

*A Study on the
First Epistle
to the
Corinthians*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Bible Study Guides for the New Testament **4**

A Study on the First Epistle to the Corinthians

Introduction **11**

Chapter 1

Exhortation to Restore Unity **13**

Chapter 2

The Wisdom of God vis-a'-vis That of the World **15**

Chapter 3

Maturity of the Believer **23**

Chapter 4

Christ's Ministers Are Spectacles to the World **26**

Chapter 5

Dealing With Fornication **28**

Chapter 6

Judging Brothers, and Keeping Your Bodily Temple Clean **30**

Chapter 7

Marriage, or Not **39**

Chapter 8

Offending Our Brethren **43**

Chapter 9

Paul Defends His Ministry **45**

Chapter 10

The Sacraments and Punishments of the Jews Are Examples 47

Chapter 11

Proving Yourself in Prayer and in Celebrating the Lord's Supper 52

Chapter 12

Spiritual Gifts 55

Chapter 13

Agape Love 64

Chapter 14

Prophecy and Speaking in Tongues 66

Chapter 15

Resurrection 70

APPENDIX

Questions from 1 Corinthians 75

Links to Other Books Available 80

Bible Study Guides for the New Testament 81

Bible Study Guides for the New Testament

Writing a book was not on my mind when this effort was initiated some years ago. In fact, it began when a member of my Sunday School class commented that his son had talked about committing suicide the previous week. As a result, I felt an urge to see what the Bible had to say about hope, with a view toward helping his son cope with his suicidal feelings. The result of that effort was an article entitled: “Hope and the Miraculous Three Pound Computer,” located in Chapter 6 of the book [After the Big Bang](#). My next writing endeavor was a fallout from a Sunday School class discussion about temptations, or trials, and their purpose in our lives. An article entitled “The Trials of Job” located in Chapter 7 of the same book resulted from that effort. After this I began to feel a prodding from the Lord to continue studying and writing. The chapters in this book document what I subsequently learned about two of God’s greatest and most marvelous creations: earth and mankind, who He made to exercise dominion over it.

Some of the material presented in these New Testament Bible Study Guides conflicts with commonly held viewpoints, and differs as well on the definitions

of some words used to explicate them. One thing I have learned through this effort is that the meaning of many of the words used in the Bible is not uniformly agreed to by expositors, and in many cases, not agreed to by the various versions of the Bible. For example, in the KJV of the old testament (OT), the word “soul” is used over 780 times. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words notes that in over 400 of these uses, the Hebrew word used is misinterpreted. I mention this not to heap criticism on the KJV, for it is my personal Bible, and I love it dearly, but to point out the importance of consulting Hebrew and Greek sources, and good conservative lexicons, when trying to understand difficult scripture. The meaning of some words is not absolutely clear even then. Nevertheless, this is the process I have followed in this effort.

I am a retired engineer: my education and work experience sparked a great interest in details. I found that to understand the technical difficulties and problems that arise in the operation of complex machines, a good understanding of the details of the design is absolutely necessary. What is presented herein is an analysis of important details in God’s creation of the earth and man: his habitat and milieu. However, no description is completely

adequate to portray the unbelievable complexity and efficacy of tripartite man. Scientists and engineers have tried to duplicate the various subsystems in God's design of man for years, with limited success. Part of the problem is that we do not understand many of the operational details, but the greatest impediment is probably the fact that man is composed of three parts: spirit, soul, and body, two of which (spirit and soul) are immaterial, and are thus largely beyond the scope of scientific and medical analysis. The third part, the highly complex body, is strongly influenced by these two immaterial parts. God has given mankind a great challenge in trying to understand tripartite man. What better model could we find for our study than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: spirit, soul and body in perfect relationship. When Jesus came to earth He emptied Himself, and was formed in the likeness and fashion of a man. Like us, He was a tripartite being, but without a sin nature. Thus, He was the perfect man, the ideal for all to emulate.

I read a book several years ago by Watchman Nee in which he made the observation that one of the primary ways God speaks to us is through our intuition. After that I began to try to follow the guidance I received in this manner, and what is presented herein is largely a result of that attempt. I

hasten to add that all readers will not agree with my conclusions. I have learned much about God's creation, and His design of man through this effort: that may be the primary purpose He had in mind. My hope is that readers will find new ideas in these words that drive them to the absolute authority: God's Word - the Bible.

As references I have used the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Revised Version (RV), and Recovery Versions of the bible, as well as the Interlinear NIV Hebrew - English Old Testament (OT), and the Interlinear Greek - English New Testament (GNT). I have also used Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon, the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, and Webster's New World Dictionary for word interpretation. Unless otherwise noted, scripture passages quoted are from the KJV.

The John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible and Dictionary, Authorized King James Version, Chicago 1950, was a primary reference source. This Bible was given to my wife and I in 1957, and is one of my dearest treasures. It has

been rebound once, and is in need of a repair job at the present time. Thus, the reader can appreciate the usage it has had over these 62 years, most of which has been during the last 25 years. The book introductions have been generally quoted from this source, with changes (mostly grammatical) made only when considered necessary.

Finally, I want to recognize the lady that takes everything I have written, and makes the necessary changes for placing it on the internet. Ms. Sandra Crosnoe is the daughter of two of my, and my deceased wife's, dearest friends, Ted and Jimmie Crosnoe (also deceased). When God moved us (my wife and I), to a Methodist Church in Pasadena, Texas, in 1962, Ted, Jimmie, and their two daughters were among the group of several families in the church that were touched by God in a mighty way that led to a weekly Bible study, that resulted in many changed lives. As the years passed by, and the families went in different directions, we were not able to maintain the close relationship we had in Pasadena. We settled in Lubbock, Texas, in 1982, and I got the call to start writing on the Bible. Sometime after that Sandra was in Lubbock and we got together for dinner. When she learned of my involvement in writing on the Bible she immediately volunteered to help in making it available by publishing

it on the internet. She may not have known what she was getting into, for God has not ceased from giving me Bible subjects to study and write about. This series on the New Testament has been our greatest undertaking, and Sandra's help (as always) has been essential. She has corrected my grammar, argued with me on interpretation, prepared the pictorial cover pages, and generally polished the appearance of the various books in ways that I could never have accomplished on my own. Without her help, this (and other) documents would never have been made available to the general public. I do so appreciate all her work. I believe Ted and Jimmie will give her a "well done" when she joins them in heaven. Her personal website is [Finding Gems and Sharing Them](#).

These bible study guides are available at no charge to read, print, download and share on a platform called Scribd (no membership is required to read/download). They are all listed and linked as a group in [Bible Study Guides by Jesse C. Jones on Scribd](#). Upon completion, most of them will contain study questions in the Appendix. Other works available are listed and linked with [Books for Believers and Seekers](#). If you hit a pop-up page on Scribd asking you to become a member to read free, simply click the 'x' in the upper right corner

to remove the pop-up and continue to our links on Scribd. My personal website is [Revealed by Fire - Jesse's Studies](#) if you wish to see my latest articles and updates.

It is my sincere hope that these works will guide you to a personal ongoing relationship with Jesus and a life led and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

JESSE JONES

Introduction

From the John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible

“Leaving Antioch, on the third missionary journey, Paul passed through Phrygia and Galatia and came to Ephesus where he remained over two years. It was a much longer time that he had spent in any of these journeys. It was during this time that reports reached the apostle concerning the moral and spiritual state of things in the Corinthian church. This was the occasion of writing this letter.

There were many things at work to hinder the power and progress of the Gospel in Corinth. . . . the apostle came to Corinth from Athens, and remained there eighteen months. He began his labors by preaching in the synagogue, but was driven out of it and was compelled to give his instructions in the home of Justus. During this stay he founded the church at Corinth, and wrote epistles to the Thessalonians, which were his first epistles.

