

The Church - Living Called

Faith, Hope & Love

Ephesians 1:15-23

Overview: Paul giving thanks for the Corinthian church and filtering their sin issues and strife with one another through the lens of scripture. The specific lens he uses is faith, hope and love, which is also the lens of the gospel.

Outline:

1 Corinthians 1:4-7 - Paul giving thanks for the Corinthian church.

1 Corinthians 13 – an expose on the characteristics of love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 – Their gifts not a measure of maturity.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 – Their love: Lacking.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13 – Their motivation: Misdirected.

This study uses the WISDOM acronym:

W – What is the main point, or key thought, and we work the issue

I – Investigate the scriptures. Study God’s word.

S – Seek counsel from other sources, voices and articles.

D – Develop a response. The best response is a written one because there is many a slip from the mind to the pen.

O - Openly discuss your study with others; this is especially valuable in a small group or learning community setting.

M - Move to action. This is where we apply what we have learned to our lives. It is in application that we find that God’s word is indeed living and active. And transformation occurs as the heart is impacted.

Please note: *This is a study guide, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. We need to walk in the truth therefore: It’s you, the Holy Spirit and the Scripture in the interpretation process. Try not to relinquish your personal study to reading and repeating commentaries, check in with them as resource to make sure that your interpretation is not way off.*

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W [What is the issue] In reading the scripture the objective here is to determine the main point or points that Paul is trying to make.

Read *1 Corinthians 1:4-7; Chapter 13*

Ask yourself questions while discovering the main points in this text:

Ask the Who What Why When Where and the So what [what difference does this make – or it's the application question] questions to discover the main issue or issues that are in this text. Command to obey; doctrine to understand; life in the church to live out; and application (to myself) to apply.

Write down your questions...as you write clarity regarding the text of scripture will emerge.

Discuss how the story of the gospel is communicated in faith, hope and love.

- Understand the tone of these verses while realizing that the church was in sin.
- Realize that they had disrespected, disregarded and disliked the apostle Paul.
- Study chapter on love – from investigate scripture section.

Write down what you think is the main issue or issues [this may change after you have completed your study]

Main issue: Gifts and talents do not point to maturity and living called as a faith community. Faith hope and love – towards God, one another and the world are key to living called as a faith community.

I Investigating Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:1-4; chapter 13

1 Corinthians – An Overview.

Paul planted the church (Acts 18) and stayed in Corinth for about 18 months before he moved on in his church planting journey. While ministering in Ephesus reports came to Paul that the church in Corinth was in trouble. There was sin, a lack of unity, pride in themselves, disrespect during worship gatherings and a loss of perspective in Jesus.

So, Paul writes to them and divides the letter into 6 segments:

- I. Chapters 1 – 4: He addresses the division that exists in the church. Church is never to be about a popularity contest between its leaders. The church is to be centered on Jesus and the leaders exist to serve the body.
- II. Chapters 5 -7: He addresses the lack of Purity in the church. Paul writes that sexual purity is one of the many ways we respond to Jesus and his gospel. Paul realizes that there are many broken relationships in the church and communicates that promiscuity contributes greatly to the brokenness in relationships. He writes that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and what we do with our bodies matter to God.
- III. Chapters 8-10: He addresses the weaker brother principle and grace. His emphasis is that our allegiance is to Jesus and not to legalistic norms. There are those who can eat the meat offered to idols and they should but those who are not there yet ought not to partake and those who partake should not condemn them (also see Romans 14).
- IV. Chapters 11-14: He addresses the worship gathering. The purpose of the worship gathering is devotion to Scripture, to prayer, to fellowship and the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42). Paul introduces the body metaphor where he says that very part is different but important and the body cannot exist without one another.
- V. Chapter 15: He addresses the hope of the resurrection. The reality that the resurrection is indispensable to the gospel for it provides: (1) victory of sin; (2) the very source of life; (3) our future hope. And if Christ had not been raised our faith is useless along with the truth that if we only hope in Christ in this life we are to pitied more than anyone (1 Cor 15:17,19).
- VI. Chapter 16: Closing thoughts and future plans.

1 Corinthians 1:4-7

This passage sets the tone for his writing. Paul is thankful to God for the grace and grace gifts given to them as a church; for the reality that they are not lacking any spiritual gift; for the faithfulness of God and their hope in God - that they will be blameless on the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. His opening is gentle, gracious and encouraging so that they will listen to what he has to say. He knows that the church has

disrespected him, ridiculed him and questioned his apostleship and yet his desire for them is to repent and walk with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 13 – an exegesis on the characteristics of love.

