - the "preaching of the Cross" makes the "world's wisdom" to become foolish. Man seeks to conquer life's problems through science, Or technology, or the religion of human efforts and accomplishments. Man tries to use everything at his disposal to conquer the visible enemies of life - disease - suffering - corruption - death. And we want it on our own terms - don't we? Do your own thing - Live as you wish Lust as you wish - Gain position and power - Get recognition and fame - Give me acceptance without standards - Give me recognition without accountability.

The Cross shatters all of the reasoning that goes with man's "own terms." In all of the searching - man discovers that science - technology - or good works - can not bring love, joy, or peace. Through the Cross - man can reach God - and can find truth - and love - and peace - and lasting security.

Read Ephesians 2:8-9.

The glorious message of the Cross is that God loves us enough to save us. By way of the Cross - Jesus took our sins upon himself. God accepts every person that approaches Him through the Cross. He does not - and cannot - recognize anyone trying to approach Him through any other means.

The Cross is not the way most people want to reach God. Most of us want to reach God through our Good Works - and when we try - we Fail! Every human effort other than the Cross - always has - always will - Fail to reach God. No effort of man will solve the world's problems with Sin - evil - disease - suffering - or greed. The Cross destroys the wisdom of man - in that it shows the way to solve all the problems of the world is the Cross! Physical - material - and spiritual. The Cross is the power of God to save those who BELIEVE. The Cross alone changes the lives of men and women to love and to sacrifice.

Look at verses 22-24. The Jews of that day believed and felt - they would be acceptable to God because of their heritage - and by being religious. They thought they were to work their way to God - they thought their Good works would bring the Kingdom of God to man.

1 Corinthians - 02 - Answer #1 - The Cross

The religionist of today are much like the Jews of that day. They have developed a system of thought - that says that the Lord will come as soon as we have prepared the earth by our good works - and when He comes - He will bring Great signs and wonders. With the religionist - the emphasis is on our good works - our labor - our efforts.

The Cross - with it's grace and love - is a stumbling block to the religionist of today - just as it was to the Jews of that day. When the religionist considers the Cross - they see ugliness of sin, shame, punishment, death, and blood. They don't see the Glory - the Majesty - the Triumph - the Victory of the Cross. The religionist does not want to hear or see the negative aspects of sin or death. They want to focus on the positive points of the ritual, the ceremony, the works, and the benevolence.

The religionist says, "let's not think about punishment for our sins - let's just look at rewards for our achievements." The Cross isn't just a stumbling block for the religionist - The Cross is a major stumbling block for the religionist.

The Greeks loved and admired wisdom. In their "ever growing" wisdom - they had come to believe that God was so far above the human- that God did not get involved in human affairs. The message of the Cross was laughed at and ridiculed - rather than listened to by the Greeks of that day. The world at large - generation after generation - has made this terrible mistake concerning the message of the Cross. Man feels that he must use his own wisdom and energy to achieve anything in this world. The simple message of the Cross with simple faith in God's love is ignored.

How many people look at the Cross - As a crude and un-cultured thing - As a bloody and repulsive religion - As lacking any rationale?

Read Colossians 2: 8 and make notes:

There are some who pay attention to God's call and movement in their hearts. They discover that Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. They discover that Jesus Christ is the power of God. They discover that Jesus Christ Delivers us from sin - brings love, joy, and peace - gives guidance and direction in our daily lives - gives assurance and confidence -gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

The Cross is God's way. The message of the Cross is the message and the power to mend the division in the church.

1 Corinthians - 02 - Answer #1 - The Cross

Read Romans 1: 16.

The Cross is the primary mission of the preacher - The Cross is the power of God - The Cross is the answer to man's search for God. Don't be a part of emptying the Cross of it's power. Instead - would you please - Be a part of taking "The Answer" to the world - Be a part of taking the solution to the divided church.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

1 Corinthians - 02 - Answer #1 - The Cross

(this page for additional notes)

1 Corinthians - 03 - Answer #2 -Humble People

Have you ever known someone who acts - walks - and talks - like they just know they are a gift to mankind? They Strut - they are puffed up - and they are proud. The kind of person you can tell they are likely to arrive at the gates of heaven and say, "well, here I am, the one you've all been waiting for." It's like seeing a Spiritual Peacock come into the church.

There's a problem in the Church in America Today! Division! In the last lesson - we looked at the # 1 answer to this problem of Division. It is The Cross of Christ. In this lesson, we are going to look at the Second Answer to the problem of Division in the Church today.

There was a large number of ex-slaves in the population of Corinth. Many in the church in Corinth had come from families who had been slaves. Some of the believers themselves had been slaves and servants.

At the time of this letter, - quite a few of them had been blessed of God - and were now living a comfortable lifestyle. Many of them had reached what we would call today "middle class" - and some had become quite prosperous. The believers in Corinth - The church in Corinth - was experiencing a certain level of physical prosperity - as well as spiritual prosperity. And some of them had become rather puffed up about it.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-30 and make notes:

The Second answer to the problem of Division in the Church:
For God's people to be humble people.

Every Church - every Believer - needs to take this message to heart. The Corinthians were boasting and taking great pride in their Wisdom, Understanding, Spiritual Gifts, and Knowledge. God had apparently enriched them with the Gifts that dealt with speech and knowledge.

The Gifts that deal with Speech and Knowledge are truly wonderful gifts. Many leaders will be found to have gifts in these areas. BUT - these gifts are especially subject to the temptation of Pride! It is evident that the Corinthians had yielded to this temptation. They felt superior to other believers and other people in general - because of their gifts and their abilities. They believed they had received Spiritual Knowledge - and Spiritual Wisdom - from the Pastors and Teachers that had come through Corinth. Apollos, Peter, and Paul were just some of the most notable.

