

**THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE
CORINTHIANS**

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BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH AT CORINTH.

Like Athens, Corinth was a completely pagan Greek city with all the problems which that Greek culture had brought. Pagan customs, pagan morality, pagan worship, pagan philosophy, extreme national pride in their culture and accomplishments and many other characteristics of that city would later affect those who would turn to Christ and seek to follow Him. The things that affected the individual believers would then also be part of the source of the problems that would later plague the entire Corinthian Church.

These strong influences also distinguished these two cities, Athens and Corinth, from the Macedonian cities of the north, Philippi and Thessalonica, where life was much simpler and where the Greek culture had penetrated but did not so completely dominate the life of the people. The Christians in those northern cities were not as much affected by these pagan influences.

In about 51 A.D., after the Council of Jerusalem which settled the question of the Gentiles and their relationship with the Law of Moses (Acts, chapter 15, vs. 1 to 30), and after his quarrel with Barnabas (chapter 15, vs. 36 to 39), Paul set out with Silas on his 2nd missionary journey.

The northern areas of Mysia and Bythynia and the entire southern region stretching from Colosse to Ephesus were still unreached with the Gospel. Paul's vision for this 2nd missionary journey seems to have been to do further work in these unreached areas of Asia.

He made his way slowly through Asia, stopping first in the Galatian region to strengthen the troubled churches (See: The Book of Galatians) he had founded on his 1st missionary journey, and to recruit young Timothy to join them (Acts, chapter 16, vs 1 to 5). When he reached the western side of Asia, he attempted to enter various northern areas of Asia with the Gospel, but the Holy Spirit blocked all his attempts to enter the regions of Mysia and Bythynia (chapter 16, vs 6 and 7). Therefore, he waited in the City of Troas for the leading of the Lord (chapter 16, vs 8).

It was while he was waiting in Troas that the Holy Spirit brought him the "Macedonian vision" (Acts, chapter 16, vs 9) which directed him to proceed immediately to the European side of the Aegean Sea, to the MACEDONIAN region on the Northwest side of the Sea.

Paul had never ministered in Europe before and there were many human reasons why he might have hesitated to leave Asia for this new ministry. The unfinished task in Asia, especially in the southern area which included the cities of Ephesus, Colosse and others, differences in the culture of the region to which he was directed from

that of Asia and the difficulties he would face in entering a new field of missionary ministry were all human reasons for feeling that he should stay in Asia and finish the task. Nevertheless, he immediately obeyed the leading of the Lord through the vision and set sail from Troas for Macedonia (Acts, chapter 16, vs 10 to 12).

Acts, chapter 16, vs 13 to chapter 17, vs 15 records the ministry of these men in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. Although there was much opposition in each of these cities, from the very beginning Paul met a warm response to the Gospel and the churches that were established there were very spiritual and fervent in their zeal for the Lord.

In a number of passages, Paul commends this warm response to the Gospel and their ongoing desire to please and serve the Lord. In Philippians, chapters 1 and 4, and in I Thessalonians, chapters 1 and 2, Paul goes to great lengths to describe the nature of these churches and the testimony they maintained for the Lord. So outstanding were these churches, that, in II Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9, in teaching the Corinthians about giving, he uses the churches of Macedonia as examples of total dedication to the Lord and sacrificial giving, and uses them also to shame the more selfish Corinthians.

The books that were written to them, Philippians and I and II Thessalonians, dealt with problems, but they were mostly doctrinal problems, and were not the problems of pride and bitterness and strife and division and immorality which marked the believers in Corinth.

From Berea, Paul went down into the region of Achaia to minister in Athens (Acts, chapter 17, vs 15 to 34). It was here that Paul had his first real encounter with the total dedication of the people to strong Greek paganism. That encounter is especially described in Acts, chapter 17, and is further evidenced in the teachings of I Corinthians, chapter 2:6-9, 14. At the end of Acts, chapter 17, there is very brief mention of the few believers in Athens, but no book was ever written to a church there. If there was actually a church established there, the two books written to the Corinthians were possibly shared with them.

From Athens, Paul proceeds further south to Corinth. Acts, chapter 18, vs 1 to 18 describes this first ministry of Paul in Corinth. Vs. 11 tells us that he had a long ministry there of about 18 months, which was a longer time than he had spent in any other city on these missionary journeys up until that time. Apparently Paul was the first missionary to work in that city, and so was their evangelist, pastor and father in the faith. They owed much to him.

In Corinth, we first meet Aquila and Priscilla, who had come to Corinth from Rome (vs.2 and 3), went with him later to Ephesus and finally returned to Rome again (Romans 16:3-5). As they later accompanied Paul back across the Aegean Sea to Ephesus, they were to be major influences in the life of Apollos whom they later met and trained in Ephesus.

In Corinth, Paul tried to preach first to the Jews, but, when they resisted the Gospel, he turned from them to the Gentiles. The Jews later even started a major effort against him (vs. 12 to 16). There were some Jewish converts there, including the chief ruler of the synagogue and his family (vs. 8), but most of the converts from this early ministry seemed to have been Gentiles. Because of the time he had with them, they were well taught in the things of the Lord. This is what makes it difficult to understand the later extreme carnality of that church.

From Corinth, Paul, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, spent a brief time in Ephesus. The most important thing which happened concerning this brief visit was that, after Paul had departed for Palestine, Aquila and Priscilla were used to train Apollos (vs.26) in correct doctrine for the ministry of preaching and teaching.

Apollos almost immediately went to Corinth and became the second teacher of the Corinthian believers and an evangelist to the Jews. He seems to have had the right motives in going there, but from the description of his dynamic personality and speaking ability which Acts 18 gives us of him (vs. 24 to 28), we can well understand why the Corinthian Christians would be drawn to him and would later divide the church over him. We do not know how long Apollos spent in Corinth, but it was long enough to inspire the loyalty of some believers to him personally.

The Book of Acts does not record this, but it is clear from I Corinthians, chapter 1, vs. 12 that Peter later also ministered in the city, and so was the third skilled teacher they had been given by God. A following also gathered around him.

The conclusion we can draw from this is that these three men were sincere in their desire to build up this Church with no intention of gathering a following after themselves. The goal of their efforts was to make this a well-taught Church and a center for reaching other parts of Europe. The Corinthians were therefore without excuse for the divisions and errors which came into the church, and for the carnal spirit that generally characterized this church.

I Corinthians, chapter 1, vs 4 to 9, and chapters 12 and 14 also show us that God had especially endowed this Church with THE SIGN GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT. These gifts were intended by God to be a source of great help in the witness of the Gospel in the absence of a written New Testament. Neither the Book of Acts nor the Epistles teach that these gifts were given to any other church to be used in the worship and fellowship of the believers. Even the Jerusalem Church, after the initial use of tongues on the Day of Pentecost, did not seem to use the sign gifts internally in the ongoing worship and fellowship of the Church. This makes us wonder why God would choose one of the most carnal churches for this special endowing of these gifts.

The answer to this question may be that the bestowing and use of these gifts in the Corinthian Church was a unique working of God in that Church with specific

purposes. One purpose seems to have been that Corinth was to be a center for the writing of some of the New Testament books, and this required special revelations. Also before “the perfect” would come (I Corinthians 13:8-13) (the New Testament) they needed special encouragement in that completely pagan situation. Still another purpose may have been to use this church as the means of reaching into the western side of Europe...to Rome and the nations beyond.

As more remote, less respected and less well-known cities, the northern cities of Philippi and Thessalonica would not have served this latter purpose. As a highly respected Greek city and a center for Greek culture, Corinth, though they later failed to meet His holy standards, would be the more strategic city for God to use in every way. As it was true in the first preaching of the Gospel to the Jews (Acts, chapter 2), and in the later preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts, chapter 10), the temporary and unique presence of these gifts would therefore especially be necessary to prove the authenticity of the message to be preached to the farther regions of Europe.

What could have been a great spiritual aid and blessing to the Corinthians, however, instead became a cause of pride and arrogance in them because of their carnal spirit. I Corinthians, chapter 14 is mainly devoted to straightening out their worldly misuse of these gifts.

AS WE COME TO 11 CORINTHIANS, we note that the problem of divisions over the teachers they had had was not really cleared up by the writing of I Corinthians. Much of II Corinthians is a defence by Paul of his motives and character. Apparently, both because of the divisions over leadership, the lacks Paul admits in his own personality and abilities and also the strong words he had had to use in his 1st epistle, many in the church had turned against him with bitter criticisms and rejection of his spiritual advice and teaching.

We again note also in II Corinthians, that Paul had to deal very sharply, in chapters 8 and 9, with the selfish spirit of the Corinthians. He also was forced to remind them in those chapters that the offering for the saints in Jerusalem was long overdue, and that they, even after a year, had not yet fulfilled their obligations. As noted before, he was led by the Lord to use the example of the northern churches of Macedonia, churches they would have looked down on, to shame them. This example he used to shame them and his strong words of exhortation would not have endeared him to them.

In II Corinthians, Paul expresses his desire to visit Corinth again. In II Corinthians, chapter 13, he speaks of two previous visits to them and a third one is pending. If he went there after those three visits, it seems likely that it would have been in the period of time (61 to 64 A.D.) between his first and second imprisonments in Rome. A year after writing the second epistle to the Corinthians, he went back to Jerusalem where he was taken prisoner (56-58 A.D.) and eventually taken to Rome for about three years (58 to 61 A.D.). He was then freed for about

three to four years, during which time he traveled both in Europe and Asia and then was reimprisoned and executed in Rome in about 65 or 66 A.D.

DATES FOR THE WRITING OF THE CORINTHIAN EPISTLES

Paul had established the Church at Corinth on his 2nd Missionary Journey after he had been led by the Holy Spirit to leave Asia and go across into Europe to preach the Gospel. (Acts, chapter 16:9-12). He spent a considerable amount of time there (Acts 18:1-17) and Apollos later went across to Corinth from Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28) to help build them up in their faith. We do not know when Peter went there to minister, but his work among them seems certain.

At the time of the writing of these two epistles, Paul was then on his third missionary journey and was probably staying in Ephesus at the time. Word had come to him of the numbers of problems in the Corinthian Church. Though he could not go to be with them at the time, the problems were so urgent that he was led by the Spirit to write with strong spiritual advice to correct them.

It seems likely that the writing of these two epistles followed the writing of the Epistles to the Thessalonians (52 and 53 A.D.). They are also written before the Epistle to the Romans (56 A.D.), for the collection to the saints, which is prominently mentioned in both I and II Corinthians, is finally spoken of as being completed in Romans, chapter 15. The most likely dates, therefore, for I and II Corinthians would be 54 and 55 A.D.

THE OUTLINE OF I CORINTHIANS.

WE NOTE: Since this book mainly deals with problems in the Corinthian Church, the suggested outline also centers on these.

