

## The First Letter to the Corinthians

### A Topical Outline from Commentaries from Ciampa & Rosner, Carson, Lucas, and Roberts

#### 1. Understanding Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles

- a. Ref. Romans 1 on “The Dynamics of Pagan Sin”
  - i. **“To Paul’s way of thinking, true wisdom (1 Corinthians 1-4) will keep the Corinthians from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 4:18-7:40) and idolatry (1 Cor. 8-14).**
- b. Ref. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 on “Gentile Conversion”
- c. Ref. Romans 15 on “Paul’s Missionary Agenda”
  - i. “Paul’s aims and agenda for his Gentile converts, then, can be summarized as follows. The Gentiles fail to glorify God, chiefly through idolatry and sexual immorality (which reflect their lack of true wisdom). The proclamation of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is a call to enter a new eschatological age established in and by him. It demands that all people submit in unity to Christ, living out the true wisdom of the other-person-centered lifestyle of the cross. They must abandon sexual immorality and idolatry and instead worship the one true God. The goal of all of this is the glory of God. The Gentiles’ lives will be characterized by expectant hope for the final consummation of God’s glory (and so their own glorification) in the future bodily resurrection. When we come to 1 Corinthians, much is gained by reading Paul’s letter with this in mind” (Ciampa & Rosner).
  - ii. “...there is good evidence that in 1 Corinthians Paul basically opposes the infiltration of Corinthian social values into that city’s church. Our contention is that Paul’s attempt to sort out the serious problems within the largely Gentile church in Corinth consists primarily of a confrontation with the church over purity concerns in general and two vices [sexual immorality and idolatry] in particular” (Ciampa & Rosner).
    1. *Note:* This was the same salvation-historical problem with the Nation of Israel in relation to the surrounding Canaanites. This is still a problem for the visible Church today (i.e., issues of same-sex marriages being blessed within the church).

#### 2. Chapters 1-4 “*Corinthians are Urged to be United in the Proclamation and Service-oriented Lifestyle of the Cross*”

- a. Letter Opening (1:1-9)
  - i. Paul’s divine calling to be an apostle according to the will of God resulted in “a rare combination of genuine humility and supreme confidence, a profound sense of both privilege and obligation” (Ciampa & Rosner).
    1. cf. 9:1-2; 4:14-16 (‘founding father’); 15:1-2 (salvation came through his preaching of the gospel); 15:5-7; 10
  - ii. Verse 2: **Malachi 1:11** LLX “prophesies a future time when God would be worshiped by Gentiles ‘in every place’ [and Paul’s reference to it here] suggests that the Corinthians are part of the fulfillment of God’s plan to be worshipped among all the Gentiles and that it is Paul’s ultimate purpose in writing to them to see them play their part in fulfilling this worldwide eschatological vision by glorifying God” (cf. 1 Cor. 3 with Malachi 3).
  - iii. Verse 3: ‘*grace and peace*’ sum up the gospel of ‘Christ crucified’ which is preached by Paul as God’s apostle; *peace* flows from God’s *grace* and results in *thanksgiving*
    1. Grace=cause of salvation
    2. Peace=outcome of salvation
  - iv. “A Christian is someone who has been given God’s grace (v. 4), who has been enriched with spiritual endowments (vv. 5-7), who eagerly awaits the Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed (v. 7), who will stand shameless on that day (v. 8), and who is in fellowship with God’s Son, Jesus Christ... [thankful for the grace already received in Christ].”