1 Corinthians - 03 - Answer #2 -Humble People

The Church today has an over abundance of Prideful Believers who have become spiritual Snobs. Verse 26 asked the Corinthian Believers to "think of what you were when you were called." Just look at yourselves - Look at the church - Just look at the type of people God calls - Remember where you have come from.

God does not call many wise. All too often "the wise" - seek the wisdom of man and not God's wisdom. Very often - "the wise" - are wise after the flesh. They live and pursue fleshly wisdom more so than Godly Wisdom.

The Jews of that day held the "scribes" in high regard. This was the person who was highly educated in the Law - and extremely skilled in its use.

The Greeks of that day held the "philosopher" in high regard. This was the person who would dispute almost any Issue - and offer a solution to everything from human wisdom.

Few of these people are saved - some are - but not many. Man simply cannot discover God by the Wisdom of this world. God does not call "many who are influential" or "many mighty." The great - the powerful - the ruler - the wealthy - Too often these have become wrapped up in their position- In their authority - all of which is of this world. God does not call many of "noble birth" - the "upper class" - "the nobility of society" - those of "respected heritage."

Proverbs 28:26 tells us that the person whose trust is in himself "is a fool." Where is the "wise man" who can do what the Cross has done for us? Where? Who is the Wise? "He who wins souls" to the Lord is the truly wise person.

Earthly knowledge isn't real knowledge - all by itself. The "fear of the Lord" is the beginning of knowledge. Possessing earthly knowledge - earthly influence - earthly nobility - does not make a person acceptable to God. This fact seems to bother people.

We seem to think that "What we have done" - or "What we have accomplished" - or what "position we hold" - should have some bearing on our being accepted by God. Pride - self sufficiency - self attainment - self righteousness - basically self centeredness - these are all attitudes that keep us from becoming acceptable to God.

Read Galatians 6:3; Jeremiah 4:22 and make notes:

1 Corinthians - 03 - Answer #2 -Humble People

How many people in the Church are "skilled" at doing evil today? And yet they "fumble pitifully" at doing good. Note in verses 27 & v28 - "God chose." It is God who takes the initiative - not man. It is God who does NOT call many outstanding people. It is God who DOES call simple and humble people – and makes them outstanding humble people!

God's choice is not arbitrary! God chooses "foolish" to confound the wise. God often chooses the ignorant, - the unlearned, - the disadvantaged - over the wise of the world. God chooses the "weak" to confound the mighty. Those who do not have a position of authority - no influence - no wealth - the weak - less important - sometimes completely insignificant. He calls the common laborer - the simple worker - the poor - the homeless - the hungry - the child - the helpless. God saves the weak person - not the mighty person.

The person who comes before God with his chest out - professing his position - or his accomplishments - Will be rejected by God! God chooses the "nothings" of this world - to "nullify" the "somethings."

The next time someone implies "you are a nothing" - You can respond - "Yes, I am" - "and isn't it wonderful." You are something - and God has sent me here to nullify you." "My nothingness just cancels out your somethingness!" – Isn't God Great? (this is meant to make you smile – I don't really suggest that you say this out loud – but you can think it)

God has a purpose in saving the humble person – and it is to eliminate man's boasting! (v29). Think of all the wickedness and evil in the world in a single day: murder - greed - stealing - lying - abuse - deception - cursing – fighting. Now consider all the education - wisdom - science - technology - power – heritage. All of the things at man's disposal can not rid the world of one evil for even one day.

What right does man have to boast? Why does man consider himself wise or mighty? What right does man have to glory in himself? The wise are finding that what they have learned - is always changing and being discarded for newer - more up to date – wisdom.

The self sufficient can not control his own earthly behavior. The powerful can not stop one small virus. Why does God choose man? "What is man that you are mindful of him - O God?" Man certainly does not deserve God's attention. Man does not deserve God's salvation. It is because of God's love for us - GRACE! We need to know that we are Saved By Grace - Not of our position with God.

Read Matthew 18:4; James 4:10 and make notes:

1 Corinthians - 03 - Answer #2 -Humble People

The answer to Division in the Church is for us to recognize ourselves as God sees us. When the church sees itself as humble people of God - then the Divisions will diminish and even disappear. Then the Church will move in the "power of God."

We need to Resist - the Proud of Heart - especially if it is our own heart that is prideful. We need to Welcome - the humbleness of the Holy Spirit. Not only make a place for the humility of the Holy Spirit to reside in our heart - but nurture the humbleness - strengthen it - maintain a humble heart and attitude.

Let us mend the Division in the Church today - By being Simple and Humble People.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

1 Corinthians - 04 - Answer #3 - God's Revealed Wisdom

Have you ever known someone - who truly knew a great deal about some particular thing? I'm not talking about a person who "thinks" they know everything - but a person who probably - in reality - just might know everything about some particular area or subject? They certainly do know a lot about some subject if they don't know everything about it. At least they are close to knowing everything about that subject.

Even when a person does know just about everything there is to know about some particular thing or subject - that doesn't automatically mean that they know everything about "everything." Even if it is a proven and undisputed fact that this person knows everything there is to know about this subject - that doesn't mean they know what is needed - or should be done - or how do to - something in another area.

We can have great knowledge - and even wisdom - in one area - and be completely unequipped in the area of knowledge and wisdom - in other areas! Please keep this in mind as we look into the message today.

There is a problem in the Church – Division.

Answer #1 – is The Cross of Christ.

Answer #2 – is Humble People of God .

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-9 and make notes:

Pride - and acting superior to others - is a major offense; which includes arrogance, feeling superior, thinking too highly of oneself. No form of self-centeredness has any part or place in God's church!

Pride had taken deep root in the Corinthian church - as it has in Today's Church also. It was ripping the Corinthian Church apart - and it's tearing today's church apart also. God has a message of Wisdom for the Church. Verse 6 tells us the message of wisdom is for the "mature" Or the "complete" - It is for the church. This message of wisdom IS NOT for the world. This message of wisdom IS NOT wisdom of this world. This message of wisdom IS NOT the wisdom of the worldly leaders. After all, - the wisdom of the world's leaders is coming to nothing!