[These thoughts are borrowed from Dr. Gene Getz found in *The Measure of a Church*]

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 – Their gifts not a measure of maturity.

13:1 - If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels [like you do] – the Corinthians had every spiritual gift (1 Cor 1:5,14:1-25),

but I do not have love, - [like you do] – they were definitely not loving one another.

I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal – The use of their gifts was mere noise because of their lack of love.

13:2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; - [like you do] – the Corinthians practiced these gifts too (1 Cor 12:1-30).

and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love - [like you do], even if they had this kind of faith, they were still lacking the most important characteristic for maturity, which is “love”.

I am nothing – Their usage of the gifts was meaningless in the eyes of the Lord.

13:3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love [like you do], it profits me nothing – Even if the Corinthians gave away everything they had and died as martyrs, they would not accomplish anything in the eyes of the Lord because they lacked love.

1 Corinthians 13 – an expose on the characteristics of love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 – Their love: Lacking.

13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, - 1 Cor 3:3, “you are still worldly...

[Love] does not boast, it is not proud.”- 1 Cor 3:21, “...no more boasting about men...” 1 Cor 4:18, “...some of you have become arrogant...”

13:5 [Love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, - 1 Cor 11:20,21 Paul describes their ultimate rudeness and self-seeking is when they gather to worship and ...one remains hungry while others eat and another gets drunk...”

13:5 [Love] is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs – 1 Cor 6:1,6 – in their anger they were taking their disputes to the court system.

13:6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth – 1 Cor 5:1: 6:15,20

13:7 [Love] always protects – 1 Cor 8:9 ...cares for the brethren...

13:7 [Love] always trusts – 1 Cor 9:1,2 ...they no longer trusted Paul who led them to Christ...

13:7 [Love] always hopes – 1 Cor 15:17,19

1 Corinthians 13 – an expose on the characteristics of love.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13 – Their motivation: Misdirected.

13:7 [Love] always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there is prophecies, they will cease; - their prophecy gifts were temporal, but love is eternal.

13:8 where there are tongues, they will be stilled; - these gifts too were temporal, but love is eternal.

13:8 where there is knowledge, it will pass away – these gifts too were temporal, but love is eternal.

13:9,10 For we know in part and we prophecy in part but, when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears – Paul uses this word ‘perfection’ as to when Jesus comes (2nd coming) and then we will be changed (1Cor 15:52) and see Jesus face – to – face (1 Cor 13:12).

13:11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man I put childish ways behind me. – Paul uses a personal illustration as to what he was like before he matured to the fullness that Jesus desired him to be.

13:12 I reasoned Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. – Their church life was a poor reflection of Christ there was little or no fruit of the Spirit but carnal fruit was very evident. (Gal 5:19 – 23)

13:12 Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known – at this time their knowledge is limited but at the transformation we will have full knowledge.

13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest is love. – From this point forward the focus needs to be on faith, hope and love. Most important love.

S Consult other sources

THANKSGIVING

A. This is the appropriate attitude of believers toward God:

1. This is the source of our praise to God through Christ

a. 2 Corinthians 2:14

- b. 2 Corinthians 9:15
- c. Colossians 3:17
- 2. This is the proper motive for ministry, 1 Cor. 1:4
- 3. This is the continual theme of heaven:
 - a. Revelation 4:9
 - b. Revelation 7:12
 - c. Revelation 11:17
- 4. This is the continual theme of believers
 - a. Colossians 2:7
 - b. Colossians 3:17
 - c. Colossians 4:2

D[develop your response] This where we do our personal study and develop our personal response.

As we work the main point from scripture, look at Scripture and interact with other voices. We write down our response. Realize the value of writing – I realize that this is difficult but when we put on paper our thoughts the greatest connection between head and heart occurs.

Use the questions in work the issue and in the openly discuss section and also come up with some of your own.

O[openly discuss] After we have our written response this is where we interact with our community or connect group and learn from one another. Share openly and honestly what our Lord has taught you from scripture. Your understanding may change as a result of your discussion with others. Let the Holy Spirit lead and be open to learn from one another. It is an amazing experience as the Spirit of the Lord shows up in our discussion and lives are touched and changed.

M [Move to action.] Apply God's word to your life, this where transformation occurs as the Spirit of God moves in your life and you respond to His prompting. This is where the heart connects with the head and the hands. Without application we will gain knowledge and remember what the apostle Paul says, "Knowledge puffs up but love builds up."

My personal application: {write it down and share it with someone who will hold you accountable}.

An application to ponder:

1 Peter 1:21,22, "Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart."