

# FIRST CORINTHIANS

**Arise  
And Build  
Relationships  
In The  
Family Of God**



**DOWLEN ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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DAVID BANNING – MAX DAWSON**

# **FIRST CORINTHIANS: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FAMILY OF GOD**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Possibly no book in the New Testament has more to say about relationships in the family of God than does this book. Corinth was a troubled church. Brethren had allowed many things into their lives that did not belong. There were divisions found among these Christians, bickering, immorality, and even suing one another in court. The book reads like a catalogue of church sins. Yet, the apostle Paul is optimistic as he writes. Every issue and every problem have a solution. When the principles of Christ are applied to their situation, then these brethren can worship and work together in harmonious relationships together. The principles of Christ are eternal and apply to relationships in God's family for every generation.

Everyone who strives to be a disciple of Christ wants to mirror the attitudes and character of Christ in their own life. We strive for perfection. But, the reality is, none of us attain perfection in this life. If we think the members of the Lord's church will always act perfectly, we have unrealistic expectations. Our need to be in the Lord's body and to grow to be like Christ grew out of our sin problem. The old man who was put away at baptism does not die without a fight. Thus, we must recognize we are involved in a constant struggle against sin. This process will have ups and downs. As we grow, our practice should become more consistent with the Lord's character, but sometimes we will falter. The more faltering among the members in a local church, the more likely it is that church problems will result. The church at Corinth had more than just a few problems. The members were at each other's throats. Jealousy, divisiveness, immorality and immaturity characterized these believers. Their attempts to "walk as He walked" (1 John 2:3-6) had failed. We should not conclude, however, that Corinth must not be God's church, nor that God's people would never experience problems. Ideally, the church should be at peace, unified and working in harmony to fulfill God's purposes. Corinth is an example of what can happen when the principles of Christ are neglected. Paul writes 1 Corinthians in order that the family of God in that city might be all that God intended it to be.

God's wisdom is well demonstrated throughout this epistle. If, as a local church, we heed the message of this letter, we will be able to confront challenges as loyal disciples of the Lord *when* they occur. It is not a case of *if* they occur. The probability of brethren sooner or later being in disagreement or members being involved in sinful activity is virtually 100%. It is not right that brethren conduct themselves in such a way, but it is reality. How will we react when problems arise? Our success as the family of God in this place may well depend on whether or not we learn the lessons from this great epistle.

## **THE CITY OF CORINTH:**

How important is it that we know something about the city in which a church is located? The environment in which a church exists will invariably influence and affect its functioning. The degree of evil in a city does not necessarily indicate anything about the lives of members of a church. But often, some members will be influenced by the evil in a community. When the atmosphere surrounding a church is decadent, we should not be surprised if some of it creeps into the lives of members (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:6).

Corinth was an extremely corrupt city. Being ideally situated on an isthmus between the Ionian and Aegean Seas, Corinth was a center of commerce. It was a crossroads by land and by sea. Wealth was abundant, and immorality inevitably joined it. Gambling, legalized temple prostitution and amusements were the main attractions in Corinth. Its population was a melting pot of merchants, sailors, gamblers, athletes and

prostitutes. The population of Corinth may have exceeded half a million in the first century. Aristophanes coined the verb *korinthiazomai*, "Corinthianize" meaning to "practice immorality." Plato used the term *Korinthia kore*, "Corinthian girl," to refer to a prostitute. Corinth was noted throughout the region for its lack of standards and freedom of thought. Such was the reputation that a Greek word, *korinthianzesthai*, meaning "to live as a Corinthian" was used



to describe one engaged in drunkenness and immoral debauchery. This proverb sums it up, "Not for every man is the voyage to Corinth." Certainly, citizens of that city were in need of the gospel's message. No doubt, the futility and folly of sin became evident to some. This was fertile ground for the gospel.

#### THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH IN CORINTH:

The establishment of the church in Corinth is chronicled in Acts 18:1-18. Near the end of Paul's second missionary journey, Paul made a visit to this city. Possibly short of funds, upon his arrival at Corinth he worked with Aquila and Priscilla at making tents (Acts 18:1-3). On the Sabbath, as was Paul's custom, he went to reason with the people in the synagogue (Acts 18:4). When Silas and Timothy arrived, they provided the financial support Paul needed to devote himself completely to the task of preaching (Acts 18:5; 2 Corinthians 11:8,9). When the Jews rejected his teaching, much like the case in Acts 13:44-47, Paul turned to the Gentiles. A man named Justus opened his home, which was next to the synagogue, for Paul to utilize in teaching (Acts 18:5-7). The most notable believer was Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, but many other Corinthians believed as well (Acts 18:8). God prepared Paul for the conflict he was to face in this city; God encouraged him by a vision telling him, "I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10). Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half (Acts 18:11). The Jews brought accusations against Paul before Gallio, the Proconsul of Achaia. Information from the Delphi inscription place Gallio's term in office in 51/52 or 52/53 A.D. Gallio was brother to the Roman philosopher, Seneca. Gallio was not much concerned about all of the furor over Paul (Acts 18:12-17).

Besides Paul, Aquila and Priscilla, the noted laborer Apollos was also in the church at Corinth. Paul commended the work of Apollos in 1 Corinthians 3:6 and encouraged him to visit Corinth again in the near future (1 Corinthians 16:12). Some suggest that Peter may also have visited Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:12; 9:5).

#### THE AUTHOR:

Since Paul is declared the author within the book itself and Clement of Rome attributes the letter to him, both internal and external evidence point to the Apostle Paul as the writer of 1 Corinthians.

THE DATE:

Questions arise regarding the actual number of letters sent and visits made by Paul to the church in Corinth. Evidently, according to 1 Corinthians 5:9, an earlier letter had been sent to Corinth. We do not have any substantial information on this letter other than what is found here. Some people fear that we are missing part of the New Testament and that God failed to preserve all of His word for us. The question is, were all letters written by Apostles to individuals and churches intended to be preserved for us as Scripture? That is highly unlikely and an unnecessary conclusion. Remember the words of Peter in 1 Peter 1:23-25.

“...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because 'All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever.' Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”

God's word stands. Part of it is not lost. Thus, we conclude that three letters were written by Paul to the church at Corinth—and one of those letters was not intended as Scripture.

Shortly after his first visit to Corinth around 51 A.D., Paul may have written his letter regarding association with immoral people (1 Corinthians 5:9). Upon receiving news from Chloe's people about division (1 Corinthians 1:11), Paul wrote 1 Corinthians around 53/54 A.D. from Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8-9). Following this, Paul makes a second visit, a "painful" one which ends in sorrow (2 Corinthians 2:1; 12:14; 13:1-4). This visit may have occurred in connection with his three month stay in Greece (Acts 20:2-3). Paul then sent Titus to Corinth (2 Corinthians 7:6ff), when apparently things at Corinth began to make a turn for the better. Paul then wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia around 55/56 A.D. Paul proposed a third visit which the Scriptures do not confirm that he made.

INTERESTING NOTES:

Beginning at 1 Corinthians 7:1 and with the words, "Now concerning the things of which you wrote unto me," Paul begins a series of transitions (which he does about seven times) in this epistle. He begins each of these with the words "now concerning" or "now." Chapter divisions were made on four of those instances (1 Corinthians 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1). See also 1 Corinthians 7:25; 11:2 and 1 Corinthians 15:1 - NASB. Chloe's people (1 Corinthians 1:11) may have brought the questions to Paul that are answered in these sections. Or possibly it was Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus who brought them (1 Corinthians 16:17,18).

Next to Paul's letter to the church at Rome, the abuse of 1 Corinthians may be the source for more false teaching and division than any other epistle of the New Testament. While many go to Romans in an attempt to establish such doctrines as "faith only," "predestination" and "original sin," 1 Corinthians is the source for many conflicting, false and divisive views which are held by contemporary Christendom.

OUTLINE AND COMMENTARY:

A general outline of the book is found on the next page. We will follow this outline throughout this workbook. Additionally, at the beginning of each part of the outline, I have written a brief commentary that summarizes the section. I hope the commentary will help you in your study.