b. True and False Wisdom and Corinthian Factionalism (1:10-4:17)

i. *Factions in the Community (1:10-17)*

1. “The ‘message of the cross’ is the cure for what ails the Corinthians, but it is not that various denials or aberrations of the gospel are dividing them. Paul’s point is that they are not living in accordance with the gospel. They have not seen its relevance to how they should behave.”
  - a. They are immature Christians who are easily influenced by the fallen wisdom of the world which views things from an ‘under the sun’ perspective. Consequently, worldly values and idols are entering into the church and causing factions (e.g., applicability to Seeker-Friendly mega churches that pander to the secular desires and expectations of the world to engage and entertain visitors? Could the same be said of ‘high church’ ritualism that meets the other-than-gospel-needs of people that look for more than ‘Christ and Him crucified’?).
    - i. cf. **Hebrews 5:11-6:2**
    - ii. Just as the Corinthians, we, too, must avoid relating to our Christian leaders in the secular and idolatrous manner of the fallen world.
2. Unity around Truth vs. Unity through Ecclesiology (Dick Lucas)
  - a. Allegiance to Christ and not human “cults of personality”
3. \*Verses 15-17: Paul did not assert that baptism “required the administration of ‘apostolic hands’,” and the one who administered baptism appeared to matter little to the apostle. For Paul, preaching the gospel was most important; not baptism.

ii. *Negative Treatment: “No More Boasting about Human Leaders” (1:18-2:5)*

1. **Condemnation of False Wisdom: The Wisdom of This World, 1:18-2:5**

(*Ciampa & Rosner*) – “human wisdom is under God’s eschatological judgment...the gospel is the antithesis of human wisdom and power” (cf. *Ecclesiastes* and the vanity of pursuing life with an “under the sun” humanist perspective that is not God-centered; 1 Cor. 3:18-23; Isaiah 28:16; 29:14; 33:18)

a. 2:1 (1:17; cf. 2 Cor. 10:10; Gal. 4:14)

- i. Weakness and foolishness characterized both Paul and the gospel (mystery; revelation of God) of Christ and Him Crucified that he preached which reflect Jesus by the Spirit in Paul’s ministry

b. 2:2 (1:18-25/ “those who reject the message” of a ‘crucified Christ’, which is like saying that a ‘president assassinated’ by a coup is victorious good news; Jews=miracles & Greeks=human understanding; “under the sun” wisdom)

- i. **Verses 17-21:** Paul *contrasts* these two “wisdoms” which are opposed to each other; noting that worldly wisdom is being judged and eradicated by God with the gospel message of a crucified Messiah (cf. *Isaiah 29:14* which Paul “uses to announce that God’s eschatological judgment and salvation are taking place among the Corinthians” & *Isaiah 33:18* which “recalls the overthrow by the Messiah of all those who oppose God and His people in the End Time, reinforcing both the passages Christology and eschatology.” NOTE: salvation and condemnation are two sides of the same coin in God’s judgment)-

1. “Wisdom of [worldly] word”

- a. Trying to persuade trusting in sophisticated rhetoric valued by the world and seen as wise

- i. Results in the ‘foolish’ who are ‘perishing’
  - ii. “The wise, the teacher of the law, and the philosopher of this age are nowhere to be found, for their wisdom has been destroyed and their intelligence frustrated. They have been outsmarted and upstaged. They have nothing more to offer. They have slunk away in defeat” (Ciampa & Rosner). “The message of the Cross proves that God’s folly has outsmarted human wisdom; His weakness has overpowered human strength (verses 22-25)” (Carson).
  - iii. The 3 groups/professions highlighted here represented the smartest and most learned by worldly standards, and, with their fallen claim to be able to discern that which is good and evil apart from God reveals their inclination to pride which is a fundamental issue tempting the Corinthians which “becomes clear in chapters 3-4.” Therefore, their “reason is blinded by pride.”
- 2. “Wisdom of the Cross”
  - a. Trusting in God’s power working through the apostle and the message of ‘Christ crucified’ he preaches which appears foolish to the world
    - i. Results in ‘power’ to those ‘being saved’
    - ii. Involves God’s grace in unconditional election (aka: ‘calling’ or ‘choosing’) which means no one can boast in their own wisdom, strength or status/wealth (cf. ***Jeremiah 9:23-24***).
    - iii. ***Matthew 11:25*** illustrates that Jesus hides the mystery/secret things of God revealed in the gospel message of ‘Christ crucified’ from the “wise and learned [of this fallen age]” but reveals them to “babes”. “When it comes to knowing God, the nub of the issue is trust, not wisdom. That knowing God *through preaching* is the solution to the problem of not knowing God through the wisdom of the world” is highlighted by Paul’s avoidance of rhetorical, persuasive, and sophisticated communication tactics that are idolized by the world and tempt Christians, like the Corinthians, with pride resulting in factionalism.
  - ii. Paul did not speak of himself but focused on and pointed to Christ Crucified in his preaching
    - 1. Against individual testimonials of conversion experiences