While in Ephesus he received news of a distressing nature relative to the state of things in this church. It was divided by the party spirit, one faction adhering to Paul, another to Apollos, another to Cephas and another party that

gave itself the name of Christ. Immoralities of various kinds prevailed in the church. There were irregularities in public worship, and mistaken views of the resurrection. These were some of the things that this epistle was designed to correct. The principle thing discussed here is how to provide help for the church in Jerusalem which was suffering severe persecution at this time.

Clement of Rome, in his epistle to this church, refers to Paul's epistle. It was written from Ephesus in 57 or 58 A.D.”

Exhortation to Restore Unity

Paul addresses his letter to those at Corinth that are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints, along with all the others who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul draws a line here between those in the church at Corinth that are (or are being) sanctified and called to be saints, from those that believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, but have not yet entered into sanctification. He seems to emphasize the fact that all the above, both sanctified and not yet sanctified, are followers of the same Lord. He goes on to beseech them to speak in unity, and be perfectly joined together, of a common mind and purpose, with no divisions among them.

Paul had been told that there were contentions within the church, so he confronts them by asking: are you of Paul? or are you of Apollos? or are you of Cephas? or Christ? Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul? He goes on to tell them that Christ did not send him to baptize, but to preach the gospel: and not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be diminished. Preaching the word of the cross is nonsense to them that are perishing; but unto us that are being saved it is God's power

of faith. For it is written, I will destroy [bring to naught] the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? or any of today's thinkers? hath not God made the wisdom of this world look foolish? For God ordained that the world would not know Him using its own wisdom. Rather, it pleased God by the "foolishness" of preaching to save those who believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, which is a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks. But to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks (John 6:44; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:2), Christ is the power and the wisdom of God. For God's "nonsense" is greater than humanity's "wisdom." Look at those God has chosen: not many are wise, and not many wield power or boast of noble birth. But God chose those that the world considers weak, in order to shame the strong. And God chose what the world considers common, in order to bring to nothing what the world considers important, so no one should boast before God. It is God's doing that brought you to Christ, so if you want to boast, boast about Him.

The Wisdom of God vis-a'-vis That of the World

Paul begins this chapter by telling the Corinthians that when he came to them before, on his third missionary journey, he did not come with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, but he came knowing nothing but Jesus Christ and His crucification. He came in weakness, fear, and much trembling, and his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the sum and substance of the gospel, and should be the primary subject of preaching. When Christ crucified is powerfully preached, the divine power of faith from the Word will persuade men to believe, and to receive salvation of their souls.

Paul preaches the wisdom of God in a mystery - a hidden mystery that God ordained before the world began, unknown to the leaders of this world. For if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord from whom this glory flows. *“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no one's heart has imagined all the things that God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:9-13).

The above quote contains one of the most significant teachings of the Bible: believers into Jesus Christ can receive the third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit, into their bodies, to provide guidance, power (faith), and discernment necessary for sanctification, which will make them holy (2 Corinthians 3:18). The scripture seems clear about this, for Luke 11:13 says, “*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?*” But many individuals, who attest that they have received Jesus as Lord and Savior, come asking for prayer to receive the Holy Spirit, only to leave in doubt about receiving after being prayed for (often with the laying-on of hands). This is a problem that apparently never arose in the first-century church. Some in the book of Acts were baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 8:15-17), and some by

John's baptism for repentance (Acts 19:2), but did not know of the Holy Spirit. They were later prayed for by Peter and John in one case, and by Paul in the other, and they received the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues and prophesying. In another case Peter went to minister to a group of Gentiles, and while he was preaching the gospel, God poured the Holy Spirit out on those that were there: they received the Holy Spirit without prayer, and apparently without asking Him. What we note from the book of Acts about the first-century church is that there seems to be no questioning or doubt about having, or not having, the Holy Spirit. Incredulity associated with receiving the Holy Spirit appears to be a more recent development.

I received the Holy Spirit in 1963 at a Layman's Retreat in Palestine, Texas, in the company of six other men from a Methodist church in Pasadena, Texas. We were all unexpectedly blessed by a Damascus Road experience which occurred within the small bungalow where we were housed during the retreat. We had returned from the morning session and were outside of our bungalow talking, when one of the men suggested that we go inside for prayer. I did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ at that time, and when it came to praying I always struggled. I suspect that the other men in the group were in somewhat the same condition: believing **in** Christ (an objective experience),

but not believing **into** Him (a subjective experience), often expressed as “having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.” We went into the bungalow and Stan (who had suggested praying) began to lead the prayer. There was no mention of the Holy Spirit during the entire time. Stan asked us to begin casting the things in our lives that we would like to be rid of into our cupped hands, in front of us. As the prayer session went on for awhile I unexpectedly began to weep - something that I never did (I considered it unmanly). At about the same time I began to be aware of a strange and powerful presence in the corner of the room behind me. I recognized immediately that the Lord had entered our bungalow, but what I sensed was a source of indescribable light that seemed to be communicating with my inner being, most of which I didn't totally understand until later. As the prayer time came to an end embarrassment about my tear stained face was replaced by surprise when I realized that all of us had shared the same experience. We all knew that something had changed in our lives, but we did not realize that we had received the gift of the Holy Spirit until later. Several of the men began confessing what they were going to do as a result of what had happened, e.g. quit smoking, quit gambling, starting a men's prayer group at church, etc. I did not recognize all the things that had changed in my life immediately: some took several months

for me to clearly understand, but one thing did stand out: Jesus Christ knew me as a person and wanted to come into my life to make me like Himself (in His image). Something very similar must have been repeated with all the other men in the group. [Anyone interested in the full story of this experience is directed to the book, [“A Man of God,” by Jesse C. Jones](#), available free online.]

I believe it is the wording in Luke 11:13 (see above) that fosters confusion about this subject: it seems to say that if we ask God for the Holy Spirit He will give it to us. But there is considerably more involved here than simply asking. The “Complete Jewish Bible” uses the term *“keep asking Him,”* and the Recovery Version of the NT has this comment referring to this passage, “Before His death the Lord told the disciples to **ask** for the Holy Spirit; after His death and resurrection He told them to **receive** the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). Regarding the commandments in the Scriptures for which the requirements have not been fulfilled, we must ask; regarding the commandments for which the requirements have been fulfilled, we must receive.” John Owen, recognized as the greatest theologian of the Puritan era, says this; “God alone gives the Spirit to us (Luke 11:13; John 3:34; 1 John 3:24). This ‘giving’ is an act of authority and freedom and it proceeds from the riches

of God's grace (Luke 11:13; John 4:10, 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:7, 12:7; Titus 3:6). God sends Him to us (Psalm 104:30; John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7). This 'sending' implies that the Holy Spirit was not with a person before He was sent to him. It tells us that this is a special work of God which He has not done before."

R. A. Torrey, a well-known Bible teacher from a more recent time says this about the baptism of the Holy Spirit: "The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God coming upon the believer, filling his mind with a real apprehension of truth, and taking possession of his faculties, imparting to him gifts not otherwise his, but which qualify him for the service to which God has called him."

Based on the NT examples, comments from recognized theologians, and the experiences described above, I believe that giving of the Holy Spirit is an act of God, based on the believer's readiness to make major changes in the direction of his life. Romans 8:9 says, "*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.*" 1 Corinthians 6:9 adds, "*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*" After my experience at the Methodist Retreat I soon recognized that my life goals began to change, somewhat like Paul's experience after his

encounter on the road to Damascus. My relationship with my wife also changed dramatically: we became one flesh as described in Ephesians 5:31. I noted a similar change in the other men present when God entered our lives personally at the retreat.

