1CORINTHIANS (WITH STUDY QUESTIONS)

1Corinthians
Key Verse:

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST CORINTHIANS

Corinth was the chief commercial city of Greece, with a population of about 650,000 (including 400,000 slaves). It was located on a narrow isthmus connecting the Greek mainland with the Peloponnesian Peninsula. The religion of the Corinthians focused on Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Religious prostitution was practiced, and sexual immorality was so common that "to Corinthianize" meant to practice sexual immorality. In 1:26-31, and again in 6:9-11 Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians of their humble origins and sinful past.

Paul pioneered the church in Corinth during his second missionary journey (Acts 18). He spent about a year and a half there, working as a tentmaker with Priscilla and Aquila. Later, on his third journey, he wrote Romans from Corinth.

Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus in answer to a letter from the Corinthians. He is their shepherd, and he knows them well. In this letter he applies the gospel to practical problems such as divisions in the church, marriage, lawsuits, differences of opinion about eating and worship, etc. He rebukes them in love. Chapter 13 is a description of Jesus' love, which is the best gift and the most excellent way. Chapter 15 calls us to practical belief and hope in the resurrection of Jesus, for the resurrection is the heart of the gospel. No one can be a Christian without resurrection faith.

CHRIST THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD

1 Corinthians 1:1-31

Key Verse: 1:24

* God Who Called Us Is Faithful (1-9)

1. This letter is written from whom, to whom? Who is Sosthenese (Act 18:17)? What does it mean that God's church is called to be holy?

2. What is Paul thankful for? How does God work when the word is preached? What is the source of Paul's confidence in weak men?

3. Read verses 10-17. What was the nature of the divisions in the church? What was Paul's appeal?

4. What was more important to Paul than ritual? Why must Christian leaders avoid creating divisions in the church? (Compare Jn 17:20-23.)

5. To whom is the message of the cross foolishness? Why? To whom is this message the power and wisdom of God? How can this be? (18-25)

6. Why can the Corinthians and we boast only of Jesus and his grace?

7. What can we learn here about God's wisdom and man's wisdom?

GOD WHO CALLED US IS FAITHFUL

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Key Verse: 1:9

1. Greetings to God's holy people (1-3)

Paul writes with apostolic authority. Sosthenes was the synagogue ruler from Corinth who was beaten (Acts 18:17), and who later became a Christian. God's people are called to be a holy nation. We are holy because Jesus' blood cleanses us from sin. We must live as holy people in an unholy world. We can do this only when we call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--put our trust wholly in him. Grace and peace come from God the Father and from Jesus.

2. God will keep you strong to the end (4-9)

Paul thanks God for his gracious work in the Corinthians. When Paul preached, God's Spirit worked to apply the gospel to their lives and change them from worldly pagans into the holy people of God. The gifts of the Spirit abounded in their fellowship. People are weak, but God who called us into fellowship with his Son is strong. He is faithful, and he will keep us to the end.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the grace of forgiveness, and for your Holy Spirit. Keep me strong in Christ until he comes.

One Word: God who called us is faithful

LEST THE CROSS BE EMPTIED OF ITS POWER

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Key Verse: 1:17

1. Agree with one another (10-12)

Paul heard that the believers were divided because they looked at themselves and their leaders from a human point of view. Paul, Apollos and Peter (Cephas) were all servants of God who sought to lead people to Christ, not to themselves. When Jesus dwells in us and rules our hearts,

we can love, respect and forgive one another and be united in mind and thought. There is no other way to agree with one another.

2. Believe the gospel (13-17)

Water baptism is a declaration to the world that one is a Christian. It is a symbol of our unity with Christ. It should unite believers in the Body of Christ. But it had become divisive. Some bragged about being baptized by Paul or Peter. They thought that baptism gave them some spiritual advantage over others. But only the cross of Christ has power. It is the gospel that saves us. Human wisdom divides. When we accept Jesus' cross and preach his gospel, our human differences disappear.

Prayer: Lord, keep me under the cross of Jesus, that its power may work in me.

One Word: Preach the gospel of the cross

GOD'S WISDOM AND MAN'S WISDOM

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Key Verse: 1:18

1. The message of the cross (18-21)

The message of the cross seems weak and foolish. To unbelievers, Jesus' death looks like failure and defeat. But to those who accept God's offer of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus, it is life, for he bore our sins and conquered death. For us who are being saved, the cross is the power of God. The way of the cross is the one and only way opened by God for sinful men to come to him for forgiveness and life. Those who reject God's way will perish, for there is no other way.

2. Christ, the wisdom and power of God (22-25)

Some people want a great dramatic miracle that stirs their feelings and makes them believe in God; others want a complicated, intellectual-sounding philosophy that feeds their pride. But God sent Jesus. His death and resurrection is the gospel. It is the wisdom of God and the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

Prayer: Lord, give me spiritual eyes to see the cross of Jesus and faith to cling to him every day.

One Word: Christ was crucified for me

REMEMBER WHAT YOU WERE

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Key Verses: 1:27,30

1. God chose foolish things (26-29)

It is easy to forget what God has done and become proud. Spiritual pride destroys the unity of believers. God not only chose a seemingly foolish way to save people; he also chose weak and humble people to bring the gospel to the world. When I remember what I was when God called me, I realize the greatness of his grace and mercy. He chose foolish people so that the humanly wise and powerful and beautiful people might be shamed. God attacks the problem of human pride at its roots. I must never fool myself by thinking that I am somebody.

2. Christ is our wisdom and righteousness (30-31)

It is because of God's grace and mercy that we are in Christ. We have done nothing to deserve such mercy. Furthermore, there is no goodness or righteousness in us. But we are in Christ, and he is our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for saving me when I was a miserable, useless, ignorant sinner. Thank you for Jesus my righteousness.

One Word: Jesus my righteousness

SPIRITUAL WISDOM

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Key Verse: 2:12

1. What was Paul's attitude and what was his message when he went to Corinth to preach the gospel?

2. Why did he eschew human wisdom and eloquence in speaking?

3. Read verses 6-9. What is God's secret wisdom? (John 3:16; Eph 3:6; 1Co 2:2; Jn 7:37-39) Why could it not be known before Jesus came and died? What does "God destined (it) for our glory before time began" mean? (Eph 2:4-10)

4. Read verses 9-10. To whom is this wisdom made known? How is it made known? (Dt 29:29)

5. Read verses 12-15. Why must we have the Spirit of God? What does he teach us? What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? How can we have the mind of Christ?