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| I. INTRODUCTION | 1:1-3 |
| II. PROBLEMS OF A CARNAL CHURCH. | 1:4-16:9 |
| A. The Spiritual Advantages God Had Given Them | 1:4-9 |
| B. The Problems That Robbed Them of Spirituality | 1:10-16:16 |
| 1. The Problem of Carnality in Church Relationships | 1:10-4:21 |
| 2. The Problem of Ignored/Undealt With Immorality | 5:1-13 |
| 3. The Problem of Public Lawsuits Against Believers | 6:1-11 |
| 4. The Problem of a Holy Standing Before God | 6:12-20 |
| 5. The Problem of Marriage Relationships | 7:1-40 |
| 6. The Problem of Carnal Use of Their Rights | 8:1-11:1 |
| 7. The Problem of Men-Women Relationships | 11:2-16 |

8. The Problem of Sin at the Lord's Table	11:17-34
9. The Problem of Possession/Use of Spiritual Gifts	12:1-14:40
10. The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrection	15:1-58
11. The Problem of Sacrificial Giving for Needs	16:1-4
12. The problem of Hostility to Paul's workers	16:10-16

III. CONCLUSION	16:17-24
A. Final Instructions and greetings	16:17-21
B. Final Warning and Benediction	16:22--24

OUTLINE OF II CORINTHIANS

WE NOTE: Since this book seems to center on Paul's defense of his own personal integrity and ministry, the suggested outline of the book also centers on this emphasis.

I. INTRODUCTION.	1:1
II. PAUL'S DEFENCE OF HIS INTEGRITY AND MINISTRY	1:3-13:12
A. Paul's attitude to God's help and comfort in testing	1:3-11
B. Paul's statement of his integrity in ministry	1:12-23
C. Paul's love and concern for the fallen brother	2:1-11
D. Paul's sincere spirit in preaching the Gospel	2:12-17
E. Paul's assertion of the glory of his ministry	3:1-18
F. Paul's honesty in ministry in the midst of trials	4:1-18
G. Paul's defense of his motives in ministry	5:1-6:13
H. Paul's demand for separation from unbelievers	6:14-7:1
I. Paul's plea for their acceptance of him	7:2-16
J. Paul deals with their selfish spirit in giving	8:1-9:15
K. Paul's defends his apostleship	10:1-11:33
L. Paul received both special revelations and testing	12:1-10
M. Paul further examines the conduct of his ministry	12:11-21
N. Paul's spiritual purposes in coming to visit them	13:1-10

III. CONCLUSION TO THE EPISTLE	13:11-14
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THE STUDY OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLE AND THE OPENING VERSES

1. PURPOSES AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF THIS EPISTLE

- A. This epistle, though written to a New Testament Church, most closely mirrors the problems of churches today. There is danger that we will feel that the New Testament churches were so spiritual and so far above the quality of our own churches in their love and devotion to the Lord that we could never possibly be like them. TO THE CONTRARY, even the Jerusalem Church, which started out as a very spiritual church (SEE: Acts 2:41-5:42), soon developed the very spiritual problems manifested in churches today. SEE: Acts 6:1-7; Acts 15; Galatians 2**
- B. The Corinthian Church is the best example of a church that had all the spiritual advantages of the newness of the work in that day, the clear evidence of the work and power of the Holy Spirit. both to work in mighty ways on their behalf and to help them walk spiritually before the Lord, and all the incentive they could possibly have needed to be all that God wanted them to be...AND YET THEY FAILED. These same advantages are no less present today, and yet we also often fail in some of the same ways.**
- C. Few churches today would fail in so many and in such extreme ways as the Church of Corinth, but every problem they faced and fell prey to is present in today's Christian world, and many churches would fail in at least one or more of these ways. We can therefore learn from the study of this book both how to identify and deal with the problems we face in our own churches.**
- D. OUR MAIN PURPOSES therefore in the study of this epistle are to UNDERSTAND all of the basic teachings of the epistle, to DEFINE the problems it deals with, to FIND the spiritual answers to these problems that are clearly set forth and then to APPLY these answers to our own churches as we seek to do His work and please Him.**
- E. Another danger we face is that there is the temptation to feel that the teachings of an epistle like this apply to another culture and another age altogether and that they are not eternal truths that apply to God's people of all cultures and ages. It is important that we remember when studying the Scriptures that God's Word is ageless and eternal in its nature, and it has perfect application to the lives and problems of those of all ages of time.**
- 1) Even in the study of the Old Testament, though we are not under the Law of Moses, we note that God sets forth eternal PRINCIPLES that apply to His people of all times and cultures.**
 - 2) It is also important to remember that the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God and is not be treated as though it is simply the thoughts and teachings of men. We are therefore to respect and faithfully follow its**

teachings, remembering that every one of them is from God, just as much today as was expected of those of the day in which the Bible was written.

2. THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF I CORINTHIANS.

I. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE

1:1-3

A. Significance of Paul's mention of his apostleship.

NOTE: See also: Romans 1:1; II Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; II Timothy 1:1 and Titus 1:1.

- 1) Facing possible criticism and rejection of the teachings in the epistle, Paul is asserting the **STANDING** God has given him in his life and work, and his worthiness under God's hand and direction to write such an epistle.**
- 2) He is also asserting his **AUTHORITY**, which is equal to the authority of any other apostle of Christ, to teach, rebuke and correct them.**
- 3) He is also defending his "**RIGHTS**" in his relationship with them and the way he uses these "rights" (SEE: Chapter 9).**

B. Significance of his description of them as "those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus....saints by calling."

- 1) He is setting forth what God intended them to be even though they have not fulfilled His intentions for them.**
- 2) He is using this description to call them back to God's full plan for them.**

C. Significance of the terms "GRACE** and **PEACE**"**

- 1) NOTE the various uses of both of these terms in the New Testament both as they apply to **SALVATION** and as they also apply to the **DAILY LIFE** of the Christian.**

GRACE

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) Ephesians 2:8, 9 | God's Grace in salvation |
| (2) II Corinthians 12:9, 10 | God's sustaining strength |
| (3) Romans 12:6-8; Eph. 4:7 | God's Grace in giving gifts |
| (4) Romans 15:15, 16 | God's Grace in His callings |

PEACE

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|-------------------------------|---|
| (1) Romans 5:1 | Peace WITH God |
| (2) Philippians 4:6, 7 | Peace OF God in our hearts |
| (3) Romans 12:18 | Peace with others in relationships |

- 2) **NOTE their application to these Corinthians as he reminds them of all that God has done for them in the Lord Jesus Christ and how much they owe to Him.**
- 3) **Their full realization of the significance of these things in their lives should lead them to full submission to Him and the abandonment of their sinful practices.**

II. THE PROBLEMS OF A CARNAL CHURCH 1:4-16:16

A. THE SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES GOD HAD GIVEN THEM 1:4-9

- 1) **We note the comparison of these spiritual advantages with those listed in Ephesians 1:3-14 and I Peter 1:3-5.**
- 2) **We further note that there are major differences in the applications that are intended in these three passages.**
 - a. **The ones in I Corinthians 1:4-9 deal especially with the spiritual gifts God had uniquely given this church which were intended to be used by God for His glory and honor and the furthering of His work. It will later be clearly shown that they had misused these advantages by the carnal lives that characterized their church and by the pride and arrogance that accompanied their use of them.**
 - b. **The ones in Ephesians 1:3-14 and I Peter 1:3-5 deal with the salvation of God and its results as made possible through the Lord Jesus Christ. These passages are not written to deal with sin or carnality among them, but to instruct them in the full blessings they have in their relationship with the Lord and to encourage them to go on with Him.**
- 3) **NOTE THE NATURE OF THE ADVANTAGES GIVEN HERE:**
 - a. **The gifts they were given were given to them fully by God so that they are not lacking in any way. It would seem that no other church could even compare to them, for this is not mentioned in any other epistle.**

- b. These gifts were given to also give them the assurance of their relationship to Christ and to give them a rich and rewarding experience in this relationship.
- c. These gifts would also give them credibility with both Christians and non-Christians as they would prove the presence of Christ among them and the truth of all they had believed about Him.
- d. The proper possession and use of these gifts would also bring wonderful unity and harmony in that body of believers as each of them fully used the gifts God had given them while recognizing also the value of those with other gifts in the church. SEE ALSO: Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:1-16.

B. THE PROBLEMS THAT DENIED THEM SPIRITUALITY. 1:10-16:16

1) THE PROBLEM OF CARNAL CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS 1:10-4:21

a. Introduction of the problem 1:10-16

- (1) The name CHLOE (1:11) is only mentioned this one time in the New Testament. She and her family must have been very spiritual.
- (2) The various factions in the reported division of the church were mostly centered around the men who had worked among them. It seems that some of them even felt that the men they were loyal to (and dividing the church over) might even have welcomed their loyalty and might even praise them for it.
- (3) Even those who, in a show of false piety, claimed to be only loyal to the Lord were just as guilty as the others, for they were still causing division in the body of believers and were doing so in a proud and arrogant way.
- (4) Some wonder if the problem of the Jews and Gentiles in chapters 8-10 was a contributing factor in this problem of division in the church with some taking sides with whoever would favor the Jews, such as Peter or Apollos, and some taking the side of the Gentiles with Paul.

b. The limitations and foolishness of worldly wisdom 1:17-31

- (1) The wisdom of worldly people, without the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, cannot be compared with the Wisdom of God. No matter how brilliant worldly people might be, their wisdom is limited. The Jewish leaders (Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees) who opposed the Gospel would be an example of brilliant and

highly educated minds that were devoid of all spiritual wisdom. (1:17-19) SEE: Matthew 23; Philippians 3:4-6

- (2) In that Greek city, where both Jewish and Gentile philosophers were present in great numbers, all of them were unable to think or understand beyond the limitations of their own human minds. (1:20-25). In the case of the Jewish wise men, no matter what dedication they might have to the understanding of the O.T. law and writings, their hearts were still blinded to the Truth of the Messiah and the Gospel (SEE: John, chapters 5-10)
- (3) He shows how God uses the simple things, including the simple message of the Gospel, to shame them (1:26-31). Their own salvation would be an example of a simple thing despised by the worldly philosophers. Even the God they serve would be despised.
- (4) We can see the connection between these teachings and the problems of the Corinthians. In that city, they too would have been tempted to be filled with pride and fascination for the philosophies for which their city was famous. This would cause them to exalt themselves in their relationships with each other in the church itself, and in their relationships with believers in others parts of the Roman Empire. The Macedonians of Philippi and Thessalonika would be examples of those they would hold in contempt because of this fascination with intellectualism.

c. The wisdom of God given through the Holy Spirit 2:1-16

- (1) SEE: The ministries of the Holy Spirit given in John 14-16, and how these chapters emphasize the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. SEE: John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13.
- (2) In this section, Paul first shows them that he had come to them in simplicity of teaching rather than trying to compete with the great thinkers and philosophers of the day. He cites the reasons why this approach was necessary for their faith in the Truth of God to enable them to have a faith that stood in the power and wisdom of God rather than in the wisdom of man. (2:1-5)
- (3) He then shows that the very wisest unsaved/natural man of the world has no ability in himself to comprehend the things about God and about the salvation He has made possible. It is ONLY by the Spirit of God that understanding can come and they can be saved and follow the Lord. (2:6-13)
- (4) In this, he is dealing with the pride in themselves the Corinthians manifest, and the arrogant way they express this pride. He is

emphasizing that they owe nothing to themselves for their understanding and following of the Truth, but owe everything to God and to the work of His Holy Spirit indwelling them.