I would like to make one other point on receiving the Holy Spirit. When discussing our destination in afterlife with a friend when I was about 18-years old, I confessed that I was not certain that I would go to heaven. My friend, a strong Catholic believer, had no doubt that she would go to heaven. I later became aware of the scripture in Romans 8:16, which says, "*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*" I had no such witness within me when I was 18-years old. Some time after the experience at the retreat I came across this verse again, and much to my joy I sensed that I now did have the witness within—I was 35-years old at that time. I believe that God placed this verse in the Bible as a promise that we would confidently recognize our new relationship with Him. I read recently that John Wesley used this verse to determine the validity of his convert's experience.

The Complete Jewish Bible has this to say about 2 Corinthians 2:14-16: "*Now the natural man does not receive the things from the Spirit of God—to him they are nonsense! Moreover, he is unable to grasp them, because they are evaluated through*

the Spirit. But the person who has the Spirit can evaluate everything, while no one is in a position to evaluate him. For who has known the mind of Adonai? Who will council him? But we have the mind of the Messiah!"

Maturity of the Believer

Paul could not speak to the Corinthians when ministering to them earlier. They were babes in Christ, and Paul fed them with the milk of the Word, for they were not able to digest solid food of the Spirit. They were still worldly, for there was envying, strife, and divisions among them: they continued to conduct themselves as worldly men, living by human standards, with one saying I am of Paul, and another saying I am of Apollos. But who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed. Paul planted the seed, and Apollos watered it; but it was God who made it grow: and he is the only one able to cause the growth. He that plants and he that waters are fellow workers with God, and you are God's building. Using the grace that God gave me, I laid a foundation, like a skilled master-builder, and another man is building on it. But let each one be careful how he builds, for no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ the Messiah. Some will use gold, silver, and precious stones to build on this foundation; while others will use wood, grass, or straw. But each one's work will be shown for what it is; the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire. If the work survives,

the worker will receive a reward; but if it is burned, he will suffer loss: but he himself will be saved (plucked) out of the fire (severe trial). Do you not know that you are God's temple, and that God lives within you? If anyone destroys God's temple, He will destroy them, for the temple is holy, and you are the temple.

Let no one fool himself. If someone thinks he is wise (by the world's standards), let him become foolish, so that he may become really wise. For the wisdom of this world is nonsense, as far as God is concerned. Therefore, let no man glory in men, for all things are your's; whether Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Matthew Henry's summary of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 says: "To have a high opinion of our own wisdom, is but to flatter ourselves; and self-flattery is the next step to self-deceit. The wisdom that worldly men esteem, is foolishness with God. How justly does he despise, and how easily can he baffle and confound it! The thoughts of the wisest men in the world, have vanity, weakness, and folly in them. All this should teach us to be humble, and make us willing to be taught of God, so as not to be led away, by pretenses to human wisdom and skill, from the simple truths revealed by Christ. Mankind is very

apt to oppose the design of the mercies of God. Observe the spiritual riches of a true believer; all are yours, even ministers and ordinances. Nay, the world itself is yours. Saints have as much of it as infinite wisdom sees fit for them, and they have it with the Divine blessing. Life is yours, that you may have a season and opportunity to prepare for the life of heaven; and death is yours, that you may go to the possession of it. It is the kind of message to take you from sin and sorrow, and to guide you to your Father's house. Things present are yours, for your support on the road; things to come are yours, to delight you for ever at your journey's end. If we belong to Christ, and are true to him, all good belongs to us, and is sure to us. Believers are the subjects of his kingdom. He is Lord over us, we must own his dominion, and cheerfully submit to his command. God in Christ, reconciling a sinful world to himself, and pouring the riches of his grace on a reconciled world, is the sum and substance of the gospel.”

Christ's Ministers Are Spectacles to the World

Men should regard us as Christ's servants, as stewards of the mysteries of God, and it is required that men selected as stewards be trustworthy. But it matters very little to me how I am evaluated by man's judgment, I don't even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against me, but I am not justified thereby: He that judges me is the Lord. So don't judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, for He will bring to light what is now hidden in darkness, and will make manifest the motives of people's hearts, and each one will receive what they deserve, good or bad.

I have used myself and Apollos as examples to teach you not to take the side of one leader over that of another. The gifts that each has were given to him from God, and thus it is God that should be honored, not the one receiving the gift. All Christians are not exposed to the same experiences, some suffer greater hardships than others. Using considerable irony, Paul describes the particulars of the apostles' sufferings, comparing them with blessed Corinthians. The apostles were fools for Christ's sake, suffering from hunger

and thirst, they were naked, they were buffeted, and they had no certain dwelling place. They toil, working with their hands to make a living; when reviled, they bless; and when persecuted, they endure; when they are slandered, they continue making their appeal. They are considered among the worst and vilest of men; as the filth of the world, and as the offscouring of all things.

Whatever believers into Jesus Christ suffer from men, they must be prepared follow the example of their Lord: to be despised and abused. It is much better to be rejected, despised, and ill used, as Paul was, than to have the favour of the world. Even though we may be rejected by the world, yet we may be precious to God, gathered up with his own hand, and placed upon his throne.

Paul concludes this chapter by mentioning that some of the Corinthians were incensed because he had not come to visit them. He told them that he would come soon, if the Lord wills; and he asked whether he should come with a rod, or in love, and in a spirit of meekness.

Dealing With Fornication

Sexual sin within the church body at Corinth had been reported to Paul: and it was especially disgraceful, involving a man cohabiting with his father's wife. Should you not have felt some shame for the body, and taken action to remove this man from among you? For I am with you spiritually, and have already judged the man who has done this as if I were present. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when you are assembled with me present in spirit, hand over such a person to Satan for his old nature to be destroyed, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. I assume that in today's vernacular this meant that the man should be cut off from any association with the church body, and thus from any spiritual guidance, in the hope that when he "hit bottom" he might repent, seek God's forgiveness, and thus be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul continued his letter by reminding them that "a little leaven contaminates the whole lump." Satan would love to have access to the church body through this evildoer. I have warned you that you should not keep

company with any brother that is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a drunkard, or an extortioner. For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? God will judge them. Isn't it those within the body that you judge? Those which are without God judgeth, therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Judging Brothers, and Keeping Your Bodily Temple Clean

Paul was highly offended that the Corinthians chose to settle their disputes by going before secular judges. He reminded them that God would use them later as judges in the new world, and thus, they should be able to fairly judge between brethren.

In bringing lawsuits against each other they had failed to follow the Lord's guidance. Paul councils them to have a humble spirit, and be willing to suffer wrong, or be cheated, and still forgive. He asks, don't you know that unrighteous people will have no share in the Kingdom of God? Don't deceive yourself: people who engage in sexual relations before marriage, who worship idols, who engage in sex after marriage with someone other than their spouse, who engage in active or passive (offering no resistance) homosexuality, who steal, who are greedy, who drink to excess, who assail people with contemptuous language, and who rob, will not share in the Kingdom of God. Some of you were guilty of partaking in these sinful acts, but you have been washed by regeneration and are being sanctified, you are justified by the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful to

believers, but all things are not expedient. All things may be lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

In our world of today much of Paul's guidance here would be totally ignored, considered out-of date and apply to a different time. However, even a superficial reading of the Bible should quickly disabuse the reader of that thought, for the Bible reaffirms these principles many times over.

Now the question about the sexual life of the married and the unmarried: Paul wrote that he had no specific guidance about this from the Lord, but he provided some helpful advice. If you have received the Holy Spirit you are the members of Christ's body, for the Holy Spirit is the spirit of Christ. Should you as a member of Christ's body join it to a harlot's body? Paul answers this question with a resounding, "God forbid". He goes on to add that anyone joined to the Lord is one spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17). I interpret this to mean that the ultimate goal in sanctification is for our human spirit to be so in-tune with the Holy Spirit that agreement between the two is total.

"Gill's Exposition of the Whole Bible" says this about Verse 15: "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot. . . Not in marriage, but in carnal copulation, and unclean embraces, is one body with her for two shall be one flesh; what is originally said of copulation in lawful marriage, in which man

and wife, legally coupled together, become one flesh, is applied to the unlawful copulation of a man with an harlot, by which act they also become one body, one flesh; and which is made use of by the apostle, to deter the members of Christ from the commission of this sin, which makes a member of Christ one body and flesh with an harlot, nothing is more monstrous and detestable.”