NOTHING BUT JESUS, AND HIM CRUCIFIED

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Key Verse: 2:2

1. Paul's resolution (1-2)

Paul was a highly educated scholar, but when he preached or taught the Bible, he did not show off his knowledge. He resolved to talk only about Jesus who was crucified for our sins. We don't have to know many things to be Christians; we only have to know Jesus and him crucified for our sins and for the sins of the world. If we don't know Jesus, then no amount of knowledge can save or help us.

2. Faith must rest on God's power (3-5)

When Paul first came to Corinth, he was overwhelmed by the moral corruption of the Corinthians. He did not know what to do, so he prayed a lot and preached the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit moved the hearts of people, and they put their trust in Jesus. Our faith must rest, not on our own knowledge, but on God who works in us with resurrection power.

Prayer: Lord, give me a repentant heart so that my faith may rest on your power, not on my own ideas.

One Word: Know Jesus and him crucified

HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Key Verse: 2:16

1. God's secret wisdom (6-10)

God's secret wisdom cannot be understood by people who love the world. God's secrets are for those who love him. The long-hidden secret is that God loves the world and sent his Son to die for the sins of all people (Eph 3:6). If the worldly rulers had known this, they would not have crucified Jesus. God gives his Spirit to those who receive his love and forgiveness, and who love him.

2. The spiritual man (11-16)

God reveals his wisdom to us by his Spirit, so that we can live according to God's word (Dt 29:29). We cannot understand the things of God by worldly wisdom. God gives us his Spirit so that we may know his heart and mind and understand the gospel. The spiritual man is the one who has the mind of Christ. He can see things from God's point of view. Worldly people judge everything by their pragmatic human wisdom. We must not let the criticism and misunderstanding of worldly people move us.

Prayer: Lord, help me to grow in my love for you, and give me the mind of Christ.

One Word: Love God; have the mind of Christ

THE ONLY FOUNDATION

1 Corinthians 3:1-23

Key Verse: 3:11

1. According to Paul, what is the underlying problem of worldly Christians? What are the marks of a worldly Christian? How can spiritual infants grow?

2. What is the cause of divisions among believers? Why should there be no such divisions? What is the purpose of every worker?

3. What was Paul's specialty as a builder? What was the foundation which he laid? How did he lay it?

4. What does it mean to build on the foundation? What will be revealed in that Day? (What is the "Day" he is speaking of?)

5. What does he mean that we are God's temple? How should we care for the temple of God?

6. What kind of wisdom do we need? Why does no child of God need to be envious of anyone?

GOD MAKES THINGS GROW

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Key Verse: 3:7

1. Worldly Christians (1-4)

Worldly Christians are Christians who need to grow. Paul calls them infants. They do not see things from God's point of view, but see everything from a human point of view. So they compete with others; sometimes they are proud, and sometimes, jealous. They follow human leaders instead of growing in Christ. We must grow up in Christ until we become spiritual men and women. Then we can please God and be useful to him. And we will have joy.

2. God's fellow workers (5-9)

God's servants are limited human beings, but God works through them. They cannot make another person grow spiritually. They cannot even make themselves grow. God alone gives life, and God makes us grow. God's servants only plant seeds, then water them with prayer and love and the word of God. Both the one who plants and the one who waters is a fellow worker with God. Their purpose is the same.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for using your servants to lead me to Jesus and to help me grow. Help me to grow in Christ until I can be a spiritual person and fruitful servant of God.

One Word: Grow up in Christ

JESUS CHRIST THE ONLY FOUNDATION

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Key Verse: 3:11

1. The only sure foundation (10-11)

Paul, an apostle to the Gentile world, specialized in laying foundations. The only foundation that will stand up under the stress of living is the solid-rock foundation of Jesus Christ, crucified, buried and raised from death. When one accepts Jesus' death for his sins, believes in his heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and takes up his own cross to follow and obey Jesus, the one solid foundation is laid in his life. We must help those with whom we study to repent and believe in Jesus; then we too can lay solid foundations.

2. Build a fire-proof building (12-15)

A life that will stand the test of fire is the one that is built on the study of and obedience to the word of God. Then, when the day of final reckoning comes, the fruit of our lives, i.e., the building we have built, will stand.

Prayer: Lord, help me lay solid foundations and build a house that will stand, by believing, living and teaching the gospel.

One Word: No foundation but Jesus

YOU ARE GOD'S TEMPLE

1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Key Verse: 3:16

1. The real temple of God (16-17)

The church in Corinth was not a building; it was a community of forgiven sinners who believed in Jesus and worshiped God. When believers accept their mission from God and obey his word, his Holy Spirit dwells in them. Each person is a living stone in God's building (1Pe 2:4-10). Anyone who sows unbelief and mistrust among believers and tries to destroy God's temple will be destroyed by God.

2. All things are yours (18-23)

It is easy to fool ourselves if we measure ourselves and others by human standards. Pride, ambition and a competitive spirit can destroy the unity of believers. God's wisdom is foolishness to worldly people, but man's wisdom is foolishness to God. God knows our thoughts. He wants to rule our hearts. When we belong to Christ and affirm his Lordship, we have everything.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your Spirit who dwells in me. Help me to be a fool to the world, and full of spiritual wisdom.

One Word: God dwells in his people

A WAY OF LIFE TO BE IMITATED

1 Corinthians 4:1-21

Key Verse: 4:2

1. Read verses 1-5. What had been entrusted to Paul? What is required of those given a trust? Why should we not judge ourselves or allow others to judge us?

2. What will be brought to light at the right time?

3. Read verses 6-13. What does Paul mean by "Do not go beyond what is written"? How does careful obedience to the Scriptures keep us from becoming proud?

4. What contrast does Paul draw between himself and those who want to be avoid the cross? Why was Paul willing to become the scum of the earth?

5. Read verses 14-21. How did Paul describe his relationship with the Corinthians? Why was he sending Timothy? What is Paul's principle that should be imitated?

6. What was Paul's travel plan? Why did he say "the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power"? What does this mean to you?

THOSE GIVEN A TRUST MUST BE FAITHFUL

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

Key Verse: 4:5

1. A sacred trust (1-2)

Servants of Christ have been entrusted with the secret things of God. God's secret, now made known, is the good news that God sent his Son to die and be raised to life to save all people. Paul was entrusted with this gospel and commissioned by the risen Christ to proclaim it to the world. Many of the Jews, Paul's own people, did not understand his mission because they had not accepted the gospel. All of us who have accepted Jesus and received God's gift of forgiveness

and life have been entrusted with this same gospel. It is required that those who have been given a trust prove faithful.

2. The Lord will expose all men's motives (3-5)

No one can judge another Christian. We do not even know our own hearts. God himself looks at the motives of each heart. In his own right time he will expose everything and judge us all. Until that time, we must each be faithful stewards of what has been entrusted to us.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be a faithful steward of your grace, and faithful to the trust you have given me.