- (5) In the closing verses of chapter 2, vs. 14-16, he emphasizes two of the three types of people who stand before God...**THE NATURAL MAN** (the unsaved man) and the **SPIRITUAL MAN** (the Christian who is truly walking close to the Lord and to His Word, and who is being taught by the Holy Spirit in obedience to that teaching).
- (6) The identification of these two types of people in chapter 2 is closely connected with the difference that has been set forth between worldly wisdom and spiritual wisdom.

d. Their true spiritual condition is identified and defined 3:1-4

- (1) He now introduces the third type of person who stands before God, **THE CARNAL/WORLDLY/FLESHLY MAN** (the Christian who is walking in the flesh and who is not in right relationship with the God) (3:1). It is clear that he is identifying the great majority of the Christians in Corinth with this person.
- (2) He gives them his reasons why he has to label them as **CARNAL** rather than **SPIRITUAL**. The divisions among them are clear evidence of this. These keep them from being spiritual.
- (3) Compare with churches of today and how even those with these very problems tend to defend and deceive themselves.

e. The proper spiritual view of the workers God has sent. 3:5-4:23

- (1) The true function and place of God's servants and God's coming judgment of them for wrong approaches to their ministries. 3:5-23
 - (a) The comparison of Apollos and himself and the different and non-competing role that each has had in the Corinthian Church. God's role and true place among them was their only desire, goal and emphasis. We have no reason to believe that either of them ever departed from this. 3:5-9
 - (b) The judgment each worker will face in the future. 3:10-15
COMPARE: Romans 14:7-12; II Corinthians 5:9-11
 - (c) The special danger of destroying the Church of God. 3:16, 17

- (d) **Summary of the danger of giving glory to men. 3:18-23**
- (2) **The dangers and temptations workers face today in ministry**
- (a) **Reputation building at the expense of spiritual labor.**
 - (b) **Gaining a personal following rather than directing to God**
 - (c) **Competition between workers for fame and reputation.**
 - (d) **Self-glory rather than giving all the glory to Him.**
 - (e) **Indifference to the spiritual quality of the work they do as they emphasize size rather than genuine spiritual results.**
 - (f) **Desire for personal gain rather than sacrifice for the Lord in their labors.**
- (3) **How Paul views Apollos and himself and how these Corinthians are to regard them and approach them. 4:1-21**
- (a) **He emphasizes the unworthiness of any man to be followed as a substitute for the Lord Himself in their individual lives and in the fellowship of believers. 4:1-8**
 - *WE NOTE : His use of Servants/Slaves (those under bondage) and Stewards (those entrusted with responsibility) to describe himself and Apollos.**
 - (b) **He also notes that even in his position as an apostle he is despised by the world, ridiculed and humiliated. 4:9-13
SEE ALSO: II Corinthians 4:7-12; 11:22-33.**
 - (c) **We note Paul's loving approach to them 4:14-17**
 - (d) **He desires nothing more of them than that they would see him as a father and as an example to them even though he is having to speak very strongly to them. They may not like the strong words the Holy Spirit inspires him to write, but he wants them to know that they are written in love. 4:18-21**
 - (e) **We note his use of "arrogant" in referring to them in 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2. This speaks of their attitude to spiritual things**

and their seeming indifference to the spiritual settlement of this and other problems in the church.

- 2) THE PROBLEM OF IGNORED IMMORALITY 5:1-13**
- a. THE PROBLEM IS IDENTIFIED 5:1, 2**
- (1) A man has taken his father's wife and the church has done nothing about it to deal with the man. Even the Gentiles would not be known for such a vile sin. 5:1**
 - (2) Their attitude is not one of mourning over the sin of the man but they rather have an attitude of contentment ("puffed up"), tolerance and indifference. 5:2**
 - (3) We note how this problem is mentioned in Leviticus 18:8. Then the remedy for it is death ("cut off") in Leviticus 18:29 so that the nation might be holy and obedient before God. All sins are offensive to God, but moral sins are especially offensive to Him and must be dealt with strongly.**
- b. HOW THE PROBLEM IS TO BE DEALT WITH 5:3-13**
- (1) The most severe action is to be taken in Corinth, and that is that the man is to be completely expelled from the body of believers. This command is repeated again and again in this chapter.**
 - (2) The purposes of such action:**
 - a) If the man is permitted to remain in the body of believers, the whole body will be led astray (like the leaven in the loaf) and will freely commit immoral acts. The body of believers is to be cleansed completely as a warning and lesson to all. 5:6-8**
 - b) The man himself, if permitted to remain, will never really repent of the sin. True repentance is required before restoration can be considered. The only way to bring him to true repentance is to expel him (into the "realm of Satan") so that he will fully realize the vile nature of the sin and be willing to deal with it in repentance. 5:5-13**
 - (3) The possibility of restoration after repentance.**
 - a) We note, in II Corinthians 2:4-11, that the man has truly repented, and is to be forgiven and taken back into the body of**

believers again. Repentance and abandonment of a sin is the basis for restoration in any age of the church.

- b) Restoration is also taught in Galatians 6:1 where it is to be done in love and compassion.
- c) The question comes, in the case of moral sins, whether or not a church officer, pastor or deacon, can be restored to his former position in the church. It seems clear, in the teaching of I Timothy 3:1-13 that, when a moral sin has been committed, any person can be restored to fellowship BUT NOT to a position of leadership in the church. He is no longer “blameless” or “beyond reproach”, and has been disqualified.

(4) Examples of the bases for church discipline in the New Testament.

- a) Romans 16:17, 18 Those who cause dissension
- b) I Corinthians 5 Immorality
- c) II Thessalonians 3:6 Undisciplined lives
- d) II Thessalonians 3:14 Disobedience to the Truth
- e) I Timothy 4:8-20 Rejection of the Truth
- f) II Timothy 3:1-5 Ungodly behavior
- g) Titus 3:9-11 Contentious spirit
- h) II John 7-11 False teaching

(5) Problems in applying church discipline.

- a) Sometimes the offending ones are relatives or friends of prominent members who may not agree to any discipline being taken against them. Large families may leave a church over this matter.
- b) Sometimes the offending one might be a church leader such as a pastor or a deacon. Not only will the leader oppose the action being taken, but the members themselves might feel that any discipline of a leader would disturb the life of the church.

- c) **The one offending, such as a prominent member or leader, might have a following in the church who would stand with him no matter what the nature of his sin might be. This might threaten to hopelessly divide the church if these people decide to leave the church with him.**
- d) **The type of offense being committed may be so widespread in the church that the church might not know how or where to begin to deal with it. The discipline called for may involve numbers of people and that may upset the stability of the church.**
- e) **Modern day thinking may rule. This says that New Testament standards cannot be applied today in the way they were in the day of the Apostle Paul.**
- f) **A church may be more concerned with growth and numbers than with Biblical standards and treat these standards lightly. Therefore, the ongoing leadership of the one who has sinned may seem essential to the church in bringing further growth.**
- g) **A church may fear some legal action by the one being disciplined that would threaten the life of the church.**

3) THE PROBLEM OF LAWSUITS AGAINST BELIEVERS 6:1-11

a. THE PROBLEM IS IDENTIFIED 6:1, 2

- (1) **Some of the members of the church had suffered loss or had some grievance against some other member of the church. As matters that seemed to come under the jurisdiction of secular courts, these cases were taken to unsaved judges to decide.**
- (2) **Though seemingly justified from a human standpoint, such public actions by believers against other believers brought the church and the name of the Lord into disrepute so that their testimony was destroyed. SEE: Matthew 5:16; I Peter 2:12,15; 3:16.**
- (3) **The believers involved in this seemed indifferent to how it would affect the reputation and testimony they had before the community, and pursued their own gain and rights.**

b. HOW THE PROBLEM IS DEALT WITH SPIRITUALLY 6:3-8

- (1) **The shame to the work of God of such actions is first of all dealt with. We note the connection of this passage with chapter 5:1, 2**

where the church was ignoring the problem of immorality and its implications, and the problem was not dealt with. The same thing seems to be true here. As a result, the unsaved people who would observe such action would use it as an opportunity to mock the Name of the Lord and His followers.

(2) The solutions that are suggested:

- a) Rather than taking grievances and disputes to unsaved judges, wise and spiritual believers are to be used instead to evaluate and judge such matters. These matters are thus kept within the church and are settled in spiritual ways.
 - b) If a matter cannot be resolved, believers are to be willing to suffer loss at the hands of other believers rather than losing their testimony and bringing shame to the Name of the Lord.
 - c) This passage does not deal with matters involving the breaking of civil laws where the local authorities need to be notified and believers are brought under their judgments. In such cases, Romans 13:1-7 would seem to apply. This passage in I Corinthians 6 only applies to personal matters between believers in the church.
- c. He reminds them of their new standing in Christ in contrast to the condition of the unsaved around them who have neither place nor inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Their lives are to be lived in conformity with that new standing in Christ. 6:9-11

4) THE PROBLEM OF A HOLY STANDING BEFORE GOD 6:12-20

- a. He is here dealing with a problem that was common in many of the churches where holy/pure living was not a priority with some of the believers. Partly, this attitude of indifference was a result of lack of understanding of their new nature and their relationship and responsibilities before God in that new relationship.
- b. SEE ALSO: Romans 6:1-22; 12: 1, 2; I Corinthians 10:31; Galatians 5:1, 13-26; Colossians 3:1-3; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; I Peter 1:13-19.
- c. COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT HOLINESS
 - (1) Romans 5:20-6:1 Sinning to obtain more Grace
 - (2) Romans 14; I Cor. 8 Sinning because of “liberty” in Christ

(3) Galatians 5:1, 13, 16 Sinning because of freedom from the Law

d. THE PROBLEM IS IDENTIFIED 6:12-18

- (1) From his discussion in these verses, it is possible that there were other forms of immorality and impure behavior among them in addition to the one mentioned in 5:1, 2.**
- (2) In chapter 5, he is dealing only with the case of gross immorality in an action in the life of a member, but in this passage in chapter 6, he is dealing with ANY form of immorality or impurity in the life of the individual believer.**
 - (a) We recognize that there are many forms sin can take besides actual actions in the life of the believer. The thoughts and intents of our hearts, our words, our feelings, our attitudes, our deep desires, our motivations and others.**
 - (b) Any of these can stain our lives with sin and destroy the holiness and purity of our lives.**

d. THE PROBLEM DEALT WITH 6:15, 19, 20

- (1) In this passage he deals with the nature of our individual lives in our relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.**
 - (a) In 6:15, we are called “members of Christ”. In 6:19, we are called “temples of the Holy Spirit.” We note that in chapter 3:16, the phrase “temple” is used to refer to the body of believers itself, but in this passage it is used to refer to the body of the individual Christian.**
 - (b) In 6:19, 20, he further states that, when we trust the Lord as our Savior, we are the possession of the Lord and have no rights over ourselves to do and act as we please. (“you are not your own for you are bought with a price”). The price He paid for us and our salvation was His own blood. (SEE: 7:23)**
- (2) He draws the conclusion that we are to “glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits which are God’s”. This means that there is to be nothing in our lives that would defile them and take away the glory from God. This same truth is repeated in I Corinthians 10:31 when he is dealing with the problem of people standing on their “rights” and ignoring God’s wishes for them.
SEE ALSO: Colossians 3:17**

5) THE PROBLEM OF MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS

7:1-40

- a. **There were two basic problems these Christians were facing in their marriage relationships. Paul has to deal with both of them, for either of these problems could affect them spiritually and lead them astray.**
 - (1) **The problem of relationships they had established in marriage BEFORE they were ever saved.**
 - (2) **The problem of establishing the right spiritual priorities in view of the troublesome times in which they lived.**
- b. **We note that some feel, in studying this passage, that Paul had a prejudice against women and considered them inferior. They would also draw the same conclusion from chapter 14, where he insists that women are to keep silent in the church. The same people would object to the teaching of such passages as Ephesians 5:22-33 and I Peter 3:1-6 where the submission of the wife to the husband is taught.**
 - (1) **They forget that ALL of this is the Word of God, and that it is not Paul's feelings that are being expressed here.**
 - (2) **As the Word of God, God is seeking to instruct us in every aspect of our Christian lives, so that everyone, men and women alike, would walk in ways that are pleasing to Him and fulfill their proper ROLE and PURPOSE in life in their relationship with the Lord.**
- c. **We also note that this entire chapter has to be interpreted in the light of the troubled times in which they lived. We see the emphasis of this in vs. 2, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32 and 35. Not only were they living in the midst of great immorality, but they apparently were also facing great persecutions that demanded that they remain true and undistracted in their lives.**
- d. **It is obvious that some in the church planned to follow their own desires no matter what instructions they might receive.**
- e. **THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED**
 - (1) **There were some misunderstandings concerning marriage relationships in their new life in Christ.**
 - (a) **Some had not yet become Christians when they married. Now that one of them in the marriage relationship has been**

saved, their problem would be whether or not they should stay in that marriage relationship with an unsaved spouse.