Matthew Henry has this to say about 1 Corinthians 6:12-20: “Some among the Corinthians seem to have been ready to say, all things are lawful for me. This dangerous conceit St. Paul opposes. There is a liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, in which we must stand fast. But surely a Christian would never put himself into the power of any bodily appetite. The body is for the Lord; is to be an instrument of righteousness to holiness, therefore is never to be made an instrument of sin. It is an honor to the body, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead; and it will be an honor to our bodies, that they will be raised. The hope of a resurrection to glory, should keep Christians from dishonoring their bodies by fleshly lusts. And if united to Christ by faith, the whole man becomes a member of his spiritual body. Other vices may be conquered by fighting that are here cautioned against, only by flight (fleeing). Vast multitudes are cut off by this vice in its various forms and consequences. Its effects fall not only directly upon the body, but often upon the mind. Our

bodies have been redeemed from deserved condemnation and hopeless slavery by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. We are to be clean, as vessels fitted for our Master's use. Being united to Christ as one spirit, and bought with a price of unspeakable value, the believer should consider himself as wholly the Lord's, by the strongest ties. May we make it our business, to the latest day and hour of our lives, to glorify God with our bodies, and with our spirits which are his."

There are some concepts introduced in this chapter that are difficult to understand in our day: What does it mean to become one flesh, and what does becoming one spirit mean? I have suggested above that becoming one spirit can be understood as the Holy Spirit entering our lives and gradually bringing our human spirit into conformity with God's Spirit. This is the process of sanctification that begins when we receive the Holy Spirit and continues until we die.

Becoming one flesh is much more difficult for me to understand, and try to explain. We know that God's intent in this regard is for us to become one flesh with our wives. Ephesians 5:31 says, "*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*" Verse 32 goes on to say that this is a great mystery, which confirms the fact that it is difficult to understand. Genesis 1:27 says, "*So God created man in His own image, in the*

image of God created He him; male and female created He them.” Genesis 2:7 adds, “*And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*” Finally, “*God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh*” (Genesis 2:21-24). These verses are loaded with information relative to our subject, for Ephesians 5:31 states that this “*one flesh*” law also applies to marriage in our own day.

To quote Matthew Henry’s comments on Ephesians 5:22-33: “The duty of wives is submission to their husbands in the Lord, which includes honouring and obeying them, from a principle of love to them. The duty of husbands is to love their wives. The love of Christ to the church is an example, which is sincere, pure, and constant, notwithstanding her failures. Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify it in this world, and glorify it in the next, that he might bestow on all his members a principle of holiness, and deliver them from the guilt, the pollution, and the dominion of sin, by those

influences of the Holy Spirit, of which baptismal water was the outward sign. The church and believers will not be without spot or wrinkle till they come to glory. But those only who are sanctified now, shall be glorified hereafter. The words of Adam, mentioned by the apostle, are spoken literally of marriage; but they have also a hidden sense in them, relating to the union between Christ and his church. It was a kind of type, as having resemblance. There will be failures and defects on both sides, in the present state of human nature, yet this does not alter the relation. All the duties of marriage are included in unity and love. And while we adore and rejoice in the condescending love of Christ, let husbands and wives learn hence their duties to each other. Thus, the worst evils would be prevented, and many painful effects would be avoided.”

My understanding of the meaning of “*one flesh*,” as used in 1 Corinthians 6:16, and Ephesians 5:31 is as follows: The Greek word for marriage in the old testament (OT) is “*laqah*,” which means “to take,” or “grasp.” In the new testament (NT) the Greek noun “*gamos*,” means wedding, marriage, consummation of marriage, and wedding feast. The importance of marriage is clearly presupposed in the NT. It is based on God’s commandment as related in the creation story (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-7; 1 Corinthians 6:16; and Ephesians 5:31). The wording in these scriptures seems to convey the

message that God is doing what He can to restore the male/female marriage relationship that existed between Adam and Eve at the beginning. He reminds us that in marriage we are one flesh, just as Eve was made from one of Adam's ribs, and thus was apparently of the same flesh as Adam. Genesis 2:22 says, "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He [builded He into] a woman, and brought her to unto the man." He also programmed both husband and wife with sexual desire, so they would be fruitful, and multiply on the earth. 1 Corinthians 7:4-5 says, "*The wife hath not power of [over] her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*"

I believe a one-flesh marriage relationship exists when both parties manifest all three types of love (*agape*, *phileo*, and *eros*) for each other. Agape love is described in 1 Corinthians Chapter 13, and I think of it as God's love, for it is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Phileo love is brotherly love that we hold for close personal friends, and less intensely for other acquaintances; and Eros or erotic love is compound affection between the sexes consisting of esteem, benevolence, and animal desire. Sexual intimacy reinforces the one-

flesh principal, for resulting offspring have DNA genes from both father and mother. We might speculate that Eve's DNA came from Adam, but that doesn't appear to be the case, since God created both male and female, and He knew how to program both. But there is a mystery here in that in some way the modern male and female couple coming together in a one-flesh godly marriage mirrors the Adam/Eve relationship, which seems to be God's plan.

1 Corinthians 6:16 introduces an even more difficult subject: *"What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall be one flesh."* And 1 Corinthians 6:18 -19 add: *"Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit that is within you, which you have of God, and ye are not your own?"* In sinning against his physical body, the Christian fornicator sins against the entire body of Christ to which he belongs (1 Corinthians 6:15). The sin of fornication, is a sacrilegious desecration of God's temple to profane uses. Chastity is the guardian of the temple to prevent anything unclean entering which might provoke the indwelling God to abandon it as defiled. The fornicator treats his body as if it were "his own," to give to a harlot if he pleases (1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Corinthians 6:20), but we have no right to disgrace our body, which is the Lord's. I believe we can

understand the seriousness of this sin against the Holy Spirit when we realize that the only unforgivable sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:32; Mark 3:29). When a believer who has received the Holy Spirit commits fornication with an harlot, (or anyone else), this unforgivable sin seems dangerously close.

In addition to the considerations above, the statement regarding “becoming one body with an harlot,” should bring any potential offender up short. It is difficult to understand how this manifests in the life of the perpetrator, but I assume that it must be something like what happened to Adam, when he ate fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden: he forfeited the presence of God in his life, and accepted the guidance of Satan. Of course, Adam didn't understand what was at stake when he accepted the fruit from his wife, he probably wanted to prolong their relationship, so he accepted what she offered. The Christian drawn to commit fornication with a harlot may be like Adam: drawn by the attraction of the harlot and unaware of the consequences, he makes the choice to satisfy his desire (lust), loses his relationship with Jesus Christ, and receives Satan's guidance in return. God forbid!

Marriage, or Not

Paul's point-of-view on marriage expressed in this chapter seems contrary to God's edict in Genesis 1:28, wherein He told Adam and Eve (the first married couple on earth) to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish (fill) the earth.

However, Paul was addressing mankind from a point-of-view that the end was near, and thus he was not concerned with populating the earth. Paul could also be responding to the distressing condition of the Corinthian church, which was torn by factions, one faction following Paul, another adhering to Apollos, and another to Cephas. He refers to both of these concerns in this chapter so possibly both were in his mind when he wrote this letter. One of his primary concerns seems to have been associated with keeping relationships between men and women as simple as possible. He also seems to feel that in view of the short time left, married men would be better served spending their time as though they had no wife (to be free from wifely cares). He adds that those that weep should be as though they wept not, and those that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and those that use this world as not abusing it. Earthly sorrow and joy and wealth are

things which are merely transient and unreal when compared with the difficulties we will face at the time of Jesus' second coming, and the end of our world (Matthew 24:3-21).