One Word: Be faithful to your trust

FOOLS FOR CHRIST

1 Corinthians 4:6-13

Key Verse: 4:10a

1. Do not go beyond what is written (6-7)

Spiritual pride creeps into one's heart when he thinks he has some special gift or grace that others lack. But God has given the Scriptures to all of us. We need no other special revelation. Whatever gift or privilege we have is given us by God's grace. Paul had the most to be proud of, but he humbly submitted himself to the word of God, and he tells us to do the same (6).

2. We have become the scum of the earth (8-13)

There were some who wanted to be Christians without any cross. They thought they could enjoy the best of both worlds. But Paul did not avoid the cross in his practical life. He did not try to save himself. He looked like a loser; he seemed to be foolish. But he was not a loser--he chose to walk the way of the cross and be a fool for Christ. This is life and victory.

Prayer: Lord, help me to submit to your word and walk the narrow way of the cross, following Jesus. Give me courage to be a fool for Christ.

One Word: Be a fool for Christ

IMITATE ME

1 Corinthians 4:14-21

Key Verse: 4:20

1. The gospel way (14-17)

Paul's way of life agreed with the gospel he taught everywhere. He did not teach the way of the cross, then live an easy, comfortable, worldly life himself. He charges us to imitate his simple, gospel-centered lifestyle. He knew that some of the Corinthian Christians were saying the right things but living worldly lives. So he sent Timothy, a man who was faithful to the Lord, to encourage them to live the way they talked.

2. The kingdom of God is power, not talk (18-21)

There were some in the church who had become spiritually proud. They talked a lot about their spiritual gifts and knowledge, but in their practical lives they had no fruit. Paul planned to visit Corinth soon. He was ready to challenge these so-called leaders to produce fruit in keeping with their big talk. He hoped that they would repent before he arrived.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to give in to the world, but to live a poor and pure life, and live humbly before you.

One Word: Imitate Paul – and Jesus

GET RID OF THE OLD YEAST

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Key Verse: 5:7

1. What is the particular problem about which Paul writes? What are his instructions? Why must this problem be dealt with so uncompromisingly?

2. What does it mean that Christ is our Passover Lamb? Why does he compare sin to yeast?

3. When Paul tells us not to associate with sexually immoral people, does he include worldly, non-Christians? Why or why not?

4. Why does he not condemn or judge unbelievers who live immoral lives?

GET RID OF OLD YEAST

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Key Verse: 5:7

1. Expel the immoral brother (1-5)

There was in the fellowship a brother who persisted in sexual immorality. Paul rebuked the church for ignoring this. For his own sake, he should be "handed over to Satan"--expelled from the fellowship. Then he could realize that sin is serious, and repent. Being cut off from the

fellowship of believers is like living in hell. The purpose was to lead him to repentance and save his soul from hell.

2. Christ our Passover Lamb (6-13)

A Christian who persists in immorality is a corrupting influence. He is like yeast. At Passover time, only bread without yeast was eaten. Everything touched by yeast had to be cleansed. This symbolized purification. So, the church must not condone yeast-like sin in one of its members. Christ our Passover Lamb died for us, so our sins are cleansed and we will not be condemned on the day of judgment. Those who sin willfully and make no effort to repent must be expelled. We must remove sin from our midst, and malice and wickedness from our hearts.

Prayer: Lord, give me courage to rebuke in love, and faith to repent when rebuked.

One Word: Get rid of old yeast

THE SAINTS WILL JUDGE THE WORLD

1 Corinthians 6:1-20

Key Verse: 6:2a

1. Read verses 1-11.What problem does Paul address in verse 1? For what motive might one believer sue another? Why is this not right?

2. What does Paul mean by saying that the saints will judge the world? How should disputes between brothers be handled?

3. Why are Christians who seek money from other believers through the courts defeated already?

4. Read verses 9-11. Look carefully at the list of sinners. What does this tell us about the Corinthian church? About the amazing grace of God? Why cannot Christians be proud?

5. Read verses 12-20. Why is it important for a Christian to control his appetites? Why is sexual immorality wrong? Find several reasons. What can we learn here about ourselves and about our relationship to Christ?

THE SAINTS WILL JUDGE THE WORLD

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Key Verse: 6:2a

1. Brothers should not sue brothers (1-6)

Problems between Christians should be solved in God's way. It is shameful for a believer to sue a fellow believer in a pagan court. A fellow Christian should mediate in a dispute between brothers. Someday, Jesus' people will join Jesus in judging the world. So even the least Christian should be wise enough to settle a dispute. God's people must not let material things damage their relationships with one another--this goes against God's creation order.

2. Remember what you were (7-11)

Here is a list of the kind of people who cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The list includes the sexually immoral, the greedy, homosexuals, drunkards, slanderers, thieves, etc. Then Paul says--"That is what some of you were." The Christian fellowship is a gathering of forgiven sinners, washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember your great grace and help others humbly and prayerfully.

One Word: Remember who you were--and are

YOUR BODY IS GOD'S TEMPLE

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Key Verse: 6:19,20

1. Not everything is beneficial (12-14)

Since we are not under the law but under grace, we do not have to keep dietary rules, but we should not be mastered by food or drink or drugs or lust or anything else. Our bodies belong to God; someday he will give us a resurrection body. For now, we must keep our bodies pure, for Jesus' sake. Sometimes sinful habits get a powerful grip on us. But we can claim victory through the power of God who raised Jesus from the dead.

2. You are not your own (15-20)

God created sex. It is his good gift to make a man and woman one flesh within the bounds of marriage, and thus create a family. Sexual immorality is not permitted because it violates our union with Christ. Our bodies belong to God; he purchased us with a price. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit; sexual immorality defiles the temple of God. We must affirm our union with Christ and be one with him in spirit. Paul says that we must flee sexual immorality and honor God with our bodies.

Prayer: Lord, help me to honor you with my body. Give me power to break bad habits.

One Word: Honor God with your body

ON MARRIAGE

(And one important principle)

1 Corinthians 7:1-40

Key Verse: 7:17

1. Read verses 1-7. Why does Paul recommend marriage for most people? Why should the husband and wife fulfill their marital duty to each other?

2. Read verses 8-16What does Paul say about marriage? About separation? About divorce? Why should a believer not divorce his or her spouse just because he or she is an unbeliever?

3. Read verses 17-31. What is the rule Paul lays down for all of the churches? Why should we not try to solve spiritual problems by some kind of ritual crutch?