(b) Others had the problem of determining, in the light of the troubled times in which they lived, whether or not they should get married or even stay married if married already.

(c) Others had the problem of changing from one situation to another in such times....e.g. from a slave to a free person

(2) Was there also rebellion on their part in that they were neglecting their spiritual responsibilities to God in their marriage relationships or were making decisions not pleasing to Him in the steps they were taking regarding marriage.

e. THE PROBLEM DEALT WITH

(1) In any marriage relationship they are to completely fulfill all of their God-given responsibilities in the marriage relationship.

(2) Those Christians who are married to an unsaved person should stay in that relationship so that, by their example of Godly living, that person could be won to the Lord. SEE ALSO: I Peter 3:1-6

(3) In some cases, it might be wise not to marry at all so that they can concentrate on the things of the Lord and spiritually meet the trials they are facing.

(4) Whatever the situation in life might be, there was danger in having too much concern for things on this earth and not enough concern for spiritual and eternal things.

(5) Fathers are to use spiritual wisdom in advising their unmarried daughters.

(6) Marriage, when it is entered into, is lifelong and a person may only be remarried when the other spouse has died. SEE ALSO: Mark 10:1-10; Romans 7:1-7.

(7) For a widow or widower, it might be wise not to remarry at all in the light of the present difficult circumstances they were facing.

6) THE PROBLEM OF THE CARNAL USE OF THEIR RIGHTS 8:1-11:1

a. We note the close connection of this section of Scripture with Romans 14:1-15:7 where the same basic problem is being dealt with.

- (1) Unlike most of our churches of today, in all of these New Testament churches, except for the one in Jerusalem, there was great diversity of background among the believers. There were Jews and Gentiles, masters and slaves, high class and low class people and the rich and the poor.**
- (2) According to the teaching of Ephesians 2:11-22, they were all one in Christ and were to walk in unity and harmony in this oneness. There were to be no differences between them. The spiritual walls have been broken down between Jews and Gentiles in Christ, since they are no longer under the Law, but, on the human level, they are going to have to face and spiritually deal with the human weaknesses and temptations that will still divide them.**
- (3) Therefore, it was inevitable that differences would break out among them, especially between the Jews and the Gentiles. Their backgrounds and cultures were so different that it would humanly be difficult for them to fit together in one body of believers.**

b. THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED

8:1-6

- (1) When the Gentiles would buy meat, they would go to the market place where the meat that was sold had first been offered to the idols in that pagan society. It is possible that they might even have been eating meat on the temple grounds.**
- (2) The Gentiles thought nothing of it since they themselves did not believe in the idols nor did they worship them in any way. SEE: I Corinthians 8:1-6. When anyone would protest, they stood on their RIGHTS as believers in Christ and defied anyone to find fault with them. They didn't care how anyone else thought or felt. SEE ALSO: Romans 14:1-4. They were apparently demanding that others simply leave them alone so that they continue their practice.**
- (3) This practice of the Gentiles deeply offended the Jewish believers. The Jews reacted to this Gentile practice and attitude of defiance by bitterly judging and criticizing them. This resulted in a major controversy in the church that divided them from each other.**
- (4) It seems clear, in both Romans, chapters 14 and 15, and I Corinthians 8, that both the Gentiles and the Jews were wrong and were to be corrected. The Gentiles were wrong in their arrogant attitude of going ahead no matter how great the offense to others might be. The Jews were wrong in their unloving and bitter denunciation of their fellow believers.**

c. THE PROBLEM DEALT WITH

- (1) In Acts 15, in dealing with the question as to whether or not the Gentiles were under the Law of Moses, all of the Apostles had agreed that they were NOT under the Law of Moses, BUT, to avoid offending the Jews in every place where they lived, they were to follow four basic rules. ONE OF THESE was that they were not to have anything to do with things that had any relationship with or were contaminated by IDOLS. SEE: Acts 15:10-18; 19-21**

- (2) In Romans 14:1 to 15:6, a number of spiritual principles are set forth to settle this controversy.**
 - (a) They are to examine how their practices affect their relationship with the Lord Himself and how would the Lord feel about them. 14:1-12**

 - (b) They are to examine how their practices affect other believers and whether or not they are leading other believers astray by what they practice. 14:13-21**

 - (c) They are to examine how their practices affect their own consciences and whether they have any doubts about them in their own hearts and lives. 14:5, 22, 23**

 - (d) They have an obligation in their walk with the Lord and their relationships in the body of believers to PLEASE one another rather than themselves, even as Christ pleased not Himself. 15:1-4**

 - (e) They have an equal obligation to ACCEPT one another in spite of their differences in background and customs, even as they have been accepted in Christ in spite of their sinful backgrounds and unworthiness before God. 15:8-8**

- (3) In I Corinthians 8:1 to 11:1, he also sets forth spiritual principles to settle this controversy.**
 - (a) They are responsible for those who lack the “knowledge” 8:7**

 - (b) They face the danger of being stumbling blocks to others 8:9**

 - (c) They face the danger of the downfall of others by their arrogant actions. 8:11**

- (d) **In their arrogance they are sinning against the Lord** 8:12
- (e) **They must spiritually be willing to give up this practice so that no one stumbles because of it** 8:13
- (f) **They must follow the example of Paul who gave up many of his apostolic rights in order to be able to freely reach all kinds of people.** 9:1-23
- (g) **Like Paul, they must run the race of life with discipline and with the full approval of God.** 9:24-27
- (h) **Paul warns them about their own accountability before God, using Israel as an example** 10:1-14
- (i) **Paul's examines the spiritual side of eating meat offered to idols and coming to the Lord's Table** 10:15-22
- (j) **Paul draws conclusions about what they are doing:**10:23-11:1
 - **Their practice may destroy their testimony** 10:23-30
 - **All things are to be done for the glory of God** 10:31
 - **They are to please all men in all things** 10:32, 33
 - **They are to follow Paul's example** 11:1

7) THE PROBLEM OF THE ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN 11:2-16

- a. **He is not teaching the inequality between men and women, either before God or before each other, but he rather is teaching that they have different roles in the plan and purpose of God and they are to recognize and fill the role that God has given them. When they act or minister outside their assigned role they are offending God Himself.**
- b. **As noted before, in the study of I Corinthians 7, men and women are equal in value before God and none of this teaching gives men the right to feel that they are superior either to their wives or to women in the church or society. SEE ALSO: The women of Romans 16:1-16.**

c. THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED

- (1) **The problem in the church seems to be that some of the women were assuming roles and positions that God had never intended for them.**
 - a) **We see this, for instance, in chapter 14:34, 35 where he warns the women that they are to keep silent in the church.**

b) We see this again in the warning he gave to women in I Timothy 2:9-15, where he speaks of women “quietly” receiving instruction and also that they are prohibited from preaching or having authority over men in the work of the Lord.

(2) In other places, he will deal with the VALUE of women to God (SEE: Romans, chapter 16; Philippians 4:2, 3; I Timothy 5:9, 10) and the ministries that a woman can have with other women (SEE: Titus 2:3, 4), but he is clear in the teaching that this does not include church leadership in the mixed body of believers, or duties in the work that God has designated for men alone.

d. THE PROBLEM DEALT WITH

(1) His first instruction is that the man is the leader of the woman. This is true in the marriage relationship (SEE: Ephesians 5:22-33; I Peter 3:1-6) and also in the work of the church. The woman is to submit to this leadership. 11:3

(2) She is to demonstrate her submission to the leadership of men both by her actions and by the hair covering she has as a symbol of their authority over her. 11:4-10

(3) At the same time, both men and women recognize their dependence on each other and the important place that each occupies in the plan of God 11:11, 12

(4) The Corinthians are warned that they are not to be contentious about this matter, but are to obey. 11:13-16

8) THE PROBLEM OF SIN AT THE LORD’S TABLE 11:17-34

a. The fellowship meal which led to sin at the Lord’s Table 11:17-22

(1) When the Lord met with His disciples for the last time before he would be crucified, their evening began with the eating of the Passover Meal that for them served as a fellowship meal. SEE: Matthew 26:17-25; Mark 13-21; Luke 22:7-18; John 13

(2) We note that, even on that occasion with the Lord Himself, there was sin committed by the disciples as they quarreled among themselves as to who was the greatest among them (Luke 22:24). They had previously had the same dispute about midway through the ministry of the Lord (Luke 9:46-48) so this was an ongoing problem with them. On both occasions, the Lord had had to strongly deal with this carnal attitude among them, and

even used His own example of washing their feet in John 13 to shame and correct them.

- (3) In the early church, they continued this practice of having a fellowship meal before the observance of the Lord's Supper itself. The Corinthian Church also followed this practice as they would gather for the taking of the Table of the Lord, remembering the broken body and shed blood of the Lord.
- (4) Some today even follow the practice of including this meal and foot-washing when they meet at the Table of the Lord.

b. THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED.

- (1) It was reported to Paul from Corinth that the rich among them came to the meal with a selfish attitude, refusing to share with the poor among them as they indulged themselves in their eating.
- (2) This became a sin on their part that overshadowed and shamed the taking of the Lord's Table, making them unworthy to have any part in it and opening them to God's judgment.

c. THE PROBLEM DEALT WITH.