Paul is also very concerned for them to exercise the gift that God has given them. Let each person live the life the Lord has assigned, and live it in the condition they were in when the Lord called them. If a man was circumcised when he was called, he should not try to remove the marks of his circumcision. If he was uncircumcised he should not undergo the covenant of circumcision. Being circumcised means nothing, and being uncircumcised means nothing. What does matter is keeping God's commandments. Each person should remain in the condition he was in when he was called.

Paul also gives other guidelines for the married and unmarried in this chapter:

1. Because of the danger of sexual immorality each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should give his wife what she is entitled to in the marriage relationship, and likewise, the wife should give the husband what he is entitled to.

2. The wife is not in charge of her own body, the husband is; nor is the husband in charge of his body, but the wife is. Do not deprive each other except for a short time by mutual agreement.
3. Single people and widows can remain unmarried: but if they cannot exercise self-control, they should get married for it is better to get married than to keep burning with sexual desire.
4. A woman is not to separate herself from her husband, but if she does she is to remain single, or be reconciled to her husband. Also a husband is not to leave his wife.
5. If any brother who has a wife that is not a believer and she is satisfied to go on living with him, he should not leave her. Likewise, if any woman has an unbelieving husband who is satisfied to go on living with her, she is not to leave him. For how do you know whether you will be able to save your wife or husband?
6. You were bought at a price, so do not become slaves of men.
7. A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives, but if he dies she is free to marry anyone she wishes, provided he is a believer in the Lord. However, Paul believes she will be happier if she remains unmarried.

Christians should maintain a holy indifference toward the world. As to relations; they must not set their hearts on the comforts of the state. As to afflictions; they must not indulge the sorrow of the world: even in sorrow the heart may be joyful. As to worldly enjoyments; here is not their rest. As to worldly employment; those that prosper in trade, and increase in wealth, should hold their possessions as though they held them not. As to all worldly concerns; they must keep the world out of their hearts, that they may not abuse it when they have it in their hands. All worldly things are show; nothing solid. All will be quickly gone. Wise concern about worldly interests is a duty; but to be full of care, to have anxious and perplexing care, is a sin. By this maxim the apostle solves the case whether it were advisable to marry. That condition of life is best for every man, which is best for his soul, and keeps him most clear of the cares and snares of the world. Let us reflect on the advantages and snares of our own condition in life; that we may improve the one, and escape as far as possible all injury from the other. And whatever cares press upon the mind, let time still be kept for the things of the Lord. **This paragraph contains thoughts from Matthew Henry's Commentary on Chapter 7:25-35.**

Offending Our Brethren

This chapter addresses eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols, and other actions that might possibly be offensive to our brethren in Christ. Paul makes it clear that eating things offered to idols in sacrifice are of no consequence since we worship the only true God, although there are many so-called gods in our world. However, there are those that continue to eat things offered to an idol, and due to a lack of knowledge, their weak conscience is defiled. I can think of only one incident where this concern has been raised during my lifetime. During the past few years some concern has been raised about “hallal” meat that has been processed in accordance with Muslim law, which does not allow the “stunning” of the animal before killing it. The fact that some cases have arisen in which the packaged meat was not labelled as being processed in according to Muslim law has disturbed some purchasers. As far as religious beliefs are concerned I would be inclined to believe that this would fall under Paul’s statement that this is much ado about nothing. However, if the concern is about the fact that the animal is not stunned before it is killed, that may be a valid problem to particular individuals.

A greater problem seems to be that of offending a brother or sister by some act on the part of someone they regard as a follower of Jesus Christ. I am particularly sensitive to this problem having experienced it in a work situation. My wife and I decided to abstain from drinking alcohol in any situation in 1958, after I had been involved in a “party” situation while working in a foreign country. We decided this for our own benefit as well as for our three children, two of which were still young and living at home. We didn’t know that it would keep them from drinking as they got older, but we figured the chances were better for us to set that example rather than the alternative. It just so happened that four years later I accepted a job as manager of a facility with a significant number of employees. In this position my wife and I often encountered employees in a non-working situation, and I felt very encouraged to be able to set this example. I don’t have any way of knowing what effect it had on our employees, but I know that they respected me, and I can’t help believing that some of that came from my wife and I being strong believers into Jesus Christ, and living out that way of life in all situations.

Paul says that when we act in a way that creates a stumbling block in the life of a brother we wound their weak conscience, and that is a sin against Christ.

Paul Defends His Ministry

Paul states that he is an apostle, a free man, and one that has seen Jesus. He reminds the Corinthians that they are living proof that he is the Lord's emissary. When people put him to the test he reminds them that he does not exercise the rights of other ministers that are given food and drink, or those that are accompanied by believing wives. He and Barnabas seem to be the only ministers that continue to work for their living. He gives them examples of others that are provided for in their efforts, such as soldiers, farmers with vineyards, and shepherds over flocks producing milk. He then quotes the Bible: *"thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn."* In other words, the ox should be allowed to eat some of the corn in the field he is treading. Paul then goes on to say, "we have sown spiritual seed among you, should we not expect some material harvest?"

Paul then adds that he has not claimed any of these rights for himself, nor does he mention these rights so they would be ministered to him. For though he preaches the gospel, he has nothing to glory about. Necessity is laid upon him; woe unto him, if he does not preach the gospel. If he does so willingly, he

will earn a reward; but if he does it unwillingly, simply because he has been entrusted with a job; what would be his reward? Just this: that in proclaiming the good news he can make it available without expecting remuneration of any kind. Paul says that he has made himself a slave to all in order to win as many as possible. With Jews under the law, he identified with them in order to win some to the Lord. To the weak he became as weak, in order to gain the weak. He became all things to all men, that he might be able to save some. This he did for the sake of the gospel, so that in all circumstances he might save some. *“Know ye not that those that run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize. And every man that strives for mastery does it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we strive for an incorruptible crown. I keep under [buffet] my body and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I should be rejected” (9:24-27).*

Although you may not have been a preacher, you have intermingled with others all your life. Looking back, how many of those do you think you might have touched for Jesus Christ, even in a small way. I recently had a lady from our church thank me in that way. I’m sorry to say that it made me aware of the pitifully few other contacts I have made in my life that would agree with that assessment. Even dear friends that I would love see in heaven will not be there as a result of any effort on my part. “You reap what you sow.”

The Sacraments and Punishments of the Jews Are Examples

Paul reminds the Corinthians how their fathers were led in the wilderness by a pillar-shaped fire by night and a pillar-shaped cloud by day. They all passed through the Red sea, and were all fed the same spiritual meat (manna), and they all drank of the same spiritual drink, which came from the Rock of Horeb. They also accepted Moses as God's representative, and thus they were "baptized" into Moses, by accepting him as their leader. But not all of them were pleasing to God, for some lusted after evil things, some were idolaters, some committed fornication, and some tempted (tried) our Lord, Jesus Christ. These historical events happened to them to provide a warning to us who live at the end of the age. Therefore, anyone who thinks he is standing up in faith, and well-pleasing to the Lord, needs to be careful not to fall. Verse 13 says:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man [man can bear]: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it."

