

1 Corinthians Part One

Lesson #4, Chapter 1:10-21

Review chapter 1 before beginning this lesson.

1. After encouraging the Corinthians in the opening verses of the book, what does Paul intend to do next according to the beginning of verse 10?
2. What does *exhort* (ESV and NIV *appeal*; NKJV *plead* [Strong's #3870]) mean?
3. When Paul adds *by the name of our Lord Jesus* to his exhortation in verse 10 what is he communicating when he uses that phrase?
4. What is it that Paul so earnestly desires to convey to the Corinthians in verse 10?
5. The reason for Paul's exhortation in verse 10 is now revealed in verse 11. What did Paul hear about the Corinthians (verse 11)?
6. What kinds of quarrels and divisions were popping up among the Corinthians according to verses 12-13?

7. Verse 12 reveals that besides Jesus Christ, there were three men who had built into the lives of the Corinthians in some way. We know Paul lived and taught in Corinth about a year and a half, though Peter's (Cephas') influence among the Corinthians is unknown. We do know something more about Apollos' ministry to the Corinthians. Look up the following verses and tell us what you learn: Acts 18:24-28; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; 16:12; Titus 3:13.

8. How could quarrels and divisions like the ones described in verses 11-13 get started?

9. Could anything like that happen at your church? How?

10. The way to overcome or prevent divisions and quarrels is found in verse 13. How does Paul begin to bring the Corinthians around to right thinking in verse 13?

11. How are those insightful questions in verse 13 helpful for us when we are tempted to polarize and prefer one leader over another?

“Humility is the secret of fellowship, and pride the secret of division.” ~ R. C. Chapman¹

¹ Robert C. Chapman, *Choice Sayings*, Gospel Tract Publications: Glasgow, Scotland, 1988. Pg. 86.

12. Being able to say the Apostle Paul had baptized you surely would have catapulted you into celebrity status and it seemed that some were boasting about it. Yet what is Paul's attitude toward it in verses 14-17?

13. Corinth was a city that seemed to thrive off of man's wisdom and it would have been tempting for any preacher to win the Corinthians with powerful arguments refuting their beliefs and way of life, instead how did Paul come to them according to verse 17?

14. What was his reasoning for this kind of preaching according to verse 17? See also 1 Cor. 2:1-4.

15. Paul's focus to preach the gospel without relying on man's wisdom or eloquence was founded upon what fact? See verse 18.

16. What did Paul know and emphatically believe about God's word? See Jer. 23:29; 1 Pet. 1:24-25.

17. How can those same truths help us the next time we are talking with someone about Christ?

18. When we're sharing the gospel with someone we need to remember Paul's example—that the simplicity of the gospel message is more powerful than carefully packaged sermons or artful logic leading someone to Christ. Can logic and apologetics save someone? Can arguments about social issues save someone? Can a presentation of the inaccuracies of evolution save someone? Can emotional appeals save someone?
 - a. At the root of our conversation must be our firm conviction that a person can only be saved by hearing the simple message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. What can save us? Explain the essential truths of the gospel message here. Consider Acts 17:30-31; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:4-10; Titus 2:11-14 as you form your answer.

19. What are some dangers of placing your faith in the wisdom of man to win others to Christ? See 1:17, 18, 31; 2:5 to get started.

20. What do you learn about God's wisdom versus man's wisdom in verses 19-21?

21. What is God's purpose for His kind of wisdom according to verse 21?

22. Are you well-pleased with God's “foolish” message of salvation? Is there any way you need to adjust your thinking to see God's “foolish” message as wise?

He [Paul] did not depend upon mere human oratory or rhetoric, but on the power of the Holy Spirit enabling him in all simplicity to present to the people a crucified, risen, ascended, and returning Christ, that all hearts might be taken up with Him and men be brought to put their trust in Him. That is the thing that unifies. As Christ is presented to the hearts of God's people they are drawn to Him, they are occupied with Him, their glorious Head.²

How foolish then, how wicked it would be of us, if we should simply entertain you when we know, as Archibald Brown once said, “There is only the thickness of your ribs between your souls and hell.” How guilty before God we should be if we sought the admiration and praise of our hearers instead of endeavoring to bring them face to face with their sins before God and seeking to get them to flee to the cross for refuge.³

² Harry A. Ironside, *I Corinthians*, Loizeaux Brothers: New Jersey, 1938 first printing, 1973 eleventh printing. Pgs. 52-53.

³ *Ibid.* Pgs. 56-57.