## **Part One: The Problem of Division (1:1-4:21)**

### **I. Introduction - 1:1-9**

### **II. Report Of Divisions - 1:10-17**

### **III. Reasons For Division - 1:18-4:21**

- A. Misunderstanding Of The Gospel Message (1:18-3:4)
- B. Misunderstanding Of The Messenger (3:5-4:5)
- C. Misunderstanding Of Paul's Ministry (4:6-21)

## **Part Two: The Problem of Immorality (5:1-6:20)**

### **IV. Concerning An Immoral Situation. - 5:1-13**

- A. Discipline The Fornicator (5:1-8)
- B. Separate Yourselves From Immoral Believers (5:9-13)

### **V. Concerning Litigation Between Believers - 6:1-11**

### **VI. Warning Against Sexual Immorality - 6:12-20**

## **Part Three: Answers to the Church's Questions (7:1-16:24)**

### **VII. Counsel Concerning Marriage - 7:1-40**

- A. Principles For Married Life (7:1-9)
- B. Principles For The Married Believer (7:10-16)
- C. Principle Of Abiding In God's Call (7:17-24)
- D. Principles For The Unmarried In The Present Distress (7:25-38)
- E. Principles For Remarriage (7:39-40)

### **VIII. Counsel Concerning Things Offered To Idols - 8:1-11:1**

- A. Principles Of Liberty And The Weaker Brother (8:1-13)
- B. Illustration Of Paul And His Liberty (9:1-27)
- C. Warning Against Being Self-Willed (10:1-13)
- D. Exhortation To Use Liberty To Glorify God (10:14-11:1)

### **IX. Counsel Concerning Worship - 11:2-14:40**

- A. Principles Of Headship And Submission (11:2-16)
- B. Rebuke Of Disorders Regarding The Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
- C. Principles Regarding Spiritual Gifts (12:1-11)
- D. The Nature Of The Lord's Body And The Use Of Gifts (12:12-30)
- E. The Pursuit Of Enduring Love Vs. The Impermanence Of Spiritual Gifts (12:31-14:1a).
- F. Principles For Exercising Spiritual Gifts (14:1b-40)

### **X. Counsel Concerning The Resurrection - 15:1-58**

### **XI. Counsel Concerning The Collection For Jerusalem - 16:1-4**

### **XII. Conclusion - 16:5-24**

## **Part One: The Problem of Division (1:1-4:21)**

### **I. Introduction - 1:1-9**

*Paul's greeting and introductory remarks set the stage for the book as he expresses his wishes for them and reminds them of their status before God. They are the people of God and, as such, have a special relationship to one another.*

1. Who is mentioned besides Paul in his greeting to the church at Corinth? Do we know anything else about this man?
2. Why is the church at Corinth addressed as "the church of God?"
3. What does it mean to "call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ?"
4. For what were the Corinthians "eagerly awaiting?"
5. Into what had the Corinthians been called?

### **II. Report Of Divisions - 1:10-17**

*The house of Chloe had reported divisions unto Paul. Division is not the will of God. Though Paul addresses part of the division at Corinth in these verses, there were many divisions in this congregation. Much of this book addresses division of one sort or another. God would have all those in His family to be united, (John 17:20-21).*

1. What did Paul exhort them to do in 1:10?
2. According to 1:12, what was the basis of the "contentions?"
3. Who did Paul mention by name as those whom he had personally baptized in the church at Corinth?
4. Did Paul speak against baptism for the remission of sins when he said, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel?" Explain your answer.

### III. Reasons For Division - 1:18-4:21

#### A. Misunderstanding Of The Gospel Message (1:18-3:4)

*The gospel is not an occasion for brethren to glory against one another. Neither are Christians engaged in a worldly competition of boasting as were many Jews and Greeks. The gospel is the expression of God's wisdom. There is no cause for men to boast. Boasting is harmful to our relationships in the family of God.*

1. In what sense is the message of the cross "foolishness"?
2. What does the cross mean to those who are being saved?
3. According to 1:26-31, why does no man have a right to boast before God?
4. According to 2:1-5, what was the essence of Paul's preaching among the Corinthians?
5. What things *did not* characterize Paul's preaching?
6. What is meant by the statement in 2:9? How has God remedied this problem?
7. Why could Paul not speak to the Corinthians as "spiritual people, but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ"?