The cup of blessing which we take in communion represents the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the bread which we break represents His body. It

seems to me that this ceremony is analogous to the Jews painting lamb's blood on the doorposts and lintel of their houses when preparing to leave Egypt. As the blood protected those in the house from the death angel, when the cup is taken worthily during the Lord's supper, it protects our heart from evil by reminding Satan that we belong to Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 says:

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. The word communion as used here means "sharing in the realization of the effects of the blood (i.e. death) of Christ, and the body of Christ, as set forth by the emblems in the Lord's Supper, of participation in what is derived from the Holy Spirit." (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, page 115)

John 6:53-56 says: *"Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* To (figuratively) eat Christ's flesh and to drink His blood is to receive His life. To eat is to take food that can be assimilated organically into, and be made a part, of our body. To (figuratively) eat the flesh

of the Lord Jesus is to receive Him within (spiritually), so that we gradually become conformed to His image. John the Baptist said it well: "He *must increase and I must decrease*." To drink Christ's blood (figurately) is to spiritually renew the protection afforded by the blood placed on the side posts and lintel of our hearts, thus restating our position *in Christ*, as believers who are not yet perfect, but whose sins are hidden forever through repentance.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 is the scripture most of us associate with the Lord's Supper: *The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.* It may be this scripture that has led many Protestant churches to believe that the Lord's Supper is just a memorial to Christ's death, a way of reminding us of the passion of Christ on the cross. It is that, but so much more. I believe this interpretation has resulted in weakening the body of Christ, and has been a great contributor to the lack of *tempering* (mixing or blending together) in the church body.

Hebrews Chapter 10 gives a stern warning to believers that fail to take part in the body of Christ, and refuse to come together to worship, fellowship, and participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Referring to these believers, Hebrews 10:25-27 Recovery Version says, *"Not abandoning our own assembling together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day drawing near, For when we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice of bulls and goats for sins, But a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fervor of fire, which is to consume the adversaries"*.

This should be a wake-up call for those that feel no need to take their place in the body of Christ, but instead are satisfied to be fed by television ministers and live their lives as "lone rangers". I believe the reason for this strong warning lies in the fact that the mystical body of Christ is the structure Jesus established to carry on His work on earth after His death. If we refuse to become part of that structure, for reasons other than ignorance, sickness, or incapacity, we basically turn our backs on the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Comments on Hebrews 10:29 in the Recovery Version of the Bible note that this is not referring to the second death, in which unbelievers are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, but that these believers may suffer dispensational punishment for their failures. Only the Lord Jesus Christ, our great Judge, is

able to look into the heart of those that refuse to take part in His plan for the church, and He is the One that will decide their fate. Hebrews 10:31 observes that *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”*.

To appreciate the great need Christ intended the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to fulfill in strengthening the body, consider the results of eating the bread and drinking the cup unworthily. 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 says, *“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”* Other versions of Bible use the word *“judgment”* rather than *“damnation”* in this passage. To fail to discern (conceive or recognize) Christ's mystical body (the church) when we partake in the Lord's Supper is to fail to realize that this sacrament was given for the purpose of tempering and strengthening members of the church body in His body. His mystical body represents Him (or is Him) in the world since His death and resurrection. Would it make a difference in our world if we were to believe and to act on this?

Proving Yourself in Prayer and in Celebrating the Lord's Supper

Verse 3 of Chapter 11 says that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman. Ephesians 5:22-23, 25 states this somewhat differently: *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”* There is another guideline given by God in Ephesians 5:31: *“For this cause shall man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”* I believe a fair summary of the guidance regarding the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage can be described as follows: God's plan is for both the husband and wife to be believers into Jesus Christ, and be joined in holy matrimony based on mutual love. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies, for he that loves his wife loves himself. If the husband loves his wife in this way, she is likely to find it easy to submit to him, and recognize that he is Christ's appointed head in the marriage.

Paul goes on to describe covering of the head in prayer: every man having his head covered when in prayer or prophesying, dishonors Christ, and every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her husband. Man is created in the image of God, and thus his head should not be covered (can you imagine God having a covering over his head? The woman is the glory of the man, for she was created of the man and for the man. If she prays uncovered it dishonors her husband by implying that she is no longer subject to him.

In trying to interpret this in today's vernacular I would be inclined to consider a woman covered by her hair. Verse 15 says, "*If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given to her for a covering.*" Even more to the point, Paul says that we (the churches of God) have no such customs, which seems to imply that covering (or uncovering) was not enforced, possibly not encouraged. Surprisingly, as a general rule, most of the Christians attending churches of today follow the guidance outlined in these passages: men do not pray or prophesy with their heads covered, and women are covered by their hair, sometimes wearing a hat.

In reference to the Lord's Supper, this chapter refers to partaking of the blood (grape juice or wine), and the bread (small cracker) unworthily as being

guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. The emphasis is placed on the need of discerning the Lord's body when celebrating the Lord's supper. Matthew Henry's commentary says this: "The apostle was addressing Christians, and warning them to beware of the temporal judgements with which God chastised his offending servants. And in the midst of judgement, God remembers mercy: he many times punishes those whom he loves. It is better to bear trouble in this world, than to be miserable for ever. The apostle points out the duty of those who come to the Lord's table. Self-examination is necessary to right attendance at this holy ordinance. If we would thoroughly search ourselves, to condemn and set right what we find wrong, we should stop Divine judgements. The apostle closes all with a caution against the irregularities of which the Corinthians were guilty at the Lord's table. Let all look to it, that they do not come together to God's worship, so as to provoke him, and bring down vengeance on themselves."

Spiritual Gifts

Most believers would be surprised to hear that the various gifts, ministrations, and operations, given to mankind are bestowed by three different entities of the triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says, *“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences [diversities] of administrations [ministrations], but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations [workings], but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”* It is helpful to our understanding of this passage of scripture to consider the meaning of the Greek words used to describe these three separate “gifts.” In verse 4, gifts from the Holy Spirit are described by the Greek word interpreted “charisma,” which is a noun meaning a spiritual gift. In verse 5, the Greek word for ministries is interpreted “diakonos,” meaning “administrations [ministrations],” a function, ministry, or office in the church. In verse 6, the Greek word for operations is interpreted “energema,” meaning “to put into effect.” When used in reference to God it refers to God’s power at work in the life of His people. My understanding of

this passage is that gifts are dispensed by the Holy Spirit at His discretion (1 Corinthians 12:11); ministers are selected by Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:5; Ephesians 4:8-11), and implemented by the Holy Spirit; and God the Father gives the go-ahead to various operations (workings) within the body, which are then guided by Christ, and implemented by the Holy Spirit.

We turn next to the various gifts, ministries, and endowments that these three categories include. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, and are listed below. Seven of these are repeated in various forms in other scriptures:

Charismatic Gifts

1. The “word of wisdom” refers to Christian enlightenment, usually regarding the future.
2. The “word of knowledge” is Christian enlightenment, usually for the present.
3. “Faith” is the power of persuasion that leads to belief. It is a gift that grows with use.
4. “Gifts of healing,” refers to specific acts of healing manifested through individual members of the church body.

5. “The working of miracles (or powers),” is thought to be a significant divine revelation, often accompanied by a miraculous sign or event, given or engineered by God.
6. “The gift of prophecy,” refers to individual prophecies given by members of the body. The word of prophecy refers to the rendering of God’s plans and purposes to his people, and the world at large. The book of Revelation is referred to as a prophecy in Revelation 1:3.
7. “Discerning of spirits,” refers to the recognition of good and evil spirits (between godly and demonic spirits).
8. “Various kinds of tongues,” refers to the use of spiritual languages, often given as prophecy. (See also Chapter 14 for more on this topic)
9. “Interpretation of tongues.” The prophet is charged with the responsibility of insuring that the message given in tongues is interpreted. (See also Chapter 14 for more on this topic)

Diakonos

A noun meaning servant, minister, or deacon. It is used to describe one who serves or ministers. It refers to servants as deacons and deaconesses, and as servants of the church and of Christ. It also refers to ministers of the new

covenant and the gospel. Requirements for those serving as servants, ministers, or deacons are listed below:

1. Matthew 20:27 says, “*And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*” I believe Jesus was correcting some of the disciples attitudes about being first or greatest in this verse. He reminded them that the way to be greatest in heaven is to be the most humble, to be low in status and dignity, to be nothing in our own eyes. Mark 9:35 says, “*And He sat down, and called the twelve and saith unto them: If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.*”
2. Ministers of the church include both men and women (Romans 16:1).
3. Deacons must be the husband of one wife, and rule their children and their own houses well (1 Timothy 3:12).
4. John 12:26 states that, “*If any man serve me [Jesus], let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*”
5. Roman 12:7 says, “*Or ministry, let us wait on [give ourselves to], our ministering [ministry].*”
6. 1 Corinthians 12:5 says, “*and there are differences [diversities], of administrations [ministrations], but the same Lord.*”

The various ministries in the church are listed in Romans 12:6-8;

1 Corinthians 12:28; and Ephesians 4:11-12. These should probably be referred to as “graces” rather than “gifts”. Paul uses this expression to refer to natural endowments strengthened by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Like a candle placed in an oxygen environment leaps up to a more brilliant flame, so the faculties of the believer are many times more effective when quickened by the power of Jesus Christ.