Read Colossians 2:8 and make notes:

1 Corinthians - 04 - Answer #3 - God's Revealed Wisdom

You don't have to be a genius - to figure this out. Philosophy is built entirely upon human understanding of things. Philosophy is built entirely upon human wisdom or human reasoning. As it says in this text from God's Word - Philosophy is built upon human tradition. Very often when a person is in a real mess and they need help - it is because they were depending on the principles of this world.

We need to - Depend on Christ Jesus - don't depend on the world's system.

Just as it was for the Corinthian Church - the message for the Church today is the message of God's wisdom - God's secret Wisdom! God's wisdom is a mystery to the World! Unfortunately - God's wisdom remains a mystery to most of the Church people! "A Secret Wisdom" - it remains "A wisdom that has been hidden" - but it is "A Wisdom that God destined for our glory" - even before time began. "No eye has seen" - "no ear has heard" - "no mind has conceived" what God destined for us to have.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:10 and make notes:

God's wisdom is proclaimed in a mystery! But it is not strange - it involves facts that cannot be known by man's natural reason. God's wisdom has to be Revealed! It is a mystery to everyone until God reveals it to man - man cannot reveal it to man! God must reveal it individually to each of us. No man can penetrate heaven and discover God. Man is unable to understand himself

Most people get lost trying to discover themselves! Before you get too deeply into doubting this particular statement - please consider the evidence before us. My generation is one which put forth great effort into trying to "discover ourselves." The great portion of my generation tried many different avenues - in an effort to find "myself." We tried just about every suggestion - regardless of how empty, weird, or outright bizarre it was. And just look at how many of my generation have become lost. Lost into a life of drugs and alcohol - Lost into a life of depravity - Lost into a world of not even knowing that we are human beings - "fried brains" - "demolished emotions." For a great many - it appears to be unrecoverable lives.

There is simply too much "hard" and "harsh" evidence to indicate - that man cannot find himself. And man cannot understand himself. Man's wisdom is insufficient and inadequate to discover God - Or God's wisdom.

The fact that God's wisdom is hidden - And remains hidden until God reveals it - Does Not Mean - that it is difficult or hard! Man's wisdom - is of this world. Man's wisdom - tends to lead us away from God. Unless God reveals it to us - we won't grasp it - because in our own wisdom we look in the wrong places - and in the wrong direction.

1 Corinthians - 04 - Answer #3 - God's Revealed Wisdom

What worldly wisdom can explain - the mystery of the Gospel of Jesus Christ Crucified? - The mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven? - The mystery of God's will? Only God's Spirit knows the wisdom and the things of God!

The world does not know God or the things of God - The things of God must be revealed by God - Through His Holy Spirit! No one can see it! No one can hear it! No one in their heart can conceive it! God's Spirit MUST reveal it! The basis for these statements can be found in the following Scriptures: John 1:18; John 3:6; John 16:13.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:12 and make notes:

It is God's desire that we - His Children - understand His wisdom. We can understand only when it is revealed by His Spirit!

Answer #3 to the Problem of Division in the Church -
The Revealed Wisdom Of God - or God's Revealed Wisdom!

Read Romans 8:5 and make notes:

Only the believer who has their “mind SET” on spiritual things - will receive of Spiritual things! God's wisdom is the message taught by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit teaches the Wisdom and Gospel of God!

Read 1 Corinthians 2:13 and make notes:

1 Corinthians - 04 - Answer #3 - God's Revealed Wisdom

The Holy Spirit guides - teaches - and directs us - to compare spiritual things with spiritual things. The question to us is: Are we ready to give up following the world's wisdom?

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

1 Corinthians - 05 - Answer #4 - How God Sees Man

Have you ever experienced this yourself - or watched as someone else experienced it? A dog is washed - groomed - and made to look and smell real nice. The owner is so proud of the way their dog looks and smells. Then the dog goes out and just wallows in the dirt - or something that really stinks - if they can find it?

You can wash a dog - you can even dress them up in nice clothes - but you can't take the desire to wallow in the dirt away from them. Dogs do - what dogs do - don't they?

Have you ever seen a situation like this: a couple of toddlers playing together - they start to having a difference of opinion - one of them bites the other one - then the mother begins to chastise the toddler that did the biting- and she says something like "we are not animals, we don't bite one another." I agree whole heartily that toddlers are not animals - but I know that toddlers Do Bite!

There is Division in the Church in America today! Division is one of the most damaging and devastating problems existing within the church and the world. Division leads to anger - fights - divorce - murder - and war.

The 4th answer to the Division in the Church - is for the People of God to understand the way God views mankind.

God sees man in one of three categories :

The Physical Man

The Spiritual Man

The Carnal Man

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 and make notes:

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 and make notes:

1 Corinthians - 05 - Answer #4 - How God Sees Man

In 1 Corinthians 2:14 - "the man without the Spirit" – in the KJV it is translated "natural man." It is the Greek word "*psuchikos*" – which literally means “physical life.”

The "physical man" is a living being - same as an animal - simply a living being. The "physical man" is living in the flesh only. His mind - his life - his energy and efforts are all focused on Physical - material - worldly flesh items. What can be seen - what can be touched - what can be heard - what can be tasted - what can be felt - what can be possessed. Just try and offer “pure gold” to a dog – he will reject it. The dog will most likely smell of it – then determine that they can't eat it – so they reject it.

The "physical man" is a man of human nature- and human nature is all that he has! His life is without the presence or the help of Jesus Christ. In Jude 1:19 we are told that they people who divide us are those who “follow mere natural instincts.”

The “Physical man” - Does Not have the Spirit! There are three things pointed out about the "physical man" in 1 Corinthians 2: 14:

1- "Physical man" Does Not receive the things of God!