- (1) The nature and significance of the Lord's Table 11:23-26
 - a) Though we do not follow the custom of the New Testament churches in having a fellowship meal before taking the bread and juice of the Lord's Table, the Lord's Table is no less significant for us today and carries with it the same responsibilities that belonged to the Christians of New Testament times.
 - b) As given by the Lord Himself, the Lord's Table taking of bread and juice is intended as a REMEMBRANCE of the sacrifice of His body and the shedding of His blood on the Cross.
 - c) Contrary to the teaching of some, there is no Scriptural teaching that the elements actually change into the body and blood of the Lord, but the remembrance is no less significant for the Christian. It is a holy time devoted to drawing near to the Lord with thanksgiving and worship and fresh commitment to Him as Christians remember all that He has done for them and how much they owe Him.

d) As a remembrance, the Lord's Table was to be approached with much heart searching and reverence for the Lord. There was to be no carelessness in this approach to it.

(2) The approach of the Christians to the Lord's Table 11:27-29

- a) Before anyone could partake, they were to "examine" themselves for sin and any impurity in their lives. It is clearly implied that any sin or impurity is first to be dealt with before God so that their hearts are clean in coming before the Lord.
- b) Apparently in Corinth, many of the believers did not take this seriously and came to the Lord's Table carelessly with indifference to its significance in their own lives. This approach would deeply offend the Lord and their approach would not be acceptable. They would be inviting His judgment on them
- c) This passage makes it clear that there was/is to be much heart preparation before anyone, in that day or this, would partake.

(3) The judgment of God upon those who offend. 11:30-34

- a) Apparently, the offense of those in Corinth who were treating the Table of the Lord carelessly and with indifference to its significance and requirements was so great that God brought direct judgment upon some of them. The judgment he brought upon them involved causing some of them to suffer sickness and others to die (11:30).
- b) In bringing such judgment on them, God had the purpose of not only REPAYING the main offenders for this sin at the Lord's Table but also the purpose of WARNING the other members of the body of believers that they did not dare commit the same

of offending Him by taking this carelessly. The same judgments could come on the others as well if also they practiced and persisted in this sin.
- c) The lesson we can learn today is that it is better not to partake at all of the Table of the Lord than to partake with deep offense to the Lord through a sinful and careless approach. The Lord may not bring judgment on us in the same way He did the Corinthians, but He still in some serious way will hold us accountable for this and other offenses we commit against Him.

sin

9. THE PROBLEM OF MISUSE OF GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 12:1-14:40

a. VARYING GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 12:3-8	I Corinthians, chs.12-14	Ephesians 4:1-15	I I Peter 4:10, 11
Prophecy	Word of Wisdom	Apostles	Speaking
Service	Word of Knowledge	Prophets	Serving
Teaching	Faith	Evangelists	
Exhorting	Gifts of Healing	Pastors	
Giving	Miracles	Teachers	
Leading	Prophecy		
Showing mercy	Disting. of spirits		
	Tongues		
	Interp. of tongues		
	Apostles		
	Prophets		
	Teachers		
	Helps		
	Administrators		

b. PURPOSES FOR THESE VARYING GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

For the unity and service of the body	For the common good For edification For exhortation	For unity, equip., build., growth and consolation of the body	For serving one another
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c. OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE GIFTS IN CORINTH

- (1) As we compare the lists of gifts in these four epistles, some have wondered why the Corinthian Church seemed to have more of them than any other church.
 - a) Part of the reason may be that the pagan city in which they lived offered more of a spiritual challenge than any other city. Not only was there idol worship, which would have been present in every other city as well, but the prominence of pagan philosophy set that city off from every other city of the empire. The believers needed the special encouragement and confirmation that the presence of the full list of gifts would give them to combat these pagan ideas.
 - b) It would also be true that Corinth, more than any other city, would be the launching place for witness to the rest of the Roman empire. Its position in the southern part of eastern

Europe made this possible. This would not have been as possible from the northern cities of Macedonia or even from the cities on the western coast of Asia such as E

- (2) Although many of these gifts were intended to be used during the entire church age, it is also taught that some of them mentioned in I Corinthians, chapter 12 had purposes limited to that day and would pass away before too much time had passed in the Church age.**
- (3) According to I Corinthians 13:8-13, the ones which were given only for a limited time were Prophecy, Tongues and Knowledge. At the same time Faith, Hope and Love would continue. Since the Interpretation of Tongues was related only to Tongues speaking, that too would pass away.**
- (4) The passing away of some of the gifts, while Faith, Hope and Love would continue, cannot refer to eternity as some teach. Faith and Hope will no longer be needed in eternity and these terms can only be applied in the Church age for the benefit of those who have not yet died and gone to be with the Lord.**
- (5) This passage makes it clear that the passing away of these would happen very soon after that period of time since it relates their use to the limited knowledge they had of the Truth in that day.**
- (6) The only explanation for this limited knowledge would be the fact that the New Testament (“THE PERFECT”) was just being written and would not be completed until nearly 100 A.D. Until that process was complete in the plan of God, they still would need these special gifts.**
- (7) These special gifts were their partial source of knowledge of God’s New Testament Truth and would not only be for their encouragement and uplifting at that time, but also for additional confirmation that all that was happening was truly from God.**
- (8) Church History shows that such gifts as Prophecy and Tongues in fact did pass away before 150 A.D. There is no valid mention of them again until some claimed to have them in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.**
- (9) In addition, the office of the APOSTLES, mentioned in I Corinthians 12:28, 29 and Ephesians 4:11 would not continue once the last of the Apostles (JOHN) died in about 95 A.D. This was a very special and limited office given only to a few men, including**

the Apostle Paul, and had special purposes in that period of time when the Gospel was first introduced and the authority and power of the Apostles was needed to validate the message they were preaching.

- (10) We note that the gift of MIRACLES, which was the ability to lay hands on people and miraculously heal them, was specifically called one of “THE SIGNS OF A TRUE APOSTLE” in II Corinthians 12:12 and would also have passed away with the death of the last of the Apostles.**
- (11) The remaining gifts mentioned in these passages are mostly given by the Holy Spirit to the body of believers in the local church and are important in the relationships within that body. Therefore, most of these would still remain today.**
- (12) As it is true with other ways the Holy Spirit ministers in our lives, these gifts of the Spirit are not matters simply of emotion and feeling or some strange experience, but are the gifts given to believers in their relation to the Lord in salvation. They are therefore to recognize and use these gifts in spiritual and God-honoring ways. I Corinthians 14 seems to stress that these gifts were to be used in quiet and orderly ways with no confusion.**
- (13) We also note from Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 that believers have differing gifts and that one person and his gift is not better than others in the eyes of God. However humble some gifts might seem from a human standpoint, no believer would ever need to be ashamed of the gifts he has been given. Every one of these differing gifts, however humble they might seem to be, are necessary so that every need of the members of the body of believers is met.**

d. THE MISUSE OF THESE GIFTS IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

- (1) Rather than accepting and using these gifts of the Holy Spirit as a blessing from God and a source of deep spiritual expression for the glory of God, the Corinthians apparently approached them with a sense of pride and arrogance to be used for their own glory and personal advancement.**
- (2) With this pride and arrogance, complete confusion was coming in their meetings as an assembly as they especially used the gifts of Tongues and Prophecy. It seems that there was even some competition among them that caused them to seek for prominence and recognition. We note that this confusion characterizes most of**

the so-called use of these today in churches that still believe they are valid.

(3) We also note that women were apparently assuming roles in the assembly they were not permitted to occupy. Although they also were gifted with some of the main gifts, they were not to vocally express these in the mixed assembly (I Corinthians 14:34, 35).

a) Their use of these gifts mentioned in I Corinthians 11:5 were apparently only to be used with other women. This is also in harmony with I Timothy 2:8, 9 where only men were to pray publicly in the assembly.

b) The work of Phoebe and others in Romans 16 does not mean that they had leadership or authority in the Church/mixed body of believers, but only indicates that God considered them very valuable in the work that they did do for Him.

e. DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF MISUSE OF GIFTS

(1) Paul very strongly lays out the rules that were not being followed but which were important to God in the use of their gifts. He makes it clear that there is to be no further confusion in the meetings of the assembly. He also indicates that Tongues is the lesser of the gifts and that Prophecy is to mainly be used in the assembly.

(2) He also makes it clear that anything else but strict attention to the standards God desired would indicate a complete lack of spirituality and submission to God on their part. Those standards were for their good and the edification of the body of believers and were to be strictly followed.

(3) As he lays out these essential rules, his approach can also be taken as a strong rebuke to them for the pride and arrogance that had led them to go astray in this. In none of these passages is he commending them for their possession and use of these gifts.

(3) It also seems to be implied that if they humbled themselves and submitted themselves to God in the area of their gifts, this might also help clear up some of the previous problems he has mentioned. Such humbling of themselves and submission to God in everything would deal with their pride and arrogance that had characterized their handling of other problems, and would give greater unity and harmony in the body of believers.

- (4) Even the “LOVE” chapter, chapter 13:1-7, seems to be written not just as a beautiful piece of poetry but as a rebuke to them for the lack of love they have demonstrated in their relationships with other believers. Until there could be true expressions of love among them, the blessing of God would never rest upon them and their use of the Gifts of the Spirit would only seem like mockery to God.

10. THE PROBLEM OF THE DENIAL BY SOME OF THE FUTURE RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS FROM THE DEAD. 15:1-58

- a. There has been much disagreement and controversy concerning the resurrection of the dead at the coming of the Lord.
- 1) Some believe in “SOUL SLEEP”. This is the idea that when a person dies, his soul sleeps in the buried body until the time of the resurrection. This belief is denied by II Corinthians 5:1-8 and Philippians 1:21-23 where it is clearly taught that when we die we immediately go to be with the Lord.
 - 2) Some doubt the TWO FOLD NATURE of the coming of the Lord...the RAPTURE, when He catches us up in the air to be with Him for a time in heaven, AND HIS COMING DOWN WITH US to rule and reign on the earth. Such passages as I Thessalonians 4:13-18 (the Rapture) and II Thessalonians 1:6-10 (His coming with us to rule and reign on the earth) clearly seem to teach this two fold nature of His coming.
 - 3) Some dispute the TIMING of the coming of the Lord. Some believe in the mid-tribulation rapture, which means that believers will go through at least half of the great tribulation that is to come. This would seem to deny the IMMEDIATE return of the Lord which means that He can come at any time.
 - a) This imminent return of the Lord is not only taught in I Thessalonians 4:13-18, but we can clearly see that it was the hope of God’s people throughout the New Testament and as continued to our hope today.
 - b) The Lord Himself emphasized that His coming could come at any time and that no one could know the hour or the day when He would return. Matthew 24:36.
- b. THE PROBLEM in the Corinthian Church was that some in the Church were altogether denying that there would be any future resurrection. SEE: I Corinthians 15:12. This same problem may have

affected some in the Thessalonian Church who had seen their loved ones die and who may have lacked hope that they would ever see them again. SEE: I Thessalonians 4:13, 18.

c. THE EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT of I Corinthians 15:1-58.

1) The bodily resurrection of the Lord from the grave is an essential part of the gospel we preach and by which we are saved, and was considered so important in the early church that it was usually one of the main parts of early preaching. 15:1-11

a) If the Lord had not risen from the dead, there would be no proof whatsoever of His victory over death and all His promises concerning His deity and Divine purpose in coming would mean little.

b) His resurrection validates not only Who He is and the truth of the teachings He gave on the subject (SEE: Mark 8, 9, 10). but also the salvation that He came to bring.