After Jesus ascended to His seat at the right hand of God He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, some helpers, and some for governing, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry unto the building up of the body of Christ.

Energema

This Greek word refers to the actual power, or faith, to bring the contemplated operation into effect. Romans 12:3-6, seems to confirm that God provides the necessary faith to bring gifts and ministries into effect.

Romans 12:3 says, “*God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*” The magnitude of the measure assigned is seemingly determined by the particular spiritual gift or ministry operating within the body member. Different gifts require different levels of faith, and the member of the body proves himself capable of doing God’s will through the renewing of his mind. As we grow in

holiness by becoming more Christlike, God can trust us with ever greater spiritual authority.

1 Corinthians 12:6 GNT says, “*And there are differences of workings, but the same God is working all things in all.*” This seems to say that God is “working” to bring all the gifts and ministries we have discussed into effect. There are several scriptures that help in our understanding of this. For example Ephesians 3:7 says, “*Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power.*” From this we assume that God brings about (effects) the selection of ministers in the body, and this same procedure probably applies to all the ministerial gifts in the body. Ephesians 4:16 seems to validate this assumption: “*From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted [framed and knit together] by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying [building up] of itself in love.*” This is what God is trying to bring into effect: building-up of the body through the increasing influence of the Head (Christ).

Colossians 2:12 refers to our salvation through faith in the operation of God, who raised us from the dead. The “operation” or “working” that God adopts here is empowered by faith, which God uses to achieve His purposes (see also

Hebrews 4:2). After we receive God's injection of saving faith the process of increasing, or growing, this initial faith begins. This occurs as we hear God, act on His written or spoken word, and see the word bear fruit. When God manifests one (or more) of His spiritual gifts in a man, He knows the man is prepared to receive the faith necessary to use the gift to benefit those in the body of Christ. He knows how successful (or not) the mind-renewing process has been in breaking down hard places in the heart.

With God this is a package deal: He gives the gift via the power (faith) required to manifest the gift. We are cautioned to not think more highly of ourselves than is warranted, for all members of the body are equally important, and God is the One that dispenses gifts. These gifts and ministries are given to benefit all members of the body, and the body is to function as a unit, with all the various parts (members) functioning as God has given grace, with one mind and with one mouth, glorifying God. To question, or to envy another member's gift is to question God's authority to distribute spiritual gifts as He sees fit.

This listing of the gifts closes with 1 Corinthians 12:11 GNT which says, *"And the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing separately to each as He*

purposes.” The Holy Spirit appears to have considerable freedom in determining when, and through whom, spiritual gifts are manifested.

In an earlier book entitled: [“After the Big Bang by Jesse C. Jones”](#) (available online free), I described the way the Father, Son, and Spirit worked as a team in accomplishing the stupendous task of creation. After reflecting on the effort required to equip mankind with spiritual gifts and ministries through operations, I became convinced that the this effort must have been organized in much the same way. The paragraph describing this is quoted below:

“I think of God’s work of creation being accomplished in a way similar to present-day major construction efforts. There must be an authorizing entity with a vision for the project (identified as the customer); an entity to develop plans for the project, and to oversee the actual construction (identified as the architect/engineering firm); and an implementing entity to bring the project plans to fruition (identified as the construction contractor). I see this same arrangement between the three persons of the Trinity: God the Father commands the Son (the Word), to create the universe that He has envisioned; the Son develops the plans for the work and oversees implementation in close coordination with the Father; and the Holy Spirit immediately sets about “*brooding*” over the work, bringing it into existence. When the Son receives the

go-ahead from the Father, He understands completely what the Father is trying to achieve, and the plans the Son speaks into existence incorporate those desires. The Holy Spirit implements these plans and specifications verbatim, for He does only what He hears from the Son.”

Accordingly, in meting out spiritual gifts and ministries, the Father selects those who are to receive a particular gift, and He directs the Son to develop a plan for implementation. The Son develops a plan to comply with the Father’s desire, and He instructs the Spirit to implement that plan: this the Spirit does. But the various subject’s reactions will vary, thus requiring adjustments in order to achieve the desired result. This all occurs while the subject is undergoing sanctification (becoming more holy).

Paul closes this Chapter with some observations about the body:

1. Upon those we think to be less honorable we should bestow more abundant honor.
2. Members of the body should provide equal care, one for another, so there will be no schism within the body.
3. When one member suffers, all members suffer with him/her. When one members is honored, all members should rejoice with him/her.

Agape Love

At times Paul's writing takes on an aura of heavenly beauty that could not have come from an ordinary man. The first verse is a good example: "*Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not (agape) love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*" God's love for poetry shows through at times, and it gives us somewhat of a personal insight as to why man (created in God's image) has a special place in his heart for beautiful poetry.

I do not see that anything can be added to this Chapter.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love,

I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries,

and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could move mountains, and

have not love, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be

burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not

puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked,

thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man I put away childish things.

For now we see through glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Prophecy and Speaking in Tongues

Following his poetic treatment of agape love, Paul treats two of the gifts of the Spirit that should be sought after. However, it is important to remember that whatever gift you receive must be used in agape love for it to be effective. God's agape love breaks down walls, and tears down fences, and will thus remove all impediments, roadblocks, and strongholds. Judging from an experience I had in seeing this power of God's love at work, God seemed to take over my tongue, and bypass my mind entirely. What I saw was a lady's bitterness toward a church body melt away entirely, in the middle of a discussion. She saw me as a representative of that church, even though we had been personal friends when she and her family were members of that body. When I first approached her I could see her stiffen, apparently preparing for a confrontation. She immediately began to vent her hurts before I could utter a word. But as I began to speak something strange occurred. God seemed to take over my tongue, and began to minister to her, and I immediately began to see a melting of her anger, and her hurts. From then on we had a very pleasant visit. Later, as I returned to my seat, I began asking God what had happened,

for I did not have any recollection of what was said. Probably because I did not really say it. God through the Holy Spirit just took over my tongue and voice and spoke to her in agape love. And I believe it was a “sea-change” event in that families’ life, for I ran into both of them (husband and wife) at a Christian dinner sometime later, and they were very friendly, and did not mention the church at all. What a wonderful experience.

In this chapter Paul introduces two gifts of the Spirit that should be sought after: prophesying and speaking in tongues. He wishes that all the Corinthian church body could speak in tongues, but rather that they prophesied, for prophecy is the greater gift: it speaks unto men for edification, exhortation, and comfort, whereas speaking in tongues edifies the person himself, unless it is interpreted for the church to understand and receive edifying. He that speaks in an unknown tongue does not speak to men but unto God, for no man can understand him.

We need to clarify here the difference between delivering a message in tongues publicly, as opposed to praying in tongues privately, during your own prayer time. When I first became aware of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the purpose of speaking in tongues my first thought was that I wanted God to jerk me up during Sunday morning church to give a message in tongues to the

body. This was obviously sheer ignorance on my part, for when God gave me the Holy Spirit, it was totally new to me. I had really never been taught that the Holy Spirit was the third person of the trinity, and that He was able and desired to become a part of my life. In fact, He wanted me to relinquish control of my life to Him. But I didn't know any of that at that time. As I began to learn over the next few months, speaking in tongues was not to be sought after to prove that you had received the Holy Spirit. As a matter of fact, when you receive the Holy Spirit you have within you all the power, gifts, and fruit characteristic of the Holy Spirit: the big problem is conditioning your spiritual life to allow power (faith), certain gifts, and all the fruit of the Holy Spirit to be manifested in your life. Regarding this Oswald Chambers says, "The holy Ghost has been given, the Lord is glorified; the waiting depends not on God's providence, but on our fitness."