The phrase "Does Not" in the KJV is "receives not." The Greek word used here means - "are not welcomed as a guest" - "not accepted as a gift." It means to refuse and to reject!

Spiritual things are of very little concern to the "physical man." The "physical man" has his mind upon “bigger and better” - ambition and promotion - acquiring more - play and recreation desires and feelings - socials and parties - wants and cravings - comfort and ease - position and wealth - drinking and eating - attention and recognition - dress and appearance.

The "physical man's" life and his mind are focused upon the physical - Upon what "this world" is and has. His mind is not focused upon the Spiritual things or Spiritual realm.

The "physical man" welcomes the world - But he rejects God! God is not welcome in his life - He does not receive the things of the Spirit - even when they are offered. He fails to see the value of the things of the Spirit. In much the same way as a dog fails to see the value of gold – the physical man fails to see the value of the spiritual things!

2 - The "physical man" considers the things of God foolishness.

The Greek word "*moria*" means - “foolishness - dull - absurd – distasteful.”

The "physical man" lives primarily for his own nature: What looks good - What taste good - What sounds good - What feels good. The "physical man" lives for his animal senses. The "physical man" lives and works toward those things that "turn him on": position - money - possessions - recognition - fame - power - house - cars - food - dress - popularity – sex. The person who gives in to these "urges" only - Is the "physical man!" He cannot see - feel - taste - or prove Spiritual things with his physical senses! Therefore, - to his mind - the things of God are utterly foolish.

1 Corinthians - 05 - Answer #4 - How God Sees Man

3 - "physical man" cannot know Spiritual things.

It is not that the "physical man" will not know - or will not understand - Spiritual things. He can NOT understand Spiritual things! The "physical man" cannot discern - the truth concerning Spiritual things - the worth of Spiritual things - the reality of Spiritual things - the glory of Spiritual things. Why can't the "physical man" discern Spiritual things? Spiritual things have to be discerned by a Living Spirit ! The Greek words translated "discern" is "*ana Krinetai*" - which means "investigate, judge, examine, estimate." The "physical man" cannot examine or estimate Spiritual things!

1 Corinthians 2: 15 – tells us something about the "Spiritual Man." Greek word translated "spiritual" is "*pneumatikos*" which means - "man of spirit."

The "spiritual man" is a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells! They are not spiritual because: They have received a superior gift - They have received an unusual ability - They have received more intelligence - They have become better. A person becomes a "spiritual man" because they receive the Spirit of God - and they are living under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Look at Romans 8:9.

There are three things pointed out to us about the "spiritual man" in verse 15:

1 - "Spiritual man" judges and discerns all things.

"Judgement" is the same word as discerned in verse 14. The Holy Spirit comes into a person and converts their body into a Holy Temple in which the Holy Spirit will dwell. Then God's Spirit within us - reveals the truth about Spiritual things to us. The ability to discern - IS NOT man's ability - It is the Holy Spirit within us!

2 - "spiritual man" is not understood by the "physical man."

"Spiritual man" is judged by no man - "spiritual man" is not subject to any man's judgment. The "physical man" has "no knowledge" and "no understanding" of the spiritual things. The "physical man" cannot be the judge of the "spiritual man." The "physical man" cannot understand why anyone would put their efforts or their energy into the spiritual things. To the "physical man" - the "spiritual man" is a fool for passing up this world and what this world has to offer.

The "physical man" DOES NOT - in fact Cannot - understand the "spiritual man." But the "spiritual man" understands the "physical man" - and discerns all things! While it does say the "spiritual man" makes judgments about all things - It also asks in verse 16 - what "spiritual man" has entered into Heaven and knows the mind of God? So "spiritual man" is not to judge other "spiritual people."

1 Corinthians - 05 - Answer #4 - How God Sees Man

3 - "Spiritual man" has the "Mind of Christ."

The "spiritual man" has his mind Focused upon the things of the Spirit. The "physical man" is like one who is trying to look at an object of great beauty with the binoculars out of focus. The "spiritual man" is like the one who is looking at that object of great beauty with the binoculars focused. Look at Romans 8:5-6.

1 Corinthians 3: 1 – shares some things about "the carnal man" – or the “worldly man.” The "carnal man" is not the same as the "physical man." Three things are shown to us about the "carnal man":

1 - the "carnal man" is not spiritually mature.

Those who are called “carnal man” are just "infants in Christ." It is worth noting that these are "believers" who are "infants in Christ." The "carnal man" believes in Jesus Christ as Savior - but does not know the things of Jesus - or the things of God - or the things of the Spirit like they should.

2 - the "carnal man" has to be fed with "milk and not the meat of the Word."

The "carnal man" has to be fed the very basics - and not the depths of God' s Word and God's Promises. The "carnal man" will rarely be given any of the "keys to the kingdom." The "carnal man" very often Does Not walk in Victory - like the "spiritual man" gets to enjoy.

In any endeavor of man - the more one experiences and studies in a given field - the more mature they become in that field. They can move from the "basics", or milk, - on to the more complex, or the meat.

3 - the "carnal man" is characterized by division.

Division is a "glowing" proof that a person is "carnal" - or that a people are "carnal" - or that a church is "carnal." Carnality is seen - in their envying and strife. Envy leads to jealousy - Jealousy leads to division.

Envy can be caused by position - gifts - recognition - wealth - promotion - attention – possessions. Envy leads to difference and to strife which eventually leads to division. Any behavior like this is "carnal" – or “worldly” - and it Does Not belong in the Church!

Carnality is seen in the Church when believers begin to walk and act like the world. Please look at Romans 6:6 and Ephesians 4:22-24.

If we can come to understand the categories of man - then we can understand one another - and division in the Church will diminish. Receive understanding - concerning those who are unbelievers; the "physical man" - and deal with them knowing that all of your spiritual exhortation is foolishness to them.