4. Why should we not try to solve human problems by running away from a situation?

5. Why should we not become too attached to the things of the world?

6. Read verses 32-40. What is the principle which Paul is following when he advises against marriage? (35) Is he making a rule to restrict believers? What does he teach here about our commitments?

ON MARRIAGE

1 Corinthians 7:1-16

Key Verse: 7:7b

1. Each one has his own gift (1-9)

Marriage is not an arrangement for mutual benefit, agreed upon by two people. It is an institution ordained by God; it is God's gift. Paul lived a single life. But he did not tell everyone to follow him in this. The single life is also God's gift. But God created marriage in the Garden of Eden. Marriage is a commitment; it is a safeguard against immorality. Marriage partners must not be self-centered. Each must consider the needs of the other, and each must give himself or herself to the other. Marriage must be for God's glory.

2. Marriage is for keeps (10-16)

While one should not deliberately marry an unbeliever, sometimes one partner is converted after marriage. This must not be an excuse for divorce. Paul says to the Christian partner, "Stay married unless you are rejected. Think about your children. Take your cross. Pray. God may work to save your family because of your faith."

Prayer: Lord, help us to give our marriages and marriage problems to you.

One Word: Happy marriages are ruled by God

STAY WHERE YOU ARE

1 Corinthians 7:17-31

Key Verse: 7:17

1. Stay where God put you (17-24)

We do not become better Christians by changing our human conditions. Only the change that Jesus makes within brings peace. A believer should not shop for a church for human reasons. We should stay in the place to which God has assigned us, put down roots and bear fruit. Rituals don't matter– obedience to God's commands does. In Paul's day, slavery was a legal institution. Paul did not directly attack the institution; he told slaves to serve God where they were. However, the principle of freedom and equality under God made a crack in the institution that finally broke it. Every person belongs to God. He made us. He bought us with a price.

2. The time is short (25-31)

Paul sees life in the perspective of eternity. In the short time we have in this world we should live for Jesus' sake and the gospel's, and not allow our hearts to become enslaved by the things of the world, for the world is passing away. Married or single, we should first give our hearts to God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to overcome circumstances and live for your glory where I am.

One Word: Serve God where you are

UNDIVIDED DEVOTION TO THE LORD

1 Corinthians 7:32-40

Key Verse: 7:35

1. How can I please the Lord? (32-35)

Paul does not oppose marriage, but he wants us to put marriage, as well as the single life, in the proper perspective. It is natural for a man or a woman to be concerned about how to please his or her spouse. But a Christian can't just live naturally. He must struggle to keep as his top priority how to please the Lord.

2. To marry or not to marry? (36-40)

The only Christian alternative to marriage is the celibate single life. Marriage is God's will for most people, but it is not absolute. Loving God and seeking to please him is the one priority that cannot be compromised. One can marry or not marry, according to God's gifts and leading. Even

a widow is free to marry again--if the person she marries belongs to the Lord. Paul is personally grateful, however, that God has enabled him to live a single life.

Prayer: Lord, help me to keep spiritual order in my view of marriage and in my home. Help me to please you and not be captured by worldly concerns.

One Word: How can I please the Lord?

LOVE BUILDS UP

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Key Verse: 8:1b

1. What is the dispute about food offered to idols?

2. What is the key principle that must be used in solving this and other disputes among believers?

3. What does Paul and many of his fellow believers know about God and about idols? (4-6) What problem do some believers who have come out of idolatry have? (7-8)

4. How can my freedom become a stumbling block to weaker brothers? Why is it a serious matter to wound the conscience of a fellow believer?

5. What is Paul's principle in these matters? How can you apply this principle in your own life and community?

LOVE BUILDS UP

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Key Verse 8:1b

1. Knowledge puffs up (1-6)

We know many things about God. We know that there is only one Creator God; we also know that an idol is nothing. We know that God created all things through Jesus Christ. Everything comes from him, so taboos about eating certain foods are unnecessary. However, even though we may know a lot, unless we love God and are known by him (3), our knowledge only makes us proud and useless.

2. Love builds up (7-13)

We are free because we are under grace, not under law. But we must use our freedom in love, to build up others' faith. Sometimes fellow believers struggle with a sinful past. Love demands that we do not make their struggle more difficult by thoughtlessly exercising our own freedom. If I

love God, I must love my brother and seek to build up his faith. I must not needlessly offend the conscience of another. Love demands that I be responsible for my influence. I must use my freedom to love God and to love others.

Prayer: Lord, help me to build up others and not tear them down by selfish or thoughtless acts.

One Word: Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up

USING RIGHTS AND FREEDOM

1 Corinthians 9:1-27

Key Verse: 9:22

1. Read verses 1-14. What are Paul's credentials as an Apostle? What freedom does he have? Why? What rights do Christian workers have in common with other workers?

2. What rights do other apostles exercise? Why does Paul not use his rights? What is more important than rights?

3. Read verses 15-23. Why does Paul preach the gospel? What is his reward?

4. Why does he, though free, make himself a slave to everybody? How can one become all things to all men?

5. How is the Christian life like a race? What must we do to win? What is Paul's example?

RIGHTS AND FREEDOM

1 Corinthians 9:1-14

Key Verse: 9:12b

1. Am I not free? (1-12a)

Paul was a free man because he had met Jesus. God had used him in Corinth, and the changed lives of the believers were evidence that his mission was from God. He was criticized by those jealous of his successful ministry. As a Christian and servant of God, he had some indisputable rights: the right to receive a salary; the right to marry and travel around with his wife; the right to have a family. Peter and the other apostles exercised these rights. Furthermore, the rights of God's servants are clearly defined in the Scriptures. Every kind of worker has the right to be supported by his work. Gospel workers are not exceptions.

2. We put up with anything (12b-14)

Paul did not use his rights, but gave them to God for the sake of the gospel. He worked with his hands as a tentmaker missionary. He lived a single life. He said, "We put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel." He did not avoid the cross in his personal life. His one aim was to preach the gospel.

Prayer: Lord, forgive my selfish life, and help me to give up any right that hinders the gospel.

One Word: I give my rights to Jesus

ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN

1 Corinthians 9:15-23

Key Verse: 9:22b

1. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel (15-18)

Paul was compelled to preach the gospel because of God’s grace in his own life. He offered the gospel free of charge. He did not expect any reward. He could give up his human rights, but he could not give up sharing the gospel of life with a sinsick world. Sometimes he shared God's word because he wanted to; at other times, he was tired or sick and just didn't feel like teaching the Bible. But he did it anyway--to discharge his duty before God.

2. To save some by all possible means (19-23)

Paul's point in teaching God's word was clear: he wanted people to come to Christ and be saved. For this purpose he denied himself and took the cross of mission. He gave up his own Jewish culture, denied his own feelings, and even went against his Jewish conscience in order to reach those for whom Christ died. He became all things to all men for the sake of the gospel, that he might share in its blessings.