#### B. Misunderstanding Of The Messenger (3:5-4:5)

*Not only was the gospel misunderstood among the Corinthians, the preachers were also given a position God did not intend. The brethren were arguing over who was the best teacher. They had what one man called "preacheritis." Sometimes the same problem of exalting preachers occurs today. It is harmful to our relationships with one another.*

1. From 3:5-7, explain the role teachers play in the conversion of souls to Christ.

2. In 3:9, what terms are used to describe God's people?
3. What is the foundation upon which Paul built?
4. What contrast is being made between the one who builds upon the foundation with "gold, silver, precious stones" vs. "wood, hay, straw?"
5. Some have used 3:15 in an attempt to support "once saved, always saved." What is the point of this verse?
6. According to 3:18-21, what is God's estimate of the reasonings of the wise?
7. What belongs to God's people and to whom do they belong?
8. How did Paul and his co-workers want to be regarded among the Corinthians?
9. Whose standard of judgment was Paul most concerned about?
  - a. the brethren's at Corinth
  - b. his own
  - c. the Lord's

**C. Misunderstanding Of Paul's Ministry (4:6-21)**

*Some may have thought Paul and his co-workers were preaching for glory, money and fame. Paul shows the real condition of those who were faithful preachers for Christ and the hardships they endured. The practice of exalting teachers was actually demeaning to those who faithfully served Christ. It was harmful to the church as a whole.*

1. What is Paul trying to get the brethren to learn by the example set by himself and Apollos?

2. What had the apostles become to the world, to angels and to men?
3. From 4:10-13, list the specifics of Paul's present condition:
4. What would be Timothy's purpose when he arrived at Corinth?
5. What did Paul's attitude upon coming to Corinth depend on?

### **Part Two: The Problem of Immorality (5:1-6:20)**

#### **IV. Concerning An Immoral Situation. - 5:1-13**

##### **A. Discipline The Fornicator (5:1-8)**

*The church was tolerating the intolerable by allowing a brother to continue in an immoral relationship. He had not repented, and the brethren were not demanding that he repent. Shame was brought upon the cause of Christ, not only because of his immorality, but also because of the church's inaction. This must be remedied.*

1. When and how should this situation be handled by the church at Corinth?
2. What are two positive purposes for this action revealed in 5:5-7?
3. What is intended as Paul refers to Christ as our Passover?

##### **B. Separate Yourselves From Immoral Believers (5:9-13)**

*Evidently, Paul's earlier epistle had been misunderstood; some concluded that to avoid company with the immoral would require leaving this world. Paul's instruction may have been thought extreme and thus disregarded entirely by the Corinthians. In any case, Christians cannot keep common company with those who continue in sin.*

1. With what particular group of immoral people does Paul forbid association? Why does he not forbid association with all immoral persons?

2. How far should we take Paul's words "not to keep company" and "not even to eat with such a person?" (Thought questions: How would this affect the husband/wife relationship? How are you to act toward this disciplined brother if you see him at the mall or grocery store?)
  
3. Does Paul authorize the church to "judge" in this matter? How do you reconcile this with Jesus' words in Matthew 7:1-5? (See John 7:24.)

#### **V. Concerning Litigation Between Believers - 6:1-11**

*Evidently, some of the Corinthians were suing one another in the civil courts. This brought shame upon the cause of Christ. There ought to be a better way to handle conflicts. Brethren must seek peace with one another.*

1. Is there any limitation to this teaching about taking a brother to law? Would this absolutely prohibit every circumstance of a Christian taking another Christian into court?
  
2. Who ought to be able to settle the conflicts under consideration in this chapter?
  
3. Instead of embarrassing one's self and the church by taking the brother to court, what does Paul recommend that the offended party do?
  