- iii. “Christ crucified” is more than salvation through the forgiveness of sins; it is the model of Christian life and ministry as demonstrated by the Apostle Paul (cf. Carson)
  - 1. \**Service vs. Sacerdotalism* in Church Leaders (Dick Lucas & Gary LW Johnson)
    - a. Christian Leaders are *Insignificant, Servants & Accountable* (Vaughn Roberts; cf. 1 Cor. 3 & 4)
    - b. **Matthew 23:1-12**
      - i. God is our Father; Christ is our Master & Lord; Holy Spirit is our Teacher (Lucas)
  - 2. \*Paul emphasized the *preaching* of the Word, “Christ crucified”, and did not place emphasis on his role or function in baptisms, even less the Lord’s Supper.
- c. 2:3 (1:26-31/ “[the lower] social standing of [most of] those who accept the message”; not wise by human standards)
  - i. “In his critique of human wisdom Paul uses the Corinthians themselves as an illustration of the pattern of eschatological reversal that characterizes the work of Christ. The low social status of most of the Corinthians itself points to the cross, which was, humanly speaking, anything but impressive, and radically overturned expectations. Paul uses **Jeremiah 9:22-24** and **1 Samuel 2:10** LXX to support his contention that through the cross God has turned the world’s values upside down.”
    - 1. For the Christian, our boast/glory is in God Whom we know through the preaching of “Christ crucified” which comes to us by grace and NOT by any merit in us. Therefore, let us not be tempted by pride revealed in boasting about worldly human achievements. Instead, we are called to boast/glory in God; because, salvation is ‘of Him’, and it is for such glorying in God that we were created (cf. **Ephesians 2:8-9**).
      - a. “To follow the logic of Paul ‘s argument, to find wisdom, you must first renounce your own wisdom and become a fool.”
    - 2. “The Prophets and Psalms regularly attest to God’s determination to vindicate the righteous and bring the unrighteous to a shameful end. ...the shaming of God’s arrogant enemies is in order that God’s honor and glory might be properly recognized. As Fee puts it, ‘in choosing the Corinthians God has already begun the final vindication over his enemies’.”
      - a. *Righteousness* – legal vindication and acquittal
      - b. *Holiness* – being set apart, consecrated, by God as His temple/dwelling
      - c. *Redemption* – emancipation from enslavement to this fallen worldly ‘age’ with reference to Israel’s Exodus from Egypt.
  - d. 2:4-5/ Paul’s preaching was not ‘in words of wisdom’ according to worldly standards which would be a “mismatch” with the message of ‘Christ crucified’ (1:17-18; **Zech. 4:6-10**)