1 Corinthians - 05 - Answer #4 - How God Sees Man

Receive understanding - concerning those who are believers - But are Spiritually immature - and deal with the Spiritually immature, or "carnal", as "infants in Christ." Don't demand and expect adult responses and reactions from them.

We as Mature Christians - should deal with the accusations of the unbelievers as coming from one who does not understand - forgive them and don't give up on them. We as Mature Christians - should Deal with the failings and the shortcomings of the Carnal Christian as you would those who are infants. Work with them - encourage them - don't give up on them - and don't allow them to remain infants! Help them to grow and to become mature.

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

1 Corinthians - 05 - Answer #4 - How God Sees Man

(this page for additional notes)

1 Corinthians - 06 - Answer #5 - Wise Builder

I know - what I am about to share - is such a simple concept - that you most likely understand it and don't need me to explain it. But because this concept is so important to the message God wants me to share with you in this lesson - Please bear with me while I refresh your memory to this simple but profound concept.

Imagine we are in the process of building a new building! The foundation for this building will be poured and set in just a few weeks. There a number of very important facts that are connected with is foundation. This foundation will be poured to certain dimensions of length and width. And these dimensions have been determined by the PLAN of the building we wish to build on this foundation.

The foundation's size was determined only AFTER the master plan for the building was finished. The foundation is not poured and then efforts are put forth to try and figure out what kind of building we can build on this foundation - After we have determined the specifics of the building we wish to build. The length, width, and even the thickness of the foundation is determined by that master plan.

After we place the order for the Steel structure - the company that will supply that steel - sends to us a plan of exactly where in the foundation there are to be bolts to hold the steel in place. And where in the foundation the concrete needs to be thicker to support the weight of the steel post - and how thick it needs to be in those places. Even the placement of bolts in the foundation - how many bolts in the foundation - the size of the bolts in the foundation - are all determined by the master plan.

Try to imagine what might happen if we ignored the plan provided to us by the steel supplier in regards to the bolts in the foundation. What do you think might happen - if we just decided for ourselves what size, how many, and where we would like to put the bolts in the foundation?

Try to imagine what might happen if we ignored the master plan when it came time to put up the outside walls - or the inside walls. We cannot ignore the master plan in any phase of the construction process - and expect the building to stand - especially when the storms come - and the Storms WILL COME - it's only a matter of time- Isn't it?

After the foundation is laid - can you imagine what mighty happen if someone took over the building project and ignored the master plan? What if this person made their own personal decisions about how long, or high wide the building should be - and it turns out that their decision is of different dimensions than the foundation? It is very important that we understand and follow the master plan!

There is a Problem in The Church Today! The Church in America is greatly Divided. We have looked at the First Letter to the Corinthians for the Answers the Holy Spirit gave through Paul to this problem in the Early Church.

- #1 The Cross of Jesus Christ
- #2 Humble People of God
- #3 God's Revealed Wisdom
- #4 The Categories of Man

1 Corinthians - 06 - Answer #5 - Wise Builder

In this lesson, we will examine Answer #5 to this problem.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-17 and make notes:

Answer #5 to the Problem of Division:

Be A Wise Builder And Laborer

Look at verse 9 - "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building." Paul declares that the Church (the group of Believers) is like a building. The Church at Corinth was in trouble! Some trouble makers were close to destroying the local Church in Corinth.

In 1 Corinthians 3:10 - the phrase "expert builder" is translated from the Greek word "*archtekon*" which means - "superintendent of a building project."

Paul was the one used of God to start the church at Corinth. Paul was the one who was led by God to rut down the foundation. Paul was not referring to a physical building - it was the people he was talking about. God gave Paul the grace, - the strength, - the power, - the ability - to reach people for Jesus Christ and to assemble them into a body of worship and fellowship - For the purpose of honoring and worshiping Jesus Christ - the Son of God. Paul stated that he was an "expert builder." He didn't create the master plan - He just made sure that he followed the master plan - as it had been given to him.

Just like any "expert builder" would do. Paul kept his mind on what was being built. Paul did not let the pleasures of this world distract him for the task God had given him to do. He made sure that the foundation was laid down according to the master plan.

Now, someone else is building on that foundation. "Someone else is building" on the foundation that I laid." The ministers that followed him in Corinth built on that foundation - the church leaders - the teachers - even the current members - are building on that foundation - all members of the local church are building the church! Through their lifestyle - their daily witness or lack of one - their service to the Lord or lack of service - every member is building up or tearing down the church!

Every church that has ever existed - has had a person who was used of God to be the master builder - the superintendent of the building project - the founder of the church. Someone surrendered himself to God - to go forth to be the expert builder - the superintendent - or the overseer of God's church in that place.

1 Corinthians - 06 - Answer #5 - Wise Builder

When they act like an "expert builder" and follow obediently the master plan - the church comes along well. But when they think they have a "better idea" and follow their own plans instead of the master plan - that church will struggle and hurt and be hurt - over and over again.

People desperately need to be reached and assembled together in the name and the love of Jesus. How many church members are building the church where you are? 1 Peter 2:5 tells us that we are all "living stones" being used to build a spiritual house. How many are building wisely and skillfully - upon the foundation that has been laid?

There is a warning in verse 10 of chapter 3 of 1 Corinthians: "Each one should be careful how he builds." The foundation has been laid - it is a strong foundation! The foundation shall not be moved! Everyone in the church is building upon this foundation so we need to "be careful."

The New Testament tells us there are a number of things we need to be careful about while building:

Matthew 6:1 - be careful not to do your acts of righteousness to be seen of men

Matthew 18:10 - be careful that you do not look down on these little ones -
their angels are before the Father

Mark 4:24 - be careful what you hear

Luke 8:18 - be careful how you listen

Luke 11:35 - be careful that the light in you is not darkness

Luke 12:15 - be careful and watch out and be on guard against greed

Luke 21:8 - be careful that you are not deceived

Colossians 4:17 - be careful to fulfill the work you have received

We Need To Be Careful How We Build The Church!