4. What will happen to those who cheat and abuse a brother?

#### **VI. Warning Against Sexual Immorality - 6:12-20**

*Corinth was a city filled with immorality. The brethren here had been delivered from the ungodliness that characterized the city as a whole. There was, however, the ongoing temptation presented by life in the city that the saints must resist. Paul gives several reasons why the Corinthians must live morally pure lives.*

1. What limitations does Paul place upon lawful things like food?
  
2. What is true of the one who "joins himself to the Lord?" What about one who joins himself to a harlot?

3. What one word is God's prescribed means for escaping the temptation of immorality?
4. What is the Christian's motivation for keeping the body from immorality?

### **Part Three: Answers to the Church's Questions (7:1-16:24)**

#### **VII. Counsel Concerning Marriage - 7:1-40**

##### **A. Principles For Married Life (7:1-9)**

*Paul responds to a letter he had received from the Corinthians in which they had asked him several questions. The first group of questions has to do with marriage. We are not told exactly what the questions were, but we can deduce them from Paul's answers. Some may have wondered if marriage was a desirable and lawful thing. There was a great deal of corruption at Corinth regarding marriage; would it be wrong to marry?*

1. What is meant by Paul's statement, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman?"
2. What are some ways in which married people may violate the teaching of 7:3-5?
3. What is it that Paul expresses "as a concession, not as a commandment?"
4. Although Paul commends the single life as "good," he suggests that it is better to marry than do what?

##### **B. Principles For The Married Believer (7:10-16)**

*Paul's teaching here covers marriages of two believers as well as those where only one is a believer. The teaching is the same for the believer in either kind of marriage--preserve the marriage; don't be the cause of separation or divorce. Paul appeals to the specific words of Jesus spoken in the gospels, when he says, "I command, yet not I but the Lord." Where the Lord had not spoken specifically, Paul gave instruction as an inspired apostle. The Lord still expects His people today to work to preserve marriages.*

1. What was the essence of the Lord's instruction as recorded in 7:10-11? Where in the gospels may this have been drawn from?
2. Does 7:11 give an individual *permission* to leave a spouse as long as they "remain unmarried?"

3. According to Paul's teaching regarding the marriage of a believer to an unbeliever, is that relationship acceptable before God?
4. What does 7:15 say about a believer having the right to remarry when an unbelieving mate departs?

### **C. Principle Of Abiding In God's Call (7:17-24)**

*When God calls us to be Christians, He calls for many radical changes, but He does not call upon us to change everything about our lives. We must change only those things that are out of the will of God. Some at Corinth may have concluded that since it was good to be unmarried, maybe it would be good to divorce and live single. God would forbid that when a couple is lawfully married and bound in the eyes of God.*

1. Though this section urges us to stay in the calling in which the gospel found us, does this suggest that immoral relationships could continue?
2. All of us are to be slaves. To whom are we enslaved?

### **D. Principles For The Unmarried In The Present Distress (7:25-38)**

*We know little of the "present distress." Some suggest it was persecution. Others say it may refer to the immoral conditions at Corinth; that it was so difficult to find a mate who would be faithful that one is better off to stay single than to risk marriage. In either case, we could see potential difficulties that might be encountered by the married person. It is important to note that remaining single is a noble thing. Both Paul and Jesus lived single lives.*

1. What was Paul's recommendation for "virgins?"
2. In 7:32-34, what contrast is drawn between the unmarried vs. the married?
3. What does Paul mean by "serve the Lord without distraction" in 7:35?

### **E. Principles For Remarriage (7:39-40)**

*What are the conditions under which a widow may remarry? May she remarry at all? What is the situation with a woman while her husband lives? Perhaps Paul addresses women rather than men here, as it is most often the case that the woman is the one left alone by a death of a mate. The teaching, however, would apply to both men and women.*

1. What is the general rule regarding marriage as stated in 7:39?
  
2. The one whose mate has died is free to marry "only in the Lord." What does this phrase mean? If Paul here implies "only a Christian," why would he require this of widows and not of young women who are less mature?
  