2) There is an essential relationship between the bodily resurrection of Christ and our own future bodily resurrection. 15:12-19

a) If He had not risen from the dead, we would have no foundation for our faith and no certainty that faith in Him would produce any eternal results.

b) The fact that He bodily arose from the dead makes it sure that His promises of a bodily return to resurrect us and take us up to be with Him can be believed.

c) All of the proofs we find in the Scripture both by the empty tomb and by those who saw and communed with Him after His resurrection can be believed.

3) His bodily resurrection is the absolute assurance of our own future bodily resurrection. 15:20-28

a) He is now our living and visible Lord in heaven and is not just in spirit form.

b) Even though we have to wait for the Rapture to actually have a resurrected body, when we or anyone else dies and is buried we know that this will be only temporary and that someday we and they will have glorified bodies to live in for all eternity.

- 4) **The harm that comes in the denial by some of our future bodily resurrection** **15:29-34**
- a) **This causes us to despair and wonder whether the promises of God can really be believed.**
 - b) **They are denying the Scriptures and the Lord Himself who both recorded His actual resurrection and also its promise for us of our own resurrection.**
- 5) **The nature of the resurrected bodies we will have** **15:35-49**
- a) **This passage and other passages dealing with our future resurrection clearly teach that we will occupy actual bodies, but they will be glorified ones fit to eternally dwell in heaven with Him.**
 - b) **It is also clear (SEE ALSO: II Corinthians 5:1-8; I Thessalonians 4:13-18)), as we think of the nature of the Lord's own body after His own resurrection from the dead, that our resurrected bodies will have none of the limitations or weaknesses of the bodies we occupy here on the earth.**
- 6) **The victory over death that comes in our future resurrection from the dead** **15:50-57**
- a) **Though, if we die before the time of the Rapture, our human bodies are buried and decay in the ground, we who die have no fear of death or its hold on us for He has conquered death in His own resurrection and promises the same for us in ours.**
 - b) **When we die (SEE ALSO: II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:22-24), the real person living in our human bodies goes immediately to be with the Lord and is only awaiting the Rapture to be joined to the glorified body. There are no grounds for despair over this.**
- 7) **The final exhortation to the Corinthians in the light of their future bodily resurrection from the dead** **15:58**
- a) **If the future resurrection of the dead means anything at all, God has the right to expect faithful obedience and walk before Him.**
 - b) **This faithful walk and obedience had been lacking in the Corinthians and so this exhortation is strong and forceful.**

11. THE PROBLEM OF SACRIFICIAL GIVING FOR NEEDS

16:1-4

- a. **This is the first of two different passages in his epistles to the Corinthians that dealt with an urgent need of the believers in Palestine. SEE ALSO: II Corinthians, chapters 8, 9. Word had come to Paul of this need and now he is sharing it with the churches of Asia and Europe.**
 - 1) **Apparently there was a deep financial crisis the poor believers in Palestine were going through. It may have been connected with another famine such as the one recorded in Acts 11:27-30 where the believers in Antioch had sacrificially given to come to their aid.**
 - 2) **Paul had already made this need known to the believers in Galatia, and presumably was also, at the same time, making the need known to the believers in Macedonia. (SEE ALSO: II Corinthians 8:1-5).**
 - 3) **Paul is appealing now to the Corinthians to join in taking an offering to add to the offerings that the other churches were going to give so that it could be sent down to Palestine to aid in the need there. (55 A.D.)**
- b. **The problem is already in the making because of the completely selfish and self-centered nature of these Corinthians. Though Paul does not directly treat it as a problem in these four verses, he must have known that they would not react well to his appeal and might or might not respond to his appeal.**
- c. **As Paul might have known when he made this first appeal, a year later (55 A.D.) they still have not responded to the appeal (SEE: II Corinthians, chapters 8, 9), and seem to have no intention of doing so. Apparently, they started to respond but then stopped and did nothing further in meeting the urgent need.**
- d. **It is not until two years after the initial appeal was made for these collections (56 A.D.) that the Corinthians have finally responded to the appeal, and their collections and the collections from the other churches are ready to be taken to Palestine to meet the urgent need of the believers there. (SEE: Romans 15:22-28)**
- e. **Apparently the second strong appeal to them to respond had convicted them and caused them to act, but their long delay in doing anything at all, in contrast to the quick and sacrificial response of the other**

churches, marked them as a carnal church and was consistent with their carnal attitude in every other situation they had been in.

12. THE PROBLEM OF HOSTILITY TO PAUL'S WORKERS 16:10-16

- a. Apparently, many in the church already had an attitude of dislike and hostility toward Paul himself. This is clear in the way they took sides in the church in the problem of disunity dealt with in chapters 1-4. As we will note in the study of II Corinthians, Paul's first epistle to them only deepened this attitude on their part toward him. SEE ALSO: III John, vs. 5-10.
- b. This attitude of dislike and hostility is apparently now going to carry over to the co-workers of Paul as well (Timothy, Titus and others), and Paul has to deal with it in this section of the closing chapter of this epistle. Paul was therefore concerned that these co-workers, including even Apollos himself, not be badly treated by the Corinthians.
- c. As we note at the end of this section, this hostility also had to do with an unwillingness to be under authority. These men Paul was going to send were coming at his bidding and so his authority as an Apostle was going to be with them, but these Corinthians might not be willing either to receive these men or to respond to/follow/obey anything they might say to them.

III. CONCLUSION 16:17-24

A. FINAL GREETINGS 16:17-21

- 1) The household of Stephanus, "first fruits" of the work in Achaia, was very close to Paul, and apparently Stephanus himself was a coworker Paul trusted and with whom he worked very closely.
 - a) Paul seems to have also put faith in him as one they should listen to and follow. The Corinthians are to be in subjection to the leadership of men like him.
 - a) He and two others have come to Paul and have given him help that the Corinthians had failed to give him. This seems to refer to financial help for Paul.
- 2) Paul not only mentions the greetings from the churches of Asia, but gives special mention to Aquila and Priscilla and the good work that they are doing in Ephesus with a church in their home.
 - a) They had first come to Corinth where Paul got to know them after

they had to leave Rome under some persecution (Acts 18:1-3). They may have already been Christians when they came to Corinth. In Corinth they were active Christians and an encouragement to Paul in helping to establish and build up the work of the Church there.

b) Then they had gone with Paul to Ephesus (53 A.D.?) where they were used by God to help Apollos get grounded in the faith. Apparently they stayed there and established a church in their home (54 A.D.)

c) In Romans 16:3, 4 (56 A.D.), they have returned to Rome again.

3) Paul finally gives his own greetings.

B. FINAL WARNING AND BENEDICTION

16:22-24

1) This final warning in vs. 22 is a curse on those who do not love the Lord.

a) This can be taken as a final warning to the Corinthians themselves who have often indicated that they are severely lacking in their love for the Lord and their complete devotion to Him.

b) This could also be for them a reminder of the unsaved state of some of those in their society whom they admire and emulate, and their final judgment by God.

2) Paul closes the epistle with a word of blessing on them and the expression of his love for them. This love for them is going to be expressed again and again in II Corinthians even though they don't seem to return that love to him. SEE: II Corinthians 6:11, 12; 7:2, 3

a) We note many other places where a benediction is given.

(1) Romans 15:13

(2) Romans 16:25-27

(3) II Corinthians 13:14

(4) Ephesians 3:20, 21

(5) I Thessalonians 3:11-13; 5:23

(6) II Thessalonians 2:16, 17; 3:16

(7) I Timothy 1:17

(8) Hebrews 13:20, 21

(9) Jude, vs. 24, 25

b) The purpose of these benedictions is to wish some blessing on those he is addressing. Perhaps he is even expressing this in the form of an actual earnest prayer for them which he is sending up to God

Himself as he writes. We often choose to use one of these in our worship services today in place of a closing prayer.

THE STUDY OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLE AND THE OPENING VERSES

PURPOSES AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF THIS EPISTLE

- 1. It had been a year since Paul had first written an epistle to these Corinthians. In that epistle, he had had to deal strongly and firmly with them about the spiritual problems that were tearing down the work for the Lord in Corinth. He had dealt with at least twelve major problems they were both practicing and tolerating in their relationships with the Lord and with each other.**
- 2. As he writes to them again, a different kind of problem had arisen that threatened both his relationship with them and his reputation as an apostle.**
 - a. Though they had acted on several of the problems he had dealt with in his first epistle to them (SEE: II Corinthians 2:4-11), their anger and bitterness concerning the strong solutions to those problems that had been suggested had turned them against Paul himself.**
 - b. This anger and bitterness caused them, with slanderous charges, to tear down his apostleship and to question his integrity. Even his motivations or reasons for serving the Lord were questioned. They made it clear that they were rejecting his right and authority to give them any further instruction or counsel. Many in the church have closed their hearts against him.**
 - c. Therefore, in inspiring Paul to write to them this second time, God leads him to present a strong defense of both of these areas of his life and ministry. Most of the epistle is devoted to this defense.**

- 2) In our own lives, it should be our deep desire that every one of these characteristics should be part of our lives as Christians.
 - a) They are especially important for those in some type of full time service for the Lord because of the very high standards God has set for His servants. (SEE: I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
 - b) Paul does not claim to be perfect, but his dedication and commitment to the Lord (SEE: II Corinthians 5:14, 15; Philippians 1:20, 21) reveal his determination to be all that God desires in him.
 - c) The study of these as we look at this Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians should be done with close observation of our own lives and willingness to correct any lack of these in our lives.

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF II CORINTHIANS 1:1, 2

1. We note that Paul again opens an epistle with a strong affirmation of his apostleship. As we will notice in our later study of this epistle, his apostleship was an issue with them. Even if they were willing to admit that he had been appointed as an apostle by the Lord, they seemed to indicate that they considered him as LESS of an apostle than any of the others. Therefore, his authority in speaking and teaching, and his right to have oversight over the churches, would not equal that of the other apostles.
2. We note that Timothy is with him. He apparently is writing again from Ephesus and Timothy has followed him there. We will note in some of Paul's later epistles that he will be sending Timothy back to observe and advise some of the churches he had established. (SEE: I Corinthians 16:10, 11). He also gave Timothy some authority to act on his behalf in Ephesus. (SEE: I Timothy 1:3-11). Titus was also given some of the same authority to minister in Crete. (SEE: Titus 1:5-9).
3. We also note that he includes all of the brethren in the Province of Achaia in his greeting. This seems to mean that this epistle is also to be shared with churches in other cities.
4. He repeats the blessing he had given them in I Corinthians 1:3, where he speaks of the Grace and Peace they are to receive from the Father and the Lord.
 - a. We note again that he uses these two terms to refer to the strength they are to receive (SEE: II Corinthians 12:9) daily in their walk with the Lord and to the freedom from worry and fear ("Peace OF God") that is part of their relationship with Him.

- b. This distinguishes the use of these terms from SAVING Grace (SEE: Ephesians 2:8, 9) and Peace WITH God (SEE: Romans 5:1) in salvation.