In 1 Corinthians 3:11, we are told there is just "one" sure foundation. Anything else in comparison to Jesus Christ is just "sinking sand."

Does it seem funny that the Bible would say that a person (Jesus) is the foundation upon which we should build the Church?

Read Matthew 7:24; Acts 4:12 and make notes:

The teachings and doctrines of Jesus Christ - is the only foundation upon which men can build their lives. Jesus Christ is the only foundation upon which we can build a True Church! 1 Peter 2:6 Jesus is the chief cornerstone. Are we building the church today according to the Master Plan Jesus used? Are we trying to build upon His foundation - or our own plan?

1 Corinthians - 06 - Answer #5 - Wise Builder

I have some personal experience that has taught - a "crafty builder" can skillfully hide inferior materials and workmanship. When the construction is finished - you won't be able to see that inferior materials were used - and perhaps inferior workmanship was used. Then one day, a storm came and revealed all the weak places - those places that were not supported the way they should have been - the pipes that were not as strong as they should have been - or the pipes that were not insulated the way they should have been.

We once bought a nice looking New home and moved into it in the early fall. Everything seemed just great. Later, when it became real winter time - this was a colder than average winter. This nice house was cold - and we couldn't keep it warm. Especially two rooms - they just happened to be the kitchen and the living rooms. After a couple of weeks of this uncomfortable - cold house - we finally concluded it wasn't just our imagination - something was wrong. I went into the attic - I discovered that the whole house was insulated - Except the kitchen and the living room. There was NO INSULATION over either of these rooms.

I pulled out the papers on this house and the specifications said there would be a certain amount of insulation in the attic. This house had not been insulated according to the master plan for this house. The builder - a good and reputable builder - had subcontracted this work out - and he had not checked to see if the subcontractor had followed the master plan. The people who were trying to make this place home were suffering because someone did not follow the master plan.

We all understand that there will come a day when a storm will come - and the physical building we build - will be tested. There will come a day when the structural integrity of our new building will be tested.

But there is a more important testing that will come upon the church: 1 Corinthians 3:12 warns us that Whatever we build with - it will be tested by God fire. Do we want to build the church out of materials that will last? What are the people today building the church with? If we build this church according to God's master plan - then the church will last - But if we build according to our personal ideas - Then it will not last!

Let's Build with the Fruit of the Spirit! Let's Build with the things that add to our faith! They are the lasting things - and they are desperately needed by the Church today. The church will be tested and tried and proven by God's fire!

Let's not build our church out of combustible materials - the treasures of this world - works of the flesh - the false teachings that are so rampant and freely floating around. Not only will the false teachings burn up - Whatever work that has been accomplished by them will bum up also.

According to 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, There is a day of inspection! The church will be inspected. A day of inspection is a sure thing - every work will be inspected - works that survive the fire will be rewarded - works that do not survive the fire will be lost with no reward (not even honorable mention).

1 Corinthians - 06 - Answer #5 - Wise Builder

The rewards for building with spiritual things - are almost beyond the human mind to comprehend:

Galatians 4:4-7 adopted as a child of God

Philippians 2:15 made blameless before God

John 3:6 given eternal life

Hebrews 10:34 given enduring substance

Philippians 3:11 given a glorious body

Romans 3:10 given eternal glory, honor, and peace

Hebrews 4:9 given eternal rest and peace

Philippians 4:9 given intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ

Matthew 25:23 made a ruler over many things

James 2:5 given a place in the Kingdom of God

Revelation 20:4 given a throne and allowed to reign forever

It appears that most people apply 1 Corinthians 3:16 to the individual. In the context of this passage - it is the "collection of believers" – it is the church that is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

It may help to examine a few Greek words used in the text. Two Greek words used for temple:

"*heiron*" = temple precinct

"*naos*" = the sanctuary

"You" - "yourselves" - these are plural words –

while "*naos*" – "sanctuary" - this is singular.

There is ONE TEMPLE of the Holy Spirit! It is made up of many "pieces parts." It is important that we grasp this concept.

Each of our many parts - many very different from the others - make up the One Temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:17 tells us that it is serious to defile the church. Those that destroy the church will receive a harsh punishment from God - They will be destroyed! The punishment is not specifically spelled out - it is simply and plainly stated that those who do such as this- Will suffer destruction.

Perhaps the actual manner of destruction will be selected so as to be most meaningful to each person who takes part in destroying the church. Trouble makers can make it impossible for the Holy Spirit to work with the Church. We cannot afford to be a trouble maker for God's church. And we can't afford to allow trouble makers to have a place in this church. WE need to be on our guard and remove them as soon as they are identified.

1 Corinthians - 06 - Answer #5 - Wise Builder

It is the Holy Spirit of God that brings about fellowship. AS church members fellowship with God's Holy Spirit - they will be drawn to one another. The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual fellowship of different persons abilities. There will always be different personalities with the church. This can strengthen the church - don't expect each member to be a clone of the others. Wise builders - Wise laborers will mend the tom and divided places Wise laborers will prevent Division in the church

Wise builders will find ways - proper ways to unite the different parts so that each one can be of benefit to the other parts. Wood and electrical wire are different materials - for different purposes - but they sure can help one another. The wood can provide support to hold the electrical wires - where they need to be in order to provide electricity to the house. Plumbing and electrical wiring are very different - but they can sure be a help and a protection for each other. If the electrical wire messes up and causes a fire - The plumbing can supply water to extinguish the fire and save the house. If the plumbing gets too cold it can rupture and leak water than can destroy the house. The electrical wire can provide electricity to keep the plumbing warm and prevent freezing. This analogy can be applied to many other parts of the house as well.

The plumber might well be only concerned with the plumbing - and making his part easier and less expensive. But a wise plumber will be concerned with the master plan - and will make sure he doesn't just decide to cut out a piece of wood because it will make his job easier. He will check the master plan and make sure it won't jeopardize the integrity of the house and make sure it doesn't interfere with the job someone else has to do. So it is with the electrician, the heating and air conditioning person, and every other person who plays a part in building the house.