3. Do you think it wiser to marry a Christian as contrasted with a non-Christian?

### **VIII. Counsel Concerning Things Offered To Idols - 8:1-11:1**

#### **A. Principles Of Liberty And The Weaker Brother (8:1-13)**

*Corinth was a city where idol worship was the order of the day. Meat offered to idols was often sold in the market place. What should be the Christian's position regarding this meat? Could he eat it? What if he were invited to a dinner where this meat was served? What about the effect of his eating of meat on his brothers in Christ? What if eating that meat led a brother to sin against his conscience? In this section, Paul uses himself and his willingness to sacrifice as an example to be emulated by his brethren in their dealings with one another.*

1. What contrast is drawn between knowledge and love? What are we to be motivated by? Think carefully before you answer.
  
2. The eating of meats sacrificed to idols could be either wrong or right. Which of the following would *not* cause one to be in the wrong?
  - a. Eating in violation of one's own conscience.
  - b. Eating so as to become a stumblingblock to the weak.
  - c. Eating while recognizing that food does not commend us to God--we are neither worse nor better for having eaten the meat.
  - d. Eating in the presence of a weak brother who is persuaded by us to eat meat sacrificed unto idols, but in violation of his conscience.

3. What does Paul say about his own liberty to eat meats in 8:13?

### **B. Illustration Of Paul And His Liberty (9:1-27)**

*It is easy to miss the point of Paul's teaching here. He is still talking about meat offered to idols. He uses himself as an example of one who was willing to give up his liberty for the good of others. Paul could hardly ask others to sacrifice if he was not willing to make sacrifices himself. Our life of service unto Christ is not one where our main goal is to exercise our liberties; our goal is to seek the salvation of souls.*

1. Who does Paul list as having exercised their right to take along a believing wife?
2. What does Paul argue about the right of the worker to be supported materially? Why had he not taken advantage of this liberty among the Corinthians?
3. According to 9:14, what did the Lord direct regarding this matter?
4. What point is Paul making in 9:19-23? Would Paul necessarily forego every liberty that someone says "offends" them?
5. Make a modern-day application of these principles. Think of a situation where you have a liberty that you might give up if it would mean the salvation of a soul.

### **C. Warning Against Being Self-Willed (10:1-13)**

*Paul appeals to Jewish history as he further encourages the Corinthians to be willing to forfeit matters of liberty. While Israel was in the wilderness, the people were not willing to make sacrifices. They did not practice self-denial. The determination of the Israelites to have their own way caused many in the nation to be destroyed. Disciples of Christ must cultivate a different spirit. We must not be selfish as were the Israelites.*

1. In the first four verses of the chapter, note the emphasis on the word "all." What is the point Paul is making? (Hint: See 1 Corinthians 9:24.)

2. According to 10:6-10, what specific lessons are we to learn from Israel's example?
  
3. Which is true of temptation according to 1 Corinthians 10:13?
  - a. My temptations are unique and peculiarly challenging.
  - b. God allows me to encounter situations which I can't handle.
  - c. Some temptations are so overwhelming and powerful that they are impossible to refuse.
  - d. Every sin is avoidable because a way of escape is provided.
  - e. The way of escape is always easily recognizable and identifiable.

#### **D. Exhortation To Use Liberty To Glorify God (10:14-11:1)**

*Note that Paul begins this section with "Therefore." He is concluding his arguments about liberty and sacrifice regarding meat offered to idols. His message is that they must flee from idolatry. All that they do must be to God's glory as they seek the spiritual well-being and benefit of others--in order that they may be saved.*

1. According to 10:21, what two things are incompatible?
  
2. Does a thing being "lawful" necessarily justify partaking in it? Why or why not?
  
3. In light of what Paul has said, how does one accomplish what Paul encouraged, "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God?"
  