Paul continues by pointing out that tongues are a sign, not for believers, but unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers, but believers. If the church comes together with all the congregation speaking in tongues, and visitors who are unbelievers enter, they will think you are mad. Therefore, if the gift of tongues is exercised it should only be by two, or at most three, and they should be in turn, and let someone interpret. If there is no one there that can

interpret, those that speak in tongues should keep silent. Let two or three prophets speak, while others weigh what is said. For all may prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, for all the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets themselves; therefore, let all things be done decently and in order.

Resurrection

Paul starts this chapter by reminding the Corinthians that they have received the gospel by which they have been saved, and they will continue to be saved if they keep Paul's teachings from the scriptures. He delivered to them what he had received: how Christ was crucified for their sins, and was buried, and that He rose again on the third day. He rose from the dead, and was seen by Peter, then by the twelve apostles. After that He was seen by over 500 brethren at once; many of which were alive at the time of Paul's writing. After that He was seen by James; then again by all the apostles. Last of all He was seen by Paul.

Some in the Corinthian church had argued that there was no resurrection from the dead; now Paul asks how they could fail to believe in view of all the evidence to the contrary. For if Christ did not rise from the dead, then there is no resurrection from the dead for all of us, and we will continue to live in our sins, and our faith will be in vain. Paul then tells them that if they have hope in Christ in this life only, then they are of all men most pitiable.

But now we know that Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits for all those that sleep (are dead). By one man, Adam, death came upon all men, but by the man, Jesus Christ, resurrection of the dead shall come. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive: Christ is the first fruit, afterward all those that are Christ's will be gathered at His coming in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Then comes the end, when He shall put down all rulers, with their authority and power. For Christ must reign on the earth until He has put all enemies under His feet; and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Then He can turn over all that He has won to the Father, and begin His reign for the thousand years of the millennium.

Paul asks a question in Verse 29 that has been interpreted in many different ways. The interpretation that I offer here seems to me to be logical, but there are many Bible scholars that have differing interpretations. Verse 29 KJV says: *"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"* When we come for baptism, we join with Jesus in His death on the cross, and we receive the (potential) death of our "old (or Adamic) nature," which we inherited from Adam. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds to become like the nature of Christ (Romans 12-2). What happens is that the authority of the "old nature" that had been running

our lives is annulled, and we now have an option in the decisions we make: we can continue to let our “old nature” rule, or act on the guidance we get from our “new” nature. Fortunately, our human spirit, now quickened, causes us to lean toward the guidance of the godly nature we received when we joined Christ on the cross. As we grow stronger spiritually in this process of sanctification, our “old nature” gets weaker, and our godly nature becomes stronger, which is Christ’s goal: to conform us to His image. In Verse 29, I believe what Paul was saying is that if there is no resurrection, then the whole purpose of baptism makes no sense because we will not be resurrected, and neither was Christ Himself resurrected. Paul summarizes the value system of that life in Verse 32: “ . . . *let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.*”

With Verse 35, Paul takes up the subject of resurrection in earnest, “*But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?*” In the following discussion I will try to paraphrase Paul’s inspired response given in vs. 36-58: Paul considered this question to be foolish, and this makes me wonder about our general lack of understanding of these things in our own time. How many Christians of today understand that in sanctification, God is trying to get our bodies to be as sinless as possible before death, for the corrupt physical body placed in the ground, will give up that incorrupt spiritual

body (embryo?), that somehow God uses to form the heavenly body that we will wear for eternity. 2 Corinthians 5:1 refers to this heavenly body as our house, which is not built with hands, eternal in the heavens, which we will groan to be covered with. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 identifies the material that God uses in building this house as the works done in our lives under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is only works that survive the refiner's fire that will be useful to God in forming our eternal bodies.

Paul closes this wonderful chapter in vs. 50-58: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Not all shall sleep in a grave before resurrection, but some will still be alive when the end comes, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the last (seventh) trumpet will sound (Revelation 11:15), the dead will give up their spiritual "bodies," and those that are still alive will be changed into heavenly "bodies," and will rise to meet the Lord in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). The spirit/souls of the dead (already in heaven), will accompany the Lord when He comes (see 1 Thessalonians 4:14), and they will join their "spiritual bodies" at that time, and will thus become a tripartite spiritual individual. Paul adds: "*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass*

the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave (death) where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength (power) of sin is the law. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Questions from 1 Corinthians

Chapter 1

1. Explain how God destroyed the wisdom of the wise and made the wisdom of this world foolish?
2. Explain verse 27.

Chapter 2

1. Why did Paul preach using simple language and demonstration of the Spirit and power rather than with enticing words of man's wisdom?
2. What is the mystery that Paul mentions in verse 7?
3. Why can the natural man not receive the things of the Spirit of God?

Chapter 3

1. Does Paul's "watered-down" preaching to the Corinthians justify preachers today refusing to deal with the more difficult subjects in the Bible?
2. Are the works mentioned in verse 13 required for salvation? If not, what is their purpose, and why should we do them?
3. If my works are consumed by the fire do I lose my salvation?
4. Why should I be careful about gaining wisdom?

Chapter 4

1. In view of verse 5, should we judge sin in our lives?
2. Answer the question raised in verse 21.

Chapter 5

1. How can the human spirit be saved by delivering the flesh for destruction?
2. Explain verse 6.
3. Explain verse 13

Chapter 6

1. What problems do you think might arise if we were to take all disagreements before the church body before taking it to court?
2. What justification does Paul give for doing this?
3. Describe what is meant by verse 17.

Chapter 7

1. Explain verse 5.
2. Explain verse 19.
3. Summarize Paul's viewpoint on marriage relative to pleasing the Lord. Do you agree with Paul?
4. What does the phrase "... *for the fashion of this world passeth away*," mean?

Chapter 8

1. List some of the idols in your own life.
2. What is required to be known by God? Have you experienced it?
3. Why do I need to be sensitive about my conduct in public?

Chapter 9

1. What is the thrust of Paul's message in this Chapter?
2. Explain verse 27.

Chapter 10

1. Give an example of a temptation from which you have escaped with God's help.
2. Explain the meaning of verse 23.
3. Why is your liberty judged by another man's conscience?

Chapter 11

1. Explain the meaning of verse 29 and 30.
2. Give your own understanding of verses 3-15 related to coverings.

Chapter 12

1. Can you identify the gift of God operating in your life?
2. What is the meaning of the word "tempered" in verse 24?
3. Explain the difference between gifts, administrations, and operations.

Chapter 13

1. Explain the difference in the three types of love: agape, phileo, and eros.
2. Explain verse 12.

Chapter 14

1. Give your 21st century interpretation of verse 34.
2. How is one to know whether there is an interpreter in the church (verse 28)?

Chapter 15

1. How many people saw Jesus after He died, was buried, and rose again?
2. Do you think Paul's persecution of the church had not been forgiven in view of verse 9?
3. Explain verse 24.
4. Explain verse 29.
5. Describe in your own words verses 36-49.
6. When does the change in verse 52 occur?

Chapter 16

1. Why is Paul so sensitive regarding Timothy in verses 10 and 11?

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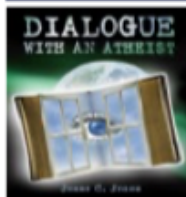
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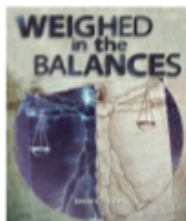


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