And so it should be with every member of the church.

Are we being Wise Builders?

Are we giving any consideration to the Master Plan for the church?

Or, do we just do what is easiest for me?

Can we be seen as a Wise Builder in God's eyes - If we don't take into consideration whether or not we are interfering with the job God has given some other spiritual builder in our community? Or, do we just go about doing what looks like a "good thing" to us? Is our "good thing" going to interfere with the ministry of someone else?

A wise builder doesn't just do what seems good to him. A wise builder consults the Master Plan - and sticks with it.

1 Corinthians - 06 - Answer #5 - Wise Builder

Write your thoughts and questions regarding this study to share with the group:

1 Corinthians - 06 - Answer #5 - Wise Builder

(this page for additional notes)

1 Corinthians - 07 - Answer #6 - Don't Deceive Yourself

Have you ever met someone - who was just sure that they knew more than everyone else? Have you ever met someone - who was sure that they were more spiritual than everyone else? Have you met someone - who was sure they had somehow arrived spiritually? Did you notice whether these people built up and strengthened the church - or damaged and discouraged it?

In this lesson, we are going to look at the sixth answer to the problem of Division in the Church As given in 1 Corinthians by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 and make notes:

Paul gives the root cause for the trouble the Believers in Corinth are experiencing. It is PRIDE! Pride in who they are - and Pride in what they know.

The city of Corinth had become a center for intellectual pursuit. Many in Corinth had begun glorifying themselves for being part of the intellectual community - for being highly educated - for being part of the cultured part of society. These were people who claimed to have intellectual, worldly wisdom - people who professed to know much more than other people - and more than they actually did know. This attitude had taken a foot hold within the church.

People of the church began to claim to understand Scriptures and to understand God much better than other people. They were sure that they were now competent and qualified to judge church leaders and to judge those whom God had called into places of ministry. They had become proud of themselves in their perceived ability to judge the truth. They were now criticizing and critiquing the way different people ministered, taught the Word, and served God.

They were in fact judging not only the abilities of ministers but judging their gifts as well. If they agreed with the particular gifts and abilities that a certain minister demonstrated - then they would cooperate with them. If they didn't agree with them - then they would openly speak against them and work against them. But because all these who saw themselves as superior to others - didn't always agree with the others who saw themselves as superior. Little groups had formed. These groups of people who claimed to be superior to others - had begun to claim they had centered themselves around Paul, Apollos, or Peter, etc. Then there were those who were so sure that they were superior to all the others who saw themselves as superior - these just claimed to be centered around Christ Jesus and no one else.

The Sixth answer to the Problem of Division in the Church is -

For people to realize that they have been deceived and to renounce this self-deception!

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Just look at verse 18 - "Do not deceive yourselves." Corinthian Believer - Don't deceive yourself. American Believer - Don't deceive yourself.

In some respects, the Believers in Corinth did have some advantages over churches in some of the more remote areas. They had access to the Scriptures - what we know as the Old Testament. They were in a great city where there were many who were gifted and educated in philosophy and theology - and these were openly discussed in public on a regular basis. They had been ministered to by some of the most outstanding preachers - not only of that day - but of today as well (i.e. Paul). They had received a bountiful outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

However, they also had a very serious problem. The Believers in Corinth had begun to desire and seek Worldly Recognition. They wanted to be seen by the world as being intellectual. They wanted to be recognized by the world as being highly educated. They wanted to be congratulated on their ability to think through and rationalize - not only the things of God - but the things of this world as well.

The pride they had in their ideas, their abilities, and their intellect - resulted in a great tragedy. They had come to follow more of their own ideas and rationalizations, - and have much less regard for what God said and what God's will was. They had come to govern their daily lives by their own wisdom and understanding - instead of God's Word. They were exalting the wisdom of man over the wisdom of God. They were exalting the ideas and ways of man over the ways of God.

The Believers in Corinth hadn't deceived God. They hadn't deceived the angels or the demons. They had deceived some other people - but NOT most of the people. The ones they had most successfully deceived was themselves! Read Galatians 6:3 and James 1:22.

This passage in 1 Corinthians basically instructs the Believer to renounce Worldly Wisdom. This doesn't say we shouldn't seek to receive an education. This doesn't say we should shun those who have an education.

Worldly Wisdom is when we try to understand God and the Truths of God by using natural human wisdom. Worldly Wisdom is able to recognize there is a problem of evil in this world. Worldly Wisdom is able to recognize there is suffering in this world. Worldly Wisdom is able to recognize the long lasting hurt and damage that is caused by such things as natural disasters, greed, selfishness, violence, lust, rage, and prejudice.

Some truly good men and women have given their lives to trying to understand and conquer these things that cause hurt and damage. But the people who commit their lives to seeking the truth concerning these things by seeking only the truth and understanding of this world - are of very little help and frequently frustrated and winding up in dead ends. Those who seek God's truth and understanding concerning these things frequently find help and answers and solutions.

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The Wisdom of man in the fields of science, education, technology, and religion is greatly limited. Regardless of the level of commitment and magnitude of the effort, - if worldly wisdom is all that is being applied in these fields - then these people are destined to come up short time and time again.

The Wisdom of God in the fields of science, education, technology, and religion has no recognizable limits. When the Wisdom of God is used in these fields - we actually have hope and a real possibility of conquering many of the evils in this world and controlling the others.

When the Church approaches God and the problems of this world using only Worldly Wisdom - the only results we can count on is tragedy. When the Church follows only Worldly Wisdom, it is on a path which will destroy the witness of Christ and will make the Kingdom of God completely useless to those in need.