4. Whose profit did Paul seek--his own or someone else's?

### **IX. Counsel Concerning Worship - 11:2-14:40**

#### **A. Principles Of Headship And Submission (11:2-16)**

*There may be an immediate connection between this section and the last, especially as Paul begins in Chapter 11 with a discussion of the woman's covering. To reject the covering in this Gentile society would destroy the influence of Christians to teach Gentiles, as it makes it appear that Christian women are not subject to their husbands. Christian women must not exercise their liberty to the damning of souls. The greater part of this section addresses worship, particularly the Lord's Supper and the use of spiritual gifts in the assembly. Paul contrasts the enduring nature of love with the temporary gifts.*

1. What three relationships regarding headship are addressed in 11:3?
2. Why was it disgraceful for a man to pray or prophesy with something on his head? Is this a law of God? Is it for all time? Does a worker on the job sin when he prays with a hat on as he gives thanks for his food?
3. Is Paul telling the Corinthian women to put something on their heads to show subjection when "praying and prophesying?" Is this a law of God for all time?
4. What things do you find in this context that might cause one to conclude that Paul was regulating local custom regarding head covering?
5. What is the nature of the appeal in 11:13 when he says, "Judge among yourselves?"
6. What is meant by the word "nature" in 11:14? Does this refer to something we are born with? See Ephesians 2:1-3.

#### **B. Rebuke Of Disorders Regarding The Lord's Supper (11:17-34)**

*It seems the church at Corinth was abusing the Lord's Supper. One of those abuses was in mixing it with the common meal. Note carefully what Paul offers as a solution to the problem at Corinth.*

1. According to 11:20, had the church at Corinth quit taking the Lord's Supper?
2. What do we proclaim when we partake of the Lord's Supper?
3. Until what time will we continue to take the Lord's Supper?

4. How can the Lord's Supper be taken in "an unworthy manner?"
5. Verses 33-34 seem to use "eat" to refer to two different meals. What are they? Which one is the function of the church?

### C. Principles Regarding Spiritual Gifts (12:1-11)

*It seems as though the Corinthians were arguing over who had the greater gifts. It was never God's intent that men bicker over these gifts. The gifts were not intended to be a source of division in the church, but a source of edifying. The gifts should all work together for the good of the church, rather than one man opposing another because of the gifts. While we do not have miraculous gifts today, we still must not bicker over skills and positions.*

1. Why is it that no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit?
2. Can you find all three persons of the Godhead mentioned in 12:4-10? What is the significance of what you find?
3. Regarding the gifts of the Spirit, what conclusion does Paul draw in 12:11 from his points made in 12:4-10?

### D. The Nature Of The Lord's Body And The Use Of Gifts (12:12-30)

*Some who had the lesser gifts evidently believed they had been shortchanged in the church. Because they did not have what others had, they concluded they were not of the body of Christ. Paul argues that just as the physical body is one, though it has many members with varied functions, so also is the body of Christ.*

1. What is meant by the phrase "by one Spirit we were all baptized?"
2. Paul's discussion about the unity of the body grows out of his teaching regarding the purpose of the gifts. Answer the following true/false questions from 12:14-24.
  - T or F Some parts of the body of Christ are more necessary than others.
  - T or F Every part of the body has an important role to play.
  - T or F "Less honorable" members speaks of those who are living in sin.
  - T or F God is the composer of the body, giving more abundant honor to the member which lacks.

3. From Paul's statement in 12:25, are we to conclude that division (schism) should be avoided at *all* costs?
4. What verse in Romans 12 is very similar to 1 Corinthians 12:26?
5. Paul is now going to show them something superior to the gifts, "a more excellent way." To what is he referring?

#### **E. The Pursuit Of Enduring Love Vs. The Impermanence Of Spiritual Gifts (12:31-14:1a)**

*The Corinthians bickered over who had the greater gifts and were leaving off something more significant--love. This is the "more excellent way." Love lasts; the spiritual gifts were only temporary. Though the gifts had their place, without love they were of no benefit. Love among the members of God's family will endure beyond this life.*

1. From 13:1-3, list the abilities and actions which are pointless without love:
2. Take Paul's description of love in 13:4-8a and see if you can summarize it all in one brief sentence.
3. What is the point about the duration of gifts vs. the duration of love in 13:8?
4. What was the "part" or "partial" which would be done away when the "perfect" came?
5. What is Paul's point about the illustration of a child putting away childish things?
6. Why might love be considered greater than faith and hope?