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS INTEGRITY AND MINISTRY 1:3-13:12

1. PAUL'S ATTITUDE TO GOD'S HELP AND COMFORT IN TESTING 1:3-11

- a. Paul, at this time, has just gone through a severe time of testing/trial. He does not identify its exact nature, but it may be connected with the "thorn in the flesh" that he speaks of in II Corinthians 12:7-10. He could either be referring to some serious physical problem or to severe persecutions from others that he went through. He mentions that they also have shared (1:6, 7) in the same sufferings, so the latter case seems the most likely. These sufferings were so serious that he even thought that he might die from them.
- b. As Paul begins this epistle of defense of his integrity and ministry, the purpose of a passage like this would be to remind them that he is totally committed to Christ and that he (SEE ALSO: II Corinthians 4:7-12; 11:22-33) has gone through terrible things for His sake.
- c. Rather than the criticism that he is receiving from the Corinthians, he needs sympathy, prayer support and encouragement. (SEE ALSO: Philippians 1:12-18). In other words, his dedicated service for the Lord under the worst of circumstances deserves something better than what he has received from them.
- d. This passage is also a testimony to the faithfulness and all-sufficient sustaining grace of the Lord, and the sufficiency of His care and help when all else fails. (SEE ALSO: II Corinthians 12:7-10).

2. PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY 1:12-23

- a. Note the place and importance of INTEGRITY in life and ministry. SEE: Psalms 25:21; 26:1, 11; 41:12; 78:72; 101:2; Job 2:3; 27:5
 - 1) No matter what great things we may seem to do for the Lord, if we are found to lack integrity in our lives, our work amounts to nothing. In most of these verses from the Psalms, as a great and powerful king David was mostly concerned for his reputation as a man of absolute integrity rather than for his great accomplishments for God in other ways.
 - 2) This emphasis upon personal integrity means that the spotless and blameless nature of our character, the absolute honesty of our hearts in the way we live and conduct ourselves, the purity of our motives in all

that we do, the pure and honest way we speak and can be believed and our entire lack of selfishness and desire for self glory in anything we do for the Lord will be the test by which we will be measured both by God and man.

- 3) Once we can be found to lack integrity, we have lost all testimony and influence on others and any usefulness to God in His work.
- b. For these reasons, Paul could not let stand their attacks on his integrity, for his credibility as an apostle and servant of God would be destroyed if others believed these attacks. SEE ALSO: I Thessalonians 2:1-11.

3. PAUL'S LOVE AND CONCERN FOR THE FALLEN BROTHER 2:1-11

- a. From the study of I Corinthians 5, where strong discipline is called for, it would seem to some that Paul had a harsh and unloving approach to the brother who had committed gross immorality. To the contrary, Paul had a love for this brother but recognized that the problem could not be corrected and the church protected if his immorality were permitted to continue while part of that body of believers.
- b. From this text of Scripture in II Corinthians, it seems that there has been complete repentance on the part of the fallen brother resulting also in the abandonment of the sin he had committed.
- c. Since he has been forgiven by God, there is therefore no reason why the Corinthians should hesitate in forgiving him and restoring him to full fellowship in the church.
- d. This passage and the passage in Galatians 6:1 raise THE QUESTION as to whether or not a pastor or church leader who has committed immorality should not only be forgiven and restored to the fellowship of the body of believers, but should ALSO be restored to his former place of leadership.
 - 1) We note that "restoration" means being restored to the fellowship of the body of believers, but does not necessarily mean being restored to the former position a person may have held before his act (s) of immorality.
 - 2) Putting together the teachings of II Corinthians 2:1-11 and Galatians 6:1 with the teachings of I Timothy 3:1-7 (pastors); 8-13 (deacons) and Titus 1:5-9 (pastors), it is clear that a pastor, like any other believer, can be restored to full fellowship when there has been sincere and complete repentance. This includes the complete abandonment of the sin that caused his fall.

3) **HOWEVER**, in spite of being restored to the fellowship of the body of believers, his lack of blamelessness disqualifies him for further **LEADERSHIP** in the body of believers. God's standards for leaders are very strict and a spiritual leader accepts this truth when he enters into ministry for God.

- a) In the Old Testament, God's judgment of Moses (SEE: Numbers 20:12) is an example of this. Moses continued to have a very close personal relationship with the Lord and the Lord continues to speak very highly of him, but his **LEADERSHIP** is given to Joshua.
- b) We note the same thing in I Corinthians 9:27, where Paul fears that God may put him aside and not use him anymore if he should fail/fall in some major way. He says this after serving the Lord faithfully for many years under the most trying circumstances. He shows that no man is indispensable in the service of God, and can be set aside.

4. **PAUL'S SINCERE SPIRIT IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL** 2:12-17

a. **His sincerity in constantly pursuing new opportunities** 2:12, 13

- 1) This had been the pattern of his entire ministry on his missionary journeys. He was never satisfied with past accomplishments or the many areas he had already reached with the Gospel, but was always burdened to reach new areas where the Gospel had never been preached.
- 2) We see this same pattern continuing at the end of his third missionary journey in 56 A.D. (SEE: Acts 20:24; Romans 15:18-24).
- 3) We see this pattern again at the close of his first imprisonment in Rome in 61 A.D. (SEE: Ephesians 6:19, 20; Philippians 3:12-14)

b. **His sincerity in having the life goal of manifesting Christ** 2:14-16

- 1) We see this goal expressed again in II Corinthians 5:14, 15 where he teaches it as one of his main motivations in ministering the Gospel.
- 2) We see it again in Philippians 1:20, 21 during his first imprisonment, where he asserts that it is the supreme goal of his life and the one to which his entire life and ministry is dedicated.

c. **His sincerity in keeping his preaching of the Gospel pure** 2:17

- 1) It seems to be implied that they were also accusing him of having material gain as one of his goals. In both I Corinthians and II Corinthians he reminds them that he had supported himself and took

nothing from them while he ministered among them. We see this, for instance, in I Corinthians 9:6-15 where he speaks of the giving up of his rights as an apostle.

- 2) In Acts 20:33, 34, at the end of his third missionary journey, he again asserts that material gain had never been his goal, but that he had worked to support himself so that he would not be dependent on others. He had therefore demonstrated the lack of GREED in his life in his ministry for the Lord.
- 3) In Philippians 4:11, 12, while in prison, he speaks of his contentment with whatever the Lord provides for him, and that material gain is not his goal in life or ministry.
- 4) In I Thessalonians 2:8, 9, in testifying concerning his conduct among them, he speaks not only of his sacrificial spirit in ministering for the Lord, but also he reminds them that he had never been a burden to them because he had labored to support himself while in their midst.

5. PAUL'S ASSERTION OF THE GLORY OF HIS MINISTRY 3:1-18

- a. In this section he is emphasizing the privilege of the ministry the Lord has given him because it so far surpasses in glory anything that Moses had known in his Old Testament meetings with God.
- b. He begins by reminding them that the communication/letter written on their hearts, which God had used him to preach to them, far surpasses anything the Old Testament people had known in the Law 3:1-4
- c. He states that God Himself has made him adequate for the ministry he has been exercising, and this adequacy is entirely through the ministry of the Holy Spirit which he has received from God 3:5, 6
- d. He compares the glory that Moses experienced with the giving of the Law with the glory that God has given us in our relationship with the Lord and by the work of the spirit in our hearts. 3:7-15
 - 1) He teaches that the giving of the Old Testament Law, as the "ministry of death"/"ministry of condemnation", had its own glory, but that that glory was limited and would fade away (e.g. the glory on the face of Moses that caused him to cover his face with a veil). That veil is still upon the hearts of the unsaved Jews at the reading of the Law.
 - 2) In the Gospel he proclaims, however, the glory not only far surpasses the glory that Moses expressed, but it is an enduring glory and produces results with which the glory of Moses cannot compare.

- e. **The Spirit of the Lord is the means by which we not only have complete liberty in this surpassing glory but through which our lives are being transformed into His image. (SEE: Romans 8:29)**

6. PAUL'S HONESTY IN MINISTRY IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS 4:1-18

- a. **The purpose of this section is to refute the accusations of those who seemed to be saying that Paul was not really honest in his work for God and in the message he was proclaiming. He defends himself by proving that he not only has renounced any form of darkness in his life and ministry, but that he also has gone through great suffering in doing so. SEE: I Thessalonians 2:1-11**
- b. **He asserts that his conscience is clear concerning any possibility of false approach to them through craftiness or corruption. 4:1-4**
- c. **He states that his only message and purpose in ministry is that of the proclamation of Christ Himself. 4:5, 6**
- d. **He then goes ahead to speak of the trials he has gone through for the sake of Christ and also for them. (SEE: II Cor. 6:4-10; 11:22-33). 4:7-18**
 - 1) **The question would be why he would willingly endure such suffering if he had selfish aims and purposes in his life and ministry.**
 - 2) **To the contrary, the enduring of these trials/persecutions proves the sincerity and integrity of his life.**

7. PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS MOTIVES IN MINISTRY 5:1-6:13

- a. **Because it would be so tempting in the work of God to do His work with false motives, such as self-glorification, self-enrichment and self-advancement, the false accusations of the Corinthians against Paul would be believed by some. It was therefore necessary for Paul to strongly assert that his motives/reasons for serving God were pure and spiritual.**
- b. **He begins this defense with the picture of the FUTURE HOPE that he shares with all other believers. In view of the sufferings he has just spoken of, this future hope would be an incentive to remain faithful and devoted to the Lord in his remaining service for Christ. 5:1-8**
- c. **He continues this defense with a picture of the total commitment of his life to being accepted/approved by the Lord in preparation for the coming judgment at the JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. (SEE: I Corinthians 3:12-17, where Paul explains why he has neither desired nor sought a following**

among them, and the accompanying chart). He speaks of being controlled by the **FEAR OF THE LORD.** 5:9-11

1) In the general use of this phrase in the Scriptures, this has to do with the attitude of heart that we are to have in approaching God. It is to be one of deep respect, reverence and complete submission to Him.

3) In the context of this passage, it has to do with his fear of facing the Lord someday at His judgment seat and not being approved by Him

d. He also speaks of the controlling/constraining influence of the **LOVE OF CHRIST** upon his life and how this had caused him to live completely for the Lord. (SEE: Philippians 1:20, 21). 5:12-15

1) In this passage, the phrase probably refers to what Christ has done for him and how it has affected him in his attitude toward the Lord and the determining of his purpose for life and ministry. He owes all to Him and the least he can do is to give himself completely to the Lord for His use of him.

2) It could also refer to the presence of the love of Christ in his own life and how this changes and influences all that he is before the Lord and does for the Lord.