There are three reasons Worldly Wisdom fails when it comes to the things of God:

The first Reason: **Worldly Wisdom Is Superficial.**

Worldly Wisdom only appears to be wise. Man Thinks he is wise - man thinks he is creative - man thinks he is knowledgeable - man thinks he is intelligent - man thinks he has a novel idea or concept concerning God and Truth.

Do you want an example to indicate the truthfulness of these statements? The evidence that the majority of people Think they are wise and knowledgeable in how to handle their lives and affairs is seen in this: There are very few people who believe they are totally Un-Acceptable and will be rejected by whatever Higher Being they think exists.

This apparent wisdom and apparent knowledge exists only in the minds of man. IT IS NOT TRUE! The Truth is stated in Jeremiah 4:22.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. While the way to destruction is wide and many people are following that path. Narrow is the way to life with God and there is very few who travel this path. No man can know God or the things of God unless God reveals them to him.

The second reason - **Worldly Wisdom is Not True Wisdom.**

"He should become a fool so that he may become wise." This means simply that a person must be willing to become what the world will call a "fool" - if they want to know God and the real Truth of God's kingdom.

When the world hears about the revelation of God - they call it foolishness. To those who are following after Worldly Wisdom, it is foolish to talk about God as though He actually exists.

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To the World - It is foolish to talk about a God that would allow His Son to die for the sins of the world. It is foolish to talk about the problems of this world being the result of evil. It is foolish to talk about something as being sin. It is foolish to talk about being saved, or being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It is foolish to talk about a person needing their heart changed or being converted. It is foolish to talk about being resurrected someday.

All of this is utter foolishness to the World's Wisdom. But all of this is exactly what Jesus Christ taught! **You can't be a Christ Follower and believe something different!** These things are at the very heart of the message of God. Look at John 14:4.

The third Reason – **Worldly Wisdom is Foolishness to God.**

It is foolishness because evil, selfishness, and sin do actually exist in the heart of man. All men sin and die. If we will be honest and be reasonable - our experiences, - what we see, - our feelings, - and what we hear - All testify to this terrible reality of life.

It is foolishness because the only way a sinful imperfect creature could ever become acceptable to the sinless and perfect God - Is for God to love this sinful imperfect creature enough to pay the penalty on behalf of this imperfect sinful creature.

This is the only way an imperfect person can be in the presence of the perfect God. This is the only way the corruptible earthly seed can come into the incorruptible spiritual heaven. This is the reason that all other approaches to God - other than through His Son Jesus Christ - are foolishness to God. Read John 3:16-17.

Now to the “meat” of this lesson. A crucial point is made in verses 21-23. We are to renounce all glorying in men – which includes ourselves – and others.

To glory in men means we trust them, - we look to them for answers - and as a source of life and blessing. In every generation, we have historical records to show that when people put their trust and hope in man - they get hurt. Praise God, there are some men and women who can be trusted. But even these should not be glorified. For they are not the source of life and they are not the source of blessing. Even if this person gave something to you when you desperately needed it - they were not the source of the blessing - only the channel through which the blessing flowed. The True Believer in Christ Jesus will glorify only God and him only will they praise and worship.

There are two reasons given in this passage why we are not to glory in another person - and most of us just run through this passage so quickly that we miss it.

First: Look at verse 21 - “all things are yours.” The Believer possesses all things. When we glory in another person - we begin to minimize our own dignity and the exalted position God has placed us in. The physical universe belongs to all Believers! God is going to remake the entire universe - the heavens and the earth. And all the Believers are going to inherit all!

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Life belongs to Believers. We're talking about "real life" - abundant life - life that has purpose - life that has meaning and significance - life that includes triumph and victory over the trials and sufferings of this world. Death belongs to the Believer. Death does not have a hold on us - Believers hold death within our grip through Jesus Christ. Death has been conquered through Jesus Christ for every Believer. Present as well as future things belong to the Believer.

God never meant for Believers to set suffering through this life - with only a hope of some future day of blessing and victory. It is not only some future day - when the Believer is to be the head and not the tail. Believers are already the head - and not the tail.

Most of us simply don't know that - so we accept the delivery of the packages of defeat and discouragement. The next time Satan tries to get you to accept a delivery of defeat and discouragement - Don't accept delivery - and point out that it belongs to the lost.

Second: Look at verse 23 - "and you are of Christ." Believers belong to Christ - And Christ belongs to God. Believers possess all things only because of Christ Jesus. Without Christ Jesus, we don't have anything more than what the world has. You know - pressure, - tension, - questioning, - wondering, - apprehension, - anxiety, - uncertainty, - insecurity. Believers owe our very lives to Christ Jesus - and not to any man any where at any time.

A few years ago – a situation developed where - my physical life was rapidly departing from my body. I'm told that had it not been for the medical personnel doing the things they did at precisely the time they did it - that I wouldn't be alive. My wife was told that if we had been only as far as next door - that there would not have been time to get me there and save my physical life.

But it wasn't anyone of those talented and trained people that made sure that I was there when this happened. Jesus is the one who made sure that I was exactly at the place I would need to be in order to save the physical life.

It is that way with the Spiritual salvation that takes place. The person who gave their testimony - the preacher who proclaimed the message - Is not the one who opened your heart and helped you understand the need to be saved. It is Jesus Christ to whom we owe our salvation. He is the one who brought us to the place - physically, emotionally, and spiritually so that we could receive what we so desperately need. And Christ is God's. He came to earth to save mankind - Not for his own selfish desires - but in complete obedience to the will of the Heavenly Father. Jesus was in complete agreement and cooperation and will with the Heavenly Father. Let all our glory be to the Father - in the name of Jesus - and in the leading of the Holy Spirit.

It may seem petty to some - But it is of the utmost importance. Have we been giving some person or some organization the Glory that is rightfully God's? Have we been deceiving ourselves - by thinking we are a lot wiser than we really are? Have we been trying to understand the things of God's kingdom using our own ideas rather than simply following what is laid out in God's Word?

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