#### **F. Principles For Exercising Spiritual Gifts (14:1b-40)**

*This chapter governed the use of miraculous spiritual gifts in the time when they were active. We should note that not all things spoken of in the Bible as "gifts" were miraculous. Romans 12:6-8 lists some things called "gifts," but not all of them were miraculous. The chapter before us only addresses miraculous spiritual gifts, and it was only these which were temporary.*

1. Which two of the gifts did Paul contrast and which one was considered superior and why?

2. According to 14:6-12, what profit would Paul be to the Corinthians if he spoke in a foreign language in their assembly--a language they could not understand?
  
3. In 14:12, What should the person who had spiritual gifts be seeking?
  
4. T or F The tongue speaker always knew the meaning/interpretation of the language he or she spoke. Verse:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Paul's quotation of Isaiah 28:11 in 14:21 is interesting. What did it mean in the context of Isaiah 28 and how is Paul using it here?
  
6. What distinction is made between tongues and prophecy in 14:22? (Do you see a connection with 14:19?)
  
7. For the sake of edification, what rules for the exercise of tongues and prophecy does Paul set forth in 14:27-35?
  
8. Does 14:34-35 prohibit a sister today from saying something in worship services?
  
9. Whose words was Paul speaking according to 14:37?

#### **X. Counsel Concerning The Resurrection - 15:1-58**

*This chapter illustrates something of the extent of the problems faced at Corinth, as it demonstrates that some were denying the resurrection. Paul begins by affirming the resurrection of Christ and calling upon the several witnesses to His resurrection. He then argues that if there is no resurrection, then Christ must not have been raised--and the whole gospel system falls. Paul's argument not only affirms the resurrection of Christ, it shows the glorious consequences to each of us personally. We also see in this section the harm that can come to our brethren via false teaching.*

1. What had Paul delivered unto them "first of all" (of "first importance" - NASB)? Why is it spoken of in this way?
  
2. What specific individuals or groups are spoken of as eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ?

3. Why does Paul label himself as unworthy to be an apostle?
4. List the consequences of the view which said "there is no resurrection of the dead."
5. According to 15:20-28, what events are to take place at the coming of Christ?
6. When Paul mentions "baptism for the dead" is he suggesting we can get saved for another person (i.e., for a dead uncle, etc.)?
7. What are some of the characteristics of the resurrection body?
8. What will occur when "the last trumpet" sounds?
9. Paul concludes by telling the Corinthians to do three things and tells them why they should do these things. Can you identify the three things?

#### **XI. Counsel Concerning The Collection For Jerusalem - 16:1-4**

*This collection is mentioned in other places. It was to assist needy Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. (See Romans 15:25-27.) Several Gentile churches were helping in this relief effort. Each church was to choose its own messenger to carry the funds to the elders of the congregation in Jerusalem. This text shows us the practice of the early church as to when the collection was made. Such assistance to brethren grows from a heart of love.*

1. When was the collection to be taken? Can you find a text in Acts that is somewhat similar to this (though it does not deal with a collection)?
2. Does 16:2 provide authority for our present practice of taking up a collection?

**XII. Conclusion - 16:5-24**

*As Paul closes this book, he relates his plans for the future, as well as those of Timothy and Apollos. He concludes with exhortations to be faithful and expresses greetings from various brethren. These greetings show us something of the close relationships that existed among early saints in the family of God.*

1. Why is Paul going to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost?
2. Why should Timothy not be afraid among the Corinthians?
3. Do we know why Apollos was reluctant to make a visit to Corinth?
4. What was Paul's five-fold admonition to the church in 16:13,14?
5. Over whose arrival did Paul rejoice and what did they supply?
6. What notable couple is mentioned and what does Paul say regarding them?
7. What might be the significance of 16:21 and Paul's personal handwritten greeting?

A Final Thought Question:

If you were a member of the Lord's church at Corinth, would you want to look for another place to worship? Explain your answer.