- i. Paul “laid the foundation” for the Corinthian Church/temple by preaching ‘Christ Crucified’ as Zechariah laid the foundation for the temple upon Israel’s return from Exile (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10-11, 16-17; 9:13-14).
- ii. Paul’s preaching presence was similar to Moses who lacked “eloquence” (Exodus 4:10), Isaiah who had unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5), and Jeremiah who didn’t know how to speak due to his youth (Jeremiah 1:6).
  - 1. God chooses to work through human weaknesses, so His power can be clearly manifested; that He, not man, may be glorified. This is God’s wisdom.
  - 2. “Paul’s speaking generated no applause. ...the sophist’s goal was persuasion by the manipulation of arguments and skillful rhetoric. Paul’s goal was the manifestation of God’s power in people’s lives [aka: ‘a demonstration of the Spirit’s power’ evidenced in the conversion of the Corinthians as the Spirit applied the word of the gospel, ‘Christ and Him crucified’, to their hearts (cf. *1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2:13*)]” (Ciampa & Rosner).
- iii. *Romans*: one must dismiss their own righteousness to attain true righteousness in Christ *1 Corinthians*: one must relinquish worldly wisdom and personal power to “receive God’s wisdom and experience [H]is power.”
- iii. *Positive Treatment*: “*Let Those Who Boast, Boast in the Lord*”(2:6-3:4)
  - 1. **Affirmation of True Wisdom: The Wisdom of the Cross and the Spirit, 2:6-3:4 (Ciampa & Rosner)**
    - a. Overview and Insights from Ciampa & Rosner: “Having demolished the false wisdom that had in part led to the divisions in Corinth, Paul seeks to put genuine wisdom in its place. Up to this point Paul has emphasized the foolishness of the gospel. Now he turns to the gospel as wisdom from God. However, it is not simply that Paul needs to correct a false view of wisdom in order to deal with divisions in Corinth. ...to Paul’s mind a lack of true wisdom leads to other faults as well, especially sexual immorality and idolatry, the very vices Paul addresses negatively and positively in chapters 5-6 and 7, and 8-10 and 11-14 respectively. In *Romans 1* Paul outlines his conviction that the rejection of wisdom from God (1:21-22) leads to sexual immorality (1:24, 26-27) and idolatry (1:23, 25). Thus, 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:4 has a relevance beyond chapters 1-4 in the letter. ‘God’s wisdom’ (2:7) is as much about how to live as what to believe.”
      - i. “In terms of tracing the argument of the section, **the theme statement** may be taken from the opening words, [*‘Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom’* (2:6a ESV)]. 1 Corinthians 2:6b-3:4 unpacks the three main elements of this solemn assertion.”
        - 1. Cf. *Colossians 1:28* & *2 Peter 3:15* on “wisdom”
          - a. ‘wisdom of God’ in verse 7 is to be equated with ‘the mind of Christ’ in verse 16 which is precisely “what Paul offers the Corinthians in the letter as a whole.” Therefore, the *wisdom of God* is depicted in...

- i. Chapters 1-4 as the recognition that *the cross* judges and ends the world's 'wisdom' while also offering the foundation for Christian unity
      - ii. Chapter 5 as *the sacrifice of Christ our Passover Lamb* as the reason for purifying the assembly by removing the incestuous man
      - iii. Chapter 6 as the recommended *righteous suffering after the example of Christ* instead of self-assertion
      - iv. Chapter 7 as *the blood/death of Christ with which we were bought* and the reason for not being enslaved to humans.
      - v. Chapter 8 as *Christ's death for our weaker brother* who were are to imitate so as not to cause our brother to stumble
      - vi. Chapter 11 as *Christ's sacrifice for us* that defines our behavior as members of His Body
    - b. "Wisdom may be defined as Christ and his cross. ...wisdom is reflected in the rejection of immorality and idolatry and in behavior that brings glory rather than shame on God and his people."
  - 2. Cf. *Ephesians 3:5-6* on "mystery" in relation to the Spirit's work through the apostles and prophets
  - 3. "The rulers of this age" in verse 6 is "a reference both to the world's organized opposition to God's wisdom and to the pernicious spiritual forces behind them."
  - 4. "We" in verses 6, 7, 13 refers to the apostles and prophets/preachers
  - 5. "We"/ "us" in verses 10, 12, 16 refer to all Believers
- b. Carson on 2:6-16 on "The Cross and the Holy Spirit"
  - i. "What it means to be 'spiritual' is profoundly tied to the cross, and to nothing else."
    - 1. Being spiritual, or wise, means understanding and gratefully appropriating the message of the cross, "God's secret wisdom," by continuously looking to it for one's living "as the measure of God's love for them and the supreme standard of personal self-denial" which is the primary theme of Paul in chapters 1-4.
      - a. While there is only one "fundamental division in the human race" – 1.) Those who are without the Spirit and ignorant of the message of the cross, vs. 2.) Those who are with the Spirit and wise with an understanding of the message of the cross – there are "gradations of maturity among the spiritual [aka: those with the Spirit and, thus, wise]" (see 3:1-4). Therefore, "the distinction between the mature and the immature is not about status but