Prayer: Lord, help me to teach your word faithfully so that people may be saved.

One Word: By all possible means save some

SPIRITUAL TRAINING

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Key Verse: 9:24

1. Strict training (24-25)

Paul saw himself as a boxer or as a long distance runner in training. Athletes endure strict physical training in order to win the prize. A runner disciplines his body severely. He knows that only one man will win the victor's crown. He wants to be that man. However, the crown he wins

will perish. How much more we should be willing to subject ourselves to God's training so that we can win the crown of life– the crown that will last forever.

2. I do not run aimlessly (26-27)

Paul did not run the spiritual race aimlessly. His training had a point. His personal sacrifices and self-discipline were for the sake of planting the gospel in the Gentile world. He did not beat the air; each punch landed on its intended target. Furthermore, he disciplined himself to live according to the gospel he preached, so that he himself might not be disqualified.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live according to your gospel. Help me to discipline myself.

One Word: Don't beat the air; run to win

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

1 Corinthians 10:1-33

Key Verse: 10:13

1. Read verses 1-10. What were the parallels for the Old Testament believers to our spiritual privileges? What was analogous to baptism? To the Lord's supper? (See Ex 13:21,22; Nu 9:15-23, 14:14; Dt:33; Ps 78:14 and Ex 16:2-36, 17:1-7; Nu 20:2-11; 21:16)

2. In spite of their spiritual privileges, what happened to the first generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt? What are the lessons we must learn from them?

3. Read verses 11-13. What warning and promise does Paul give us?

4. Read verses 14-22. Why should God's people not sample any other religion or compromise in any way with idolatry?

5. Read verses 23-33. What principles can you find here as guidelines for Christians in using their freedom?

A WARNING FROM HISTORY– AND A WAY OUT

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Key Verses: 10:6,12,13

1. The failure of our forefathers (1-11)

The people of Israel had great spiritual privileges. They were delivered from bondage in Egypt. They were baptized as they passed through the Red Sea. They ate bread from heaven. They drank from the rock–and so partook of Christ. But God was not pleased with most of them, and

they died in the desert. Why? Their hearts were not changed; they continued in the idolatry of the people around them.

2. God provides a way out of temptation (12-13)

We are not fated to repeat the mistakes of Israel. We who belong to Jesus must learn from their failure. We must not compromise with the materialism and immorality of our times. We must be not be full of complaints–we must be thankful. If we do not become proud and complacent but acknowledge that we are weak and need help, God who is faithful will provide a way out of every temptation.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be vigilant at all times, so that I can find your way out of every temptation. Help me to learn from those who failed, and live a pure and thankful life.

One Word: Depend on God and be thankful

DON'T COMPROMISE WITH IDOLATRY

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

Key Verse: 10:21

1. Flee from idolatry (14-17)

The Lord's Supper reminds us that we have entered into a blood covenant with Jesus. When we repent and receive forgiveness through Jesus' blood, we become a part of Christ's body. This commitment is more binding even than that of marriage, for God's commitment to us and ours to him is sealed in the blood of his Son.

2. Consider Israel's failure (18-22)

The people of Israel failed to maintain God's blessings in the promised land because they compromised with the pagan culture. Idolatry is spiritual adultery. It is unfaithfulness to God. We must not act like Christians in one situation and non-Christians in another. In Corinth, as in ancient Israel, idolatry was woven into the fabric of the culture, and Christians felt constant pressure to compromise. But God's people must not compromise.

Prayer: Lord, I was a hopeless sinner, but Jesus' blood washed me clean. Help me to be faithful to you forever.

One Word: Sealed by Christ's body and blood

THE BELIEVER'S FREEDOM

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

Key Verse: 10:31

1. Seek the good of others (10:23-30)

Jesus' people must put Jesus first, others next and self last. Jesus set us free from sin and law, but we must use our freedom to build up others. We must respect the consciences of our brothers and sisters. Some may object to being bound by the conscience of another, but Paul challenges us to be responsible for our influence on others. Jesus said that it would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone around one's neck than to cause another person to sin (Mk 9:42). For the sake of others we can give up freedom to enjoy small pleasures.

2. Seek to glorify God (10:31-11:1)

Whatever we do, we should do for the glory of God. We should measure what we do– our eating and drinking, going and coming, speaking and remaining silent by one yardstick: "Does it glorify God?" If we seek the highest good of others so that they may be saved and grow in Christ, this pleases God. We must follow the example of Paul, who followed Christ.

Prayer: Lord, help me to put you first, others next and myself last.

One Word: The glory of God; the good of others

WORSHIPING GOD TOGETHER

1 Corinthians 11:1-33

Key Verse: 11:1,31

1. Read verses 1-16. Why could Paul boldly ask others to follow him?

2. What seems to be the custom, respectively, for men's and women's dress? How could a woman show respect for God and for fellow believers? A man?

3. What do verses 1-16 teach about spiritual order in the church? Why is it important?

4. Read verses 17-33. What seems to have been one problem when believers gathered together to eat? What was Paul's rebuke and what was his directive?

5. Why should selfishness have no place in the Christian fellowship? How can we see this problem today?

6. What is the meaning of the broken bread? The cup? What do these things mean to you?

7. Why should one examine himself before partaking of the Lord's supper?

SPIRITUAL ORDER

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Key Verse: 11:12

1. Follow leaders who follow Christ (2)

Paul could be a spiritual leader because he strove to follow Christ (1). God's people need shepherds who set an example in following Christ, and they need spiritual order if they are to grow.

2. Honor God; respect others (3-16)

In exercising their freedom, Corinthian Christians had forgotten the importance of respecting one another and being reverent before God. This was reflected in their worship. In that culture, a man showed respect for God by removing his hat in church, while women kept their heads covered when they prayed or preached. The heads of promiscuous women were shaved. Our culture is different, but we must still show respect for God and for our fellow Christians. In the Lord, men and women are not independent of each other. Eve was made of Adam's rib, to help him. But men are born of women. They respect their mothers. Everything comes from God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to keep spiritual order and show my respect for you and for others in the way I dress and speak.

One Word: Honor God; respect each other

THE LORD'S SUPPER

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Key Verse: 11:25,26

1. Selfish Christians (17-22)

When the Corinthian Christians came together to share a fellowship meal and to eat together the Lord's Supper, they did not think about the Lord, but about eating and drinking. The meal that should unite them became a display of their disunity. When we come together, we must be sensitive to the needs of one another and not just think about ourselves.

2. The meaning of the Lord's Supper (23-34)

On the night Jesus was betrayed, he taught his disciples the meaning of his death, and assured them of his coming again. The bread represents Jesus' broken body. It tells me that he loves me and that he loves the world. The cup represents the new covenant sealed in his blood. His blood cleanses my sins and I am united with him in his death and resurrection. I must proclaim his death for the sins of the world until he comes again.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the new covenant in your blood. Help me to love fellow Christians and proclaim the gospel of forgiveness until you come.

One Word: Proclaim Jesus until he comes

ONE BODY, ONE SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Key Verse: 12:13

1. Read verses 1-11. Why is it important to discern whether a spirit is of God or not? What shows whether a spirit is of God or is an evil spirit?

2. How does Paul describe the unity and diversity of the Spirit and his work? What are the gifts mentioned here? How should each gift be used?

3. Read verses 12-20. What is the Body of Christ? How is it held together? How can we all be different, yet equal? (12-26) What work does the Spirit do in every believer?

4. Read verses 21-26. How are believers related to each other? Why should they not envy or compete with one another? How can we have concern for each other?

5. Read verses 27-31. What does it mean to be a part of the body of Christ? What are the gifts and responsibilities mentioned here? What is the purpose of the gifts God gives?

THE SAME SPIRIT, DIFFERENT GIFTS

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Key Verse: 12:3b

1. Jesus is Lord (1-4)

When we were living in sin, apart from God, our lives were in chaos. In our ignorance we let idols rule our hearts. God gives his Holy Spirit to everyone who repents and believes the gospel. By the Spirit's work in our lives we can confess, "Jesus is Lord." When Jesus is my Lord and King, my life has order and direction. I can love others in a right way. God's Spirit works differently in each person, but God is the same God, and he leads everyone to obey Jesus.

2. Each gift given for the common good (5-11)

God gives different gifts to each person, but the same Holy Spirit works in each life. God's gifts are not to be used selfishly. The Holy Spirit is not given to make us feel good; he comes to enable us to do God's work. God gives spiritual gifts for one purpose: to build up God's people in faith and love so that God may be glorified.

Prayer: Lord, rule my life so that all I am and have may be used to glorify you and serve your people.

One Word: Jesus is Lord!

THE BODY OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Key Verse: 12:12

1. One Spirit; one body (12,13)

The Christian Church is the body of Christ. Christ has only one body. God baptizes with the Holy Spirit all those who repent of their sins and receive Jesus as Savior and Lord; all of these, without exception, are parts of the body of Christ. There may seem to be many groups and denominations, but these are all man-made divisions. From God's point of view, there is only one true, invisible Church of Jesus Christ.

2. The body has many parts (14-31)

Hands don't compete with feet; a nose and an eye are both precious. If I burn my finger, my whole body suffers. Each person in the Christian fellowship has something to do to build up the whole church. Some work may seem more glamorous to people, but to Christ the head, each person is precious. If we love Jesus, we can do anything for him–and rejoice even in suffering.

Prayer: Lord, help me to respect and love each of your precious children, and use my gifts to build up the body.

One Word: One Spirit, one body, many parts

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Key Verse: 13:13

1. What is the greater gift? The more excellent way? Why is spiritual power, insight into the Bible, understanding of spiritual things, and great faith not sufficient? (1,2)

2. What does God require of us more than personal sacrifice--giving to the poor, and even martyrdom for Jesus' name's sake? Why?

3. How does Paul describe love? What are the negative aspects of love? The positive? How did Jesus exibit each of these qualities (4-7)?

4. Why is love better than prophecies, tongues, knowledge? When does perfection come? When shall we see face to face? What is the difference in being childish and childlike? (8-12)

5. Why is love greater than hope or faith?

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Key Verse: 13:13

1. The one necessary thing (1-3)

Love is the one indispensable ingredient of Christian character. Jesus commanded us to love one another. He commanded us to love our enemies. Love is the glue which holds the Body together. No matter what other virtues one may have, if he does not have love, his strengths are all liabilities. If he has love, then even his weaknesses are strengths.

2. The nature of Christian love (4-7)

Verses 4-7 tell us what love is. Jesus set the example of love. He wants us to follow him. When impatience, pride, selfishness and a rebellious spirit dwell in our hearts, there is no room for love. Human love demands a response; it sometimes even destroys the one loved. But Jesus' love is unconditional; it builds up.

3. Love is eternal (8-13)

Prophecies are fulfilled; knowledge becomes obsolete; even faith turns to sight. But we must grow in love until the image of Jesus is formed in us. We can know perfect love when we meet him in heaven.

Prayer: Lord, help me to love others.

One Word: The greatest of these is love

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Key Verse: 14:25

1. When we follow the way of love, what is the best gift to seek? Why? (1-5)

2. Why should tongues not be used in public unless they are interpreted? Why is it better to pray with understanding?

3. What does "edify" mean? Why must all spiritual gifts be used to edifies the body? What does this mean? (1-19)

4. When was hearing a foreign language a sign of God's judgement? What is one evidence that God is among his people? (20-25)

5. Read verses 26-39. How did Paul deal with problems in the worship service in Corinth? [Women in the church: 11:5; Ac 1:14; 2:17; 16:14-15; 18:2,18,26; 21:9; Ro 16: 1-6; Lk 2:36-38; Ex 15:20; Jdg 4:4,5; 2Ki 22:14.]

6. What were Paul's guide lines? (33,39) How many times is "edify" mentioned in this chapter? (4,5b,12,17) What does this tell us?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Key Verse: 14:25

1. Excel in gifts that build up the church (1-12)

The way of love is to seek spiritual gifts that build up the church's faith. The gift of tongues was first given to reinforce Jesus' world mission command. Paul says that rather than trying to speak in tongues, it is better to seek gifts that can build up others--such as prophecy. Prophecy is the gift of understanding God's word; a prophet must have the faith and courage to teach and apply God's word without compromise.

2. Speak plainly (13-25)

While spiritual language can be useful in private prayer, Paul encourages us to speak with intelligible language, so that unbelievers may be convicted of sin, repent and fall down and worship God. In times past, tongues or foreign languages were a sign of God's judgment, for they were heard when foreign armies invaded. Now, gifts of languages are given so that the gospel can be preached to the whole world.

Prayer: Lord, give me the Holy Spirit, and gifts necessary to serve your people.

One Word: Use God's gifts to build up others

WORSHIP GOD WHEN YOU MEET TOGETHER

1 Corinthians 14:26-40

Key Verse:14:33a

1. For the strengthening of the church (26-28)

Apparently when the church in Corinth met for worship, there was much noise and confusion. The atmosphere did not encourage spiritual growth; God was not really worshiped. Singing hymns and praying and expounding the word of God should all be a part of the worship service, but these things should be done in an orderly way. This will please God and build up believers.

2. In a fitting and orderly way (29-40)

Prophets are Bible teachers. When one speaks God's word in the congregation, everyone should listen carefully and weigh what is said against the Bible. Those who have something to say from God should speak in turn. The women had a tendency to to talk and not listen. If they had questions or wanted to gossip or talk about something other than a revelation from God, they should do it at home. The worship service is a time to worship God.

Prayer: Lord, help us to make an environment in our worship service in which your Spirit can work, and in which we can worship you in spirit and in truth.

One Word: Worship God and grow in faith

THE GOSPEL OF RESURRECTION (I)

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Key Verses: 15:3,4

1. Read verses 1-2. What relationship does Paul have to those to whom he writes? Why was it necessary for them to be reminded of the gospel again?

2. Why does Paul say “according to the Scriptures?” Why does he consider the gospel to be of first importance?

3. What does it mean that "Christ died for our sins"? From a Biblical point of view, what is the nature of sin? How serious are the consequences? How extensive a problem is sin? (cf. Ro 3:23,10,11; Ro 6:23; Heb 9:27; 2 Co 5:10)

4. How did God provide a solution to man's sin problem? (Jn 1:29, 3:16, 5:24, 1 Pe 2:24) What must we do?

5. What does Jesus' resurrection teach us about God? About Jesus? (1 Co 15:20-28, 45-58)

6. What is the hope given us by the resurrection of Jesus? (1 Co 15:17-19, 42-44, 45-58; 1 Pe 1:3,4)

7. When and where did the risen Jesus appear to Peter? To the Twelve? To the others? hy was it so important to have witnesses to the resurrection? How did they witness to Jesus' resurrection?

8. When and how did Paul meet the risen Jesus? How did the risen Jesus change him? How was his life a testimony to the fact that Jesus rose from the dead? What was his life purpose? Of what was he confident?

THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Key Verse: 15:3,4

1. By this gospel you are saved (1-2)

The church in Corinth had many complicated problems, and in this letter Paul had written about many of these in detail. Most of us have problems. But if we have the gospel in our hearts, every problem is an opportunity to grow in the inner person. So Paul turned away from the problems and pointed to the risen Christ and his gospel, the solution to every problem. If we hold firmly to his word we are saved. This is his promise.

2. Of first importance (3-4)

Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised on the 3rd day. This event is the climax of God's redemptive history. It is the turning point of human history. Jesus' death and resurrection defeated the power of sin and death and set us free from slavery to the devil. When we receive this gospel and believe it in our hearts, we are saved. This is God's grace. It is the turning point of our lives.

Prayer: Lord, I believe that Jesus died and rose again for me. Thank you for providing a way for me to come to you.

One Word: Christ Jesus died and rose for me

RESURRECTION WITNESSES

1 Corinthians 15:5-11

Key Verse: 15:10

1. He appeared to Peter and the Twelve (5-6)

Biblical faith is not a vague feeling or a philosophy or theory. Faith rests on concrete historical evidence, on the testimony of reliable witnesses. The risen Jesus appeared to Peter and restored his failure. He appeared to the Twelve when they were trembling in fear behind locked doors. He spent 40 days between his resurrection and ascension visiting believers to plant in them resurrection faith. James, the Lord's brother, and all the apostles were witnesses to the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

2. He appeared to me also (7-11)

Paul himself met the risen Jesus on the Damascus road and his life was transformed. He had been God's enemy, but by God's grace, the risen Jesus met him and changed him into an apostle and missionary to the Gentile world. Changed lives are the best testimony to the fact of Jesus' resurrection.

Prayer: Lord, continue to work in me by the power that raised Jesus from the dead. Change me in my inner person until I can be your useful servant.

One Word: A witness to the resurrection

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

1 Corinthians 15:12-34

Key verse: 15:22

1. Why did Paul rebuke the Corinthians in verse 12? If there is no resurrection what are the consequences?

2. Why do we preach the gospel and live a life of faith? (14) [What hope does his resurrection give us? (cf. 1 Pet.1:3,4)]

3. What had the apostles testified about God? (15) How could God raise Jesus from the dead? (see 1 Cor 6:14)

5. Look at verse 17. What does the resurrection of Christ have to do with our sin problem? What does it mean, practically, if we are still in our sins?

6. Read verses 18 and 19. If there is no resurrection, why are Christians to be pitied?

7. Read verses 20-22. Why have all men been caught up in this power of death? What are the consequences?

8. What power does the resurrection of Jesus have for us? (22; 1 Pet 1:3) What does the word "firstfruits" in verse 20 mean?

9. Read verses 24-26. What is the ultimate power of the resurrection of Christ? (24-26) How is Jesus' kingdom different? (see verse 28; Isa 11:1-9; Rev 21:4)

10. What is the last enemy? (26) How will creation order be restored after all things have been put under Christ? (28)

11. Read verses 29-31. How could Paul die every day and persevere in preaching the gospel?

12. Why is a pleasure-seeking life the only alternative to resurrection faith? What is bad company? What happens to us when we don't believe the resurrection? (34) How can we live with resurrection hope? (58)

IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Key Verse: 15:17

1. If there is no resurrection of the dead (12-13)

...then we are swimming in a sea of death. There is no hope. Furthermore, not even Christ has been raised. If Christ has not been raised, then being a Christian has no point and no meaning. There is no good news to preach. There is no forgiveness and no way out of guilt and hell.

2. If Christ has not been raised (14-19)

...then those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. Death is the end. We have no hope, and can only be overwhelmed by despair and fatalism. If there is no hope in heaven, then Christians who have lived sacrificial lives for Jesus' sake and the gospel's are losers. But Christ has been raised from the dead. We have a living hope in heaven (1Pe 1:3,4). We know that if we die with him, we shall also live with him (Ro 6:8). We are not losers, but victors in Jesus.

Prayer: Praise God who raised Jesus from the dead and gave us assurance of forgiveness, and a living hope in heaven.

One Word: Christ is alive!

IN CHRIST ALL WILL BE MADE ALIVE

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Key Verse: 15:22

1. Christ the firstfruits (20-23)

In Adam all die. Adam disobeyed God and brought sin and death to all people. We cannot defeat death with life insurance or savings accounts or by medical science. Our life and death problem is a sin problem. God sent Jesus to die for our sins. He raised Jesus from the dead. When we believe in him, our sins are forgiven and we have eternal life, beginning now. Jesus Christ is the firstfruits. He rose from death and we are made alive in him.