3) It could also be applied to the way that God manifests His love to others through the lives of those who know and follow Him.

e. He speaks of the effects and changes of his **NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.** When a person has truly been born again, this will not only change his relationship with God, but it will also eliminate his relationship with the old sinful ways he practiced before, change the way he now lives his life and create new obligations to the Lord. 5:16, 17

f. He speaks of the **CALLING/MINISTRY/RESPONSIBILITY** that God has now laid upon him in regard to the message of reconciling others to Christ. This is based upon the reconciling work of the Lord Himself. (SEE: John 15:16). He takes this very seriously and it drives him on as he continues in the ministry to the very end. (SEE: Acts 20:24) 5:18-21

g. As a worker together with Him, he speaks again of the complete commitment he has to the Lord as demonstrated in **THE SUFFERINGS** he has gone through for the Lord. These prove his determination that his ministry will not in any way be discredited or brought to shame through lack of such commitment on his part. 6:1-10

- h. He closes this section by A PLEA to them to open their hearts to him. He can truly say that he has a completely open heart for them, but he has noticed that they have not returned the consistent love and affection that he has shown them. 6:11-13**

8. PAUL'S DEMAND FOR SEPARATION FROM UNBELIEVERS 6:14-7:1

- a. Coming from such a pagan background, marriages, close friendships and other entangling relationships with unbelievers would be an ongoing problem with the believers in the Corinthian Church.**
- 1) Such relationships would be all that they had ever known in their unsaved state, and it would be difficult to change these patterns after their conversions.**
 - 2) Strong teaching is therefore necessary to bring them into conformity with God's will in this matter.**
 - 3) As was true with the problems he had had to deal with in I Corinthians, they might not be willing to accept all of the teaching he is giving them, but he is still fulfilling his responsibilities as an apostle and is sharing with them what God has inspired him to write.**
- b. He deals first with the general principle of believers being entangled in relationships with unbelievers. He shows them that there is no possibility of harmony or understanding between them on spiritual levels. His warnings can affect marriage relationships, business relationships or any other types of close ties between believers and unbelievers. 6:14-16a**
- c. He then shows that his teaching is based upon the Word and Will of God Himself for them, and they are to apply it strictly to their lives. (SEE: Leviticus 26:12; Isaiah 52:11; Exodus 4:22) 6:12b-7:1**

9. PAUL'S PLEA FOR THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF HIM 7:2-16

- a. As their first evangelist, pastor and father in the faith, Paul had every right to feel that they should hold him in high regard and have a deep love and affection for him. However, he found that this was not true. This was evidenced by their willingness (SEE: I Corinthians, chapters 1-4) to divide the church over three different personalities who had been involved in the work of the church, and to turn against the ones they did not favor.**
- b. Paul acknowledges that his first letter had given them some reason to be sorrowful, but that did not justify them shutting him out of their hearts.**

- c. The sending of Titus to them and their reception of him should give indication that they also held Paul in high regard and respect. COMPARE: I Corinthians 16:10, 11, where Timothy is being sent to visit them.

10. PAUL DEALS WITH THEIR SELFISH SPIRIT IN GIVING 8:1-9:15

- a. This section of Scripture grows out of the need that is mentioned in I Corinthians 16:1-4, and which appears in that passage to be a potential problem for this church.
- 1) There was an urgent need in Palestine for the financial help of the churches scattered throughout Asia and Eastern Europe. For some reason, there was deep poverty affecting the believers in Palestine. The churches to whom he appeals are more than able to meet the need.
 - 2) The Church in Corinth, and perhaps all of the churches of the region of Achaia, were among the wealthiest churches of any Paul had established, but they were also the ones with the most selfish spirit.
 - 3) Since Paul had first appealed to them a year before (54 A.D.), the church in Corinth had apparently made only a small beginning (SEE: 8:6, 10) and then had stopped altogether in acting to help with this need. This is in contrast to the generous response Paul had had from the churches in Galatia and Macedonia.
 - 4) Now, a year later, Paul is forced to write to them again concerning their responsibility before God in the matter of GIVING. His approach to them is strong and will include both the shame of their neglect in this matter and also the basic principles that are to be followed in giving.
- b. He begins by using the churches of Macedonia as an example of sacrificial and generous giving. He does this to shame them. 8:1-5
- 1) Since, from a cultural standpoint, they would despise and look down on those from Macedonia, the use of these believers as an example to them would have the effect of deeply shaming them. This would either bring obedience or deep resentment and rebellion.
 - 2) Paul indicates that the Macedonians were poor and hardly able to give at all, and yet they had sacrificed and given beyond their means. Their response to the need was not just in response to Paul's plea to them, but was a true spiritual response to the Lord as He spoke to their hearts and showed them what He wanted them to do.

- 3) It also appears that the Macedonian response was immediate and had come willingly when the need was first made known, and that only the Church at Corinth had failed to respond.
- c. He then goes on to share some of the principles that apply if there is to be true spiritual giving on the part of God's people.
- 1) From the example of the Macedonians, it is to be with true dedication of heart to the Lord, counted as a privilege and is to be sacrificial. 8:1-5
 - 2) It is to be an evidence of the love of the one giving it as that one reaches out to those in deep need.....love for the Lord and for others. 8:6-8
 - 3) It is to be based on the example of the Lord Himself 8:9
 - 4) It is both to include a deep desire to do it and also the willingness to take all the action that is necessary to complete it. 8:10,11
 - 5) It is based on what a person has, not on what he does not have 8:12
 6. There is to be equality, with everyone sharing together 8:13-15
 7. There is to be complete honesty in the administration of it 8:16-23
 8. True giving is a proof of the love of the person giving it 8:24
 9. It is to be bountiful giving without any trace of covetousness 9:1-5
 10. As we sow in giving so shall we reap, either bountifully or sparingly 9:6
 11. It is to be done willingly rather than by compulsion 9:7
 12. God will reward those who give with grace for their needs 9:8-11
 13. God Himself is honored through true spiritual giving 9:12-15
11. PAUL DEFENDS HIS APOSTLESHIP 10:1-11:33
- a. From the beginning, the possibility of the position of an APOSTLE being given to anyone other than to one who had actually been with the Lord in His earthly ministry seemed to be out of the question. Even before Pentecost, the eleven disciples were concerned that someone should be appointed to replace Judas who had been with the Lord from the beginning. (SEE: Acts 1:15-22) From among the number of those meeting together, they made their own choice of Matthias to be that one.

- b. It is clear, from the way the Lord saved Paul from his sins and then appointed him to minister to the Gentiles, that Paul was the one God Himself had chosen to complete the number of the disciples/apostles. Paul himself never doubted the position of authority to which he had been appointed, and this also seemed to be recognized by the other apostles. (SEE: Acts 15).
- c. When people like the Corinthians had to be rebuked and corrected by Paul, it was natural for them to look down on Paul because he had not actually walked with the Lord in His earthly ministry, and to question his right to teach and correct them. At the very most, even if he could prove that he was an apostle, they could not accept him as being equal with the others who had occupied that position from the beginning.
- d. In defending his apostleship, Paul uses several strong arguments:
 - 1) He proves that his warfare is not according to the flesh, but is divinely powerful both in the preaching he does and also in the results God brings through his ministry. SEE: 10:3-5
 - 2) He points out that their evaluation of him is not to be based upon his personal appearance, his speaking ability or any other human factor. SEE: 10:10
 - 3) He defends his preaching of the Gospel and shows that he has reached far beyond areas others have reached for the Lord. SEE: 10:13-16
 - 4) He points out that they have proven that they will receive almost anyone else other than himself, even when those they receive are totally unworthy. They receive such people gladly. SEE: 11:4, 19, 20.
 - 5) He points out that his spirit and manner of walk among them had been sacrificial and was not at all a burden to them. SEE: 11:7-9
 - 6) He goes on to further share with them the sufferings he had gone through for Christ. (SEE ALSO: 4:1-12; 6:3-10). His purpose is to show that he had always been a dedicated worker for the Lord who was willing to totally sacrifice himself in His service. SEE: 11:22-33

12. PAUL RECEIVED SPECIAL REVELATIONS AND TESTING 12:1-10

- a. We do not know the exact nature of these special revelations that God gave to him, except that they were beyond any experience he had ever had as a servant of God. Some might compare them to the special privilege God gave

to Moses to be alone in fellowship with Him on the mountain of Sinai for long periods of time.

- b. The result of this experience given to Paul was that God permitted him to be afflicted with some extreme form of affliction. Most Bible teachers believe that this was a physical affliction such as epilepsy or some other disease that would be a source of burden and distress to him.**
 - 1) Paul recognizes the purpose of God in permitting this affliction to come into his life, and that was to keep him from exalting himself because of the special revelations he had received.**
 - 2) The affliction was so severe that Paul earnestly prayed that it would be removed from him.**
 - 3) God would not remove the affliction, but taught Paul to more completely cast himself upon the Lord and to depend entirely on His sustaining grace in his life. He would then admit that he had no strength in himself.**
 - 4) Casting himself so completely upon the Lord would not only cause him to rely entirely on the strength of the Lord rather than upon his own strength, but would also give all the glory to the Lord.**
 - 5) Paul's attitude to the affliction, therefore, is one of complete acceptance and a renewed determination to rely more on the Lord Himself.**

13. PAUL FURTHER EXAMINES THE CONDUCT OF HIS MINISTRY 12:11-21

- a. He first points out that he had clearly possessed and exhibited the "signs of an apostle." We take these to mean that he had been given the ability to heal and to do other miraculous signs. Such power was reserved for the apostles themselves and this proved that he was in no way inferior. 12:11, 12**
- b. He then lists the various ways he had conducted himself among them. This is to prove that his conduct was spiritual, sacrificial and entirely without cause for blame. (SEE ALSO: I Thessalonians 2:1-11) 12:13-19**
 - 1) He was not a burden to them in any way while with them**
 - 2) He was willing to totally spend and be expended for them**
 - 3) He had not taken advantage of them in any way, nor had any of his coworkers.**

4) He has been doing all his work in the sight of God Himself, and was doing it entirely for their upbuilding and for their good. Therefore, he is without blame in the way he had conducted his ministry. This would include not only his work while in their midst but also his writing to them in I and II Corinthians.

c. He closes this section by reminding them that things in the church may not be right when he comes to visit them again and that he may have to strongly deal with the sins that remain. 12:20, 21

14. PAUL'S SPIRITUAL PURPOSES IN COMING TO SEE THEM 13:1-10

a. One of his main purposes in coming again to see them is to correct things in the church that have gone wrong, including their attitudes of bitterness and fault-finding toward him. 13:1-4

b. He urges them to test themselves "WHETHER they be in the faith." The sins they have been practicing and the unspiritual attitudes they have shown might be some indication that some of them are not even saved even though they are members of that church. 13:5-8

c. He warns them in advance to correct their conduct and to be everything that God wants them to be before he ever comes. 13:9, 10

CONCLUSION TO THE EPISTLE 13:11-14

a. Paul closes this epistle with some words of encouragement for them in the form of a benediction.

b. His closing benediction includes all the members of the Trinity. This is the second time where the three are all equally presented. (SEE: Mt. 28:19)

c. We note that this is one of many times Paul closes an epistle with a benediction. The purpose of these closing benedictions is to assure them that, no matter how great the problems might be that he has had to rebuke, require them to acknowledge and demand that they take action to correct, he is still writing to them in love with a sincere desire for God's continued blessing and favor on them in their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

d. His expression of love and heart desire for correction of the errors in faith and conduct that they might be guilty of does not take away from the strength of the spiritual challenges he has laid before them or the grave responsibilities they themselves must face and act upon in correcting the matters being dealt with.

- e. His admonitions, rebukes and demands on some of the churches would not be easy for some of them to accept (SEE: The Corinthians), and his loving blessings on them at the end of such epistles, though given sincerely and from the bottom of his heart, would be hard to believe and appreciate. Some in the Corinthian Church might even be bitter and angry against him rather than being humble in accepting them and blest by what he says in conclusion.**
- f. Not all of his epistles deal with serious matters (SEE: Philippians) requiring strong admonitions and warnings, so the blessing he wishes for them at the end of such epistles would be more easily accepted and appreciated.**