concerns behavior in keeping with that secure and sanctified Christian identity. [Paul] wants them all to accept the wisdom of the cross and Spirit. As 3:1-4 shows, all Christians have the same status, but they show their maturity by their readiness to respond to teaching concerning the implications of ‘the word of the cross’ for life together. The mature in Corinth are those whose grasp of ‘Christ as the wisdom of God’ (1:30) has enabled them to resist the lure of ‘the wisdom of the world’ (1:20) and who refuse to participate in petty factionalism” (Ciampa & Rosner).

- i. Maturity among the “spiritual” or “wise” may be evaluated upon one’s reliance on either worldly wisdom opposed to God, or God-given wisdom inherently tied to the cross. These are the only two alternatives and “there is no middle ground. Those who try to create some middle ground by imitating the Corinthians [e.g., the Western Church]-who confessed the Jesus of the cross but whose hearts were constantly drawn to one or another of the public philosophies and values of the day-will gain nothing but the rebuke of Scripture.”
  - ii. If the focus of our minds and hearts and self-identification is anything other than the cross (such as home schooling, abortion, or style of worship [either ‘seeker friendly’ or ‘ritualistic’] and if we think that being really wise or spiritual is dependent on any of those things, then we are not being grounded in Spirit-enabled wisdom which points to the cross.
- ii. ***“Insight into the message of the cross cannot be gained apart from the work of the Spirit.”***
1. Truly understanding the message of the cross essentially involves personal “brokenness, contrition, repentance, and faith. ...to look at God and his holiness, and people and their sin, *from the perspective of the cross*, is life-changing” which is enabled by the regenerating Holy Spirit.
  2. Any “philosophical or theological grid that entitles [us] to ‘filter out’ the centrality of the message of the cross [means that we have] bought into one of the ‘wisdoms’ of this world and have therefore not grasped the message of the cross at all. The reason for this failure [lies] in our deep waywardness, our culpable self-interest, our alienation from God, our corresponding refusal to recognize just how lost we are. To overcome such lostness, we need the power of the Spirit of God.”

3. Verse 14 refers to the one who has blasphemed against the Holy Spirit (cf. **Matthew 12:22-32**)
  4. Verse 16 references **Isaiah 40:12-14**, and the rhetorical question of Is. 40:13 “who has understood the mind of the Lord?” expects the answer ‘no one’, BUT Paul surprisingly says that “We have the mind of Christ” which is God’s profound and secret wisdom of a crucified Messiah currently and eschatologically being revealed by the Holy Spirit.
- c. Carson on 3:1-4 on “The Cross and Factionalism” - Note the close parallels between the Corinthian Church and the American/Western Church in which two fundamental issues underlie factionalism:
- i. Misunderstanding of the centrality of the cross in the gospel in exchange for *worldly wisdom* (aka: “folly”) that valued “pomp, prestige, rhetoric, social approval, triumphalism.”
    1. As articulated in 2:6-16, the Corinthians, as a corporate body, are Christians, and Paul addresses them as ‘brothers’; however, they are not acting like Christians. While they are ‘spiritual’ and possess the Spirit, Paul could not address them in that manner; because, they are immature. Because of their immaturity as Christians (being ‘mere infants in Christ’), Paul had to address them ‘as worldly’ or ‘fleshly’ (as people without the Spirit) by refocusing on the fundamental centrality of ‘the message of the cross.’
      - a. Such Christian immaturity is unacceptable, and we will be accountable to God for our lack of spiritual growth which flows from our faithful appropriation of the “the message of the cross” for our personal Christian lives and the fruit we are expected to produce (cf. **Romans 1:5; 16:26** ‘the obedience of faith’). “The Spirit does not impart wisdom out of thin air, for the Spirit and the cross go together. The mind of Christ is not exercised by thinking about nothing. Rather, those who are spiritual habitually turn to the cross (2:8), as Paul did in the face of divisions in Corinth in 1:18-2:5. For the cross is where we find Christ’s mind-set on such behavior” (Ciampa & Rosner). We are culpable for our own ignorance, foolishness and immaturity.
        - i. Verse 1 *sarkinos* = “people of the flesh” - which means “composed/made of flesh” and indicates acting *fleshly* or “merely human” without the Spirit.
        - ii. Verse 3 *sarkikos* = “of the flesh” – which means “characteristic of human flesh” and has moral overtones. Basically, the Corinthians are being accused of acting like pagans who do not have the Holy Spirit to fall back on. Evidence of pagan behavior that’s characteristic of fallen human nature

is their ‘jealousy and strife’ resulting in factionalism because of their focus on ‘worldly wisdom’ instead of ‘the message of the cross’ which is ‘God’s secret wisdom’ for their lives (*Galatians 5:13-26; cf. 1 John 2:16-18*).

iii. *Hebrews 5:11-6:2*

ii. Misunderstanding Christian leadership as being modeled on and by ‘the message of the cross’ as opposed to being based on *worldly wisdom*. Instead of making Christ crucified on the cross the primary point of identification, they identify with a Christian leader.

1. The beginning of denominationalism: Apollos, or Cephas, or Wesley, or Calvin.

a. Conclusively, there can be no hope for genuine unity apart from a collective affirmation of the centrality of the “message of the cross” which is “God’s secret wisdom.”

iv. \**Application to the Church, Ministers, and Ministry (3:5-4:17)*

1. **Metaphors for Church Leaders: Christ’s Servant Co-workers who are Entrusted with ‘the Mysteries of God’ by which They Live and with which they Encourage and Exhort Others, 3:5-3:17 & 4:1-17 (Ciampa & Rosner)**

a. 3:5-17 “**Christian leaders are only servants** of Christ and are not to be accorded allegiance reserved for God alone. God cares about his church, and he holds its leaders accountable for how they build it” (Carson).

i. Apollos and Paul are mere servants, *of the Lord* (thus, Christians’ affection and allegiance should be directed to the Lord), like manual laborers or humble farm workers; both occupations not highly regarded in Corinthian culture.

1. The apostles and prophets/preachers are co-workers; fellow workers *belonging* to God

ii. In verses 10-15, “Paul here envisions a scrutinizing of Christian leaders, not a judgment of all Christians, and the fire is not an instrument of punishment (as in Revelation 20), but of purification. It is not a judgment of people but of their work. Elsewhere Paul indicates that he believes that all Christians will face similar judgment: ‘we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ’ (@ Cor. 5:10; cf. Rom. 14:10). The judgment in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 is not of all humankind, of the justified over against (other) sinners, but of wise and unwise builders of the church” (Rosner & Ciampa).

1. Is the wisdom of the Cross or the wisdom ‘under the sun’ being used to build the local church in both numbers through evangelism and spiritually mature disciples of Jesus? Are the materials used to build worthy of the Foundation; will they endure God’s scrutiny?

2. Carson, “The fire then is not purgatory. Nothing is said about tormenting the builders and purging them in flames. Rather, it is the quality of their work that is revealed by the fire. If a builder’s work is burned up, ‘he will suffer loss;

he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames' (3:15).