2. He must reign (24-28)

Jesus will come again to destroy all dominion and authority and power. He will put all his enemies under his feet, fulfilling the prophecy of Psalm 8:6. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Death is destroyed by resurrection. When everything is under Jesus' feet, as God promised, God's creation order will be restored and God will rule over all, forever and ever.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for life and hope. Come quickly and reign forever.

One Word: In Christ all will be alive

I DIE EVERY DAY

1 Corinthians 15:29-34

Key Verse: 15:31a

1. Why do we endanger ourselves? (29-32a)

Paul's resurrection faith was practical. It changed the way he lived. He was not overwhelmed with sorrow at the death of a loved one, because he had hope to meet him again. He had no life security problem. He was threatened with death by anti-Christians many times and he was imprisoned for his faith, but this did not stop his gospel work. What was his secret? He died every day with Jesus.

2. Stop sinning (32b-34)

If the dead are not raised, we can join the fatalistic crowd who say, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." But we must not be influenced by this crowd; we must live lives of highest moral character before God who loves us and has called us to be his children. If we do not believe that God who raised Jesus from the dead loves us and hates the sin that makes us useless, then we are ignorant of God.

Prayer: Lord, I believe that you raised Jesus from the dead. Help me to die daily to sin and fear and self.

One Word: I die daily

THE GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION

1 Corinthians 15:35-58

Key Verse: 15:49

1. What are some of the questions asked by people who cannot conceive of a resurrection of the dead?

2. What is the resurrection principle stated in verse 36? Can you think of any applications of this principle in our common lives? (compare Jn 12:24)

3. How is the seed that is planted different from the body which grows from it? What does verse 38 teach us about God's way of working? What is his purpose in creating the physical body? (38,42)

4. What are the different kinds of bodies and different kinds of splendor? What does this contribute to our understanding of the resurrection of the dead?

5. Why is it important to know that there is a natural or a physical body and a spiritual body as well?

6. Who is the first Adam? The last Adam? What is the great contrast between the two Adams?

7. What is the hope of earthly men? What does it mean to bear the likeness of the man from heaven?

8. Why must our earthly bodies be changed if we are to inherit the kingdom of God?

9. What will happen to faithful believers and to God's enemies when Jesus comes again? Why is this our great hope? What difference does it make in our practical lives?

10 What is the great victory which we are assured of winning through our Lord Jesus Christ?

11 In view of the fact of Jesus' resurrection and the certainty of his coming again, how ought we to live?

SO WE SHALL BEAR HIS LIKENESS

1 Corinthians 15:35-49

Key Verse: 15:49

1. God gives it a body (35-44)

What will our resurrection bodies be like? This is the resurrection principle: We plant a seed; it dies. Then it rises to a new and more beautiful life. Our old body is a perishable seed. It is full of sickness and sin. Our new resurrection body is imperishable; it is glorious and powerful. It is the body which God gives. This principle is a spiritual truth. We must die to self in order to bear fruit for God.

2. We shall bear the likeness of Jesus (45-49)

We are descendants of Adam; we bear his image. We are dust. We sin and die, as did he. But when we belong to Jesus, we have forgiveness of sin and eternal life. We die with him and live

with him. When Jesus comes again, he will give us a resurrection body like his. The broken image of God will be completely restored in us. There will be no more tears. We will know and love God perfectly, and be with him forever.

Prayer: Lord, let this glorious hope fill my heart until Jesus comes again.

One Word: We shall bear his likeness

VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Key Verse: 15:57

1. Death has been swallowed up in victory (50-57)

Jesus will come again suddenly, with a trumpet blast. He will come to judge the living and the dead. He will complete his victory, establish his perfect kingdom and reign forever. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, so we who belong to Jesus must be changed. We will exchange our perishable bodies for imperishable, glorious ones, and we will reign with him forever. How foolish it is to put one's hope in the world or in the flesh!

2. Therefore, let nothing move you (58)

There is no defeat in Jesus. When he comes in glory, he will totally destroy our great enemy Satan, who rules with the power of sin and death. Sometimes we are discouraged because of our own failures and sins. But there is no defeat in Jesus. We may lose a few battles, but the war is already won. God gives us victory in Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, help me to give myself fully to your work, for I know that only what I do for you will last.

One Word: Jesus gives victory

AN OFFERING AND AN OPEN DOOR

1 Corinthians 16:1-9

Key Verse: 16:8

1. An offering for Jerusalem (1-4)

Paul turns his attention from the glorious resurrection to a seemingly mundane matter--the offering. This particular offering was very important to Paul. He risked his life to deliver it to Jerusalem. The saints in Jerusalem needed material help, but more than this, they needed tangible evidence of God's work among the Gentiles. They needed world mission vision. The Gentile

Christians also needed to make a sacrificial gift. An offering is a spiritual thermometer, and Christians who give are growing Christians.

2. An open door (5-9)

Paul described his work in Ephesus as an open door--with many opponents. When God is working, Satan also works. This is not the time to retreat or give up. So Paul stayed in Ephesus.

Prayer: Lord, help me to give sacrificially, so that I may participate in your work and my faith may grow.

One Word: A sacrificial offering and an open door

BE MEN OF COURAGE; DO EVERYTHING IN LOVE

1 Corinthians 16:10-24

Key Verse: 16:13,14

1. Do everything in love (10-18)

Paul had pioneered the church in Corinth and he felt like their father. He was sending Timothy to them, and he himself was planning to spend the winter there. He did not want to make just a superficial visit. Timothy was worried about how he would be received. The Corinthians had wanted Apollos to come, but Paul was sending Timothy. Three men from Corinth had visited Paul in Ephesus, seeking his council. They told him about the church, and were going back with Paul's advice.

2. Final greetings (19-24)

Aquila and Priscilla had helped him pioneer the church in Corinth, and had gone as lay missionaries to Ephesus, where they were living and working. His final words remind us that love is the solution to problems between Christians. If we love Jesus and love each other, the problems disappear.

Prayer: Lord, help me to stand firm in the gospel and do everything in love.

One Word: Stand firm; act in love

DO EVERYTHING IN LOVE

1Corinthians 16:1-22

Key Verse: 16:14

1. Read verses 1-4. What principles did Paul teach about offerings? What was the purpose of this particular offering? (Ro 15:25-27)

2. Read verses 5-9. Where is Paul writing from? What is his plan? Why did he want to remain in Ephesus, even though it was dangerous?

3. Read verses 10-12. What was Paul's attitude toward his fellow workers?

4. Read verse 13-24. Why might the admonitions in verses 13-14 be necessary? How does Paul express gratitude and encourage spiritual order?

5. How many times is "love" mentioned in these verses? What can you learn from Paul about co-working in doing God's work?