- a. "Two things must be said to clarify this picture Paul has painted and to drive his points home into our lives. First, those who 'suffer loss' but who escape 'through the flames' are not the 'carnal' or 'worldly' Christians of 3:1-4, but are Christian leaders who build the church with materials that will not withstand the final conflagration. The worldly Christians of 3:1-4 constitute all or part of the Corinthian church, and the church is represented, in the first analogy, by the field, and in the second, by the building. What we might call the 'church 'builders,' people like Paul, Apollos, and other evangelists, preachers, and teachers, are either the workers in the field or the builders of the building. It is they whose work is tested by fire. This means that the sophisticated form of the 'carnal Christian' theory, which postulates that some people make a profession of faith, shortly thereafter return to a lifestyle indistinguishable from that of any believer, yet finally make it into heaven by the skin of their teeth ('as one escaping through the flames'), finds no warrant whatever in this passage. Even the 'worldly' or 'carnal' Christian is still identifiably a Christian, and in this passage it is the church builders who barely escape the flames, not the 'ordinary' church folk themselves."
  - i. *cf.* - Luke 6:43-49 "*Are You In or Out?!*" sermon on knowing an evil versus a good tree by their fruits.
- b. "The issue then is not reward or punishment, heaven or hell, but reward or no reward. It is the builder's 'work' (3:13) that will be burned up, not *the builder* himself. As Fee states, 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 is not 'a soteriological statement.' The *reward* can only be an eschatological 'prize' (1 Cor. 9:24-27; *cf.* Phil. 3:14). Whatever its precise nature, its essence is 'praise from God' (4:5). We may compare Jesus' promise in the parables of the Bags of Gold in Matthew and the Ten Minas in Luke: 'well done, good and faithful servant!...Come and share your master's happiness' (Matt. 25:21,23; *cf.* Luke 19:17). In both cases the reward for faithful service is the master's pleasure and his confidence, which leads to a further entrusting of responsibility."
- b. **4:1-17 Applications: *The Apostles as Models of the Wisdom of the Cross* (Rosner & Ciampa)**

- i. Paul declared the status of Christian leaders using four terms: **Servants subordinate to Christ and the Church** (3:5, 4:1), **Fellow workers with one another belonging to God** (3:9), **Stewards accountable to God Himself** (4:1,2)...
1. of **'the mysteries of God'** (4:1) "which they are to dispense refers, as in 2:7, to the gospel in all its fullness [and] to the 'deep things of God' in 2:10. The context [of 4:2-5] suggests that the 'mysteries' have to do with the message Paul has shared with the Corinthians, certain points of which had resulted in his being judged by some of them. In building the church, ministers manage a major project, the resources for which are nothing less than the fullness of the gospel of God" (Ciampa & Rosner).
- ii. Verses 1-5 "The verb 'to judge' is used three times in vv. 3 and 4. It was used in 2:14-15 in the sense of 'inquiring into' spiritual things. There too 'the person with the Spirit...is not subject to merely human judgments.' Likewise, here in 4:3 Paul, a spiritual man, will not be evaluated by any human being, but rather only by God (v. 4). The evaluation of Paul's 'faithfulness' is God's prerogative alone. The only assessment of Christian workers that counts is not congregational (or denominational), nor even personal, but only that by 'the Lord who assigned them each his task' (3:5). [Verse 5] is the most explicit indication of what Paul had in mind in his earlier reference to the rewards to be received by God's servants (cf. 3:14). The judgment in question will be 'then,' not now; this is another damper on Corinthian eagerness to assess their leaders. Paul has in view judgment as it concerns believers in Christ. In other places Paul speaks of those in his churches as his joy, crown, and glory on the Day of Judgment (2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 2:16; 1 Thess. 2:19-20). **John 5:44** contains a similar view of *praise from God* and pits it over against 'praise from human beings'..." (Ciampa & Rosner).
- iii. Verses 6-13 "...Paul moves from speaking figuratively and indirectly about the church and its leaders, to speaking literally and directly to the situation in Corinth. In terms of tone and style, he shifts from polite metaphors to blunt commands, accusing rhetorical questions, and even insulting sarcasm and strong language. As Fee observes, with 6-13, 'the argument has reached its moment of truth.' Calvin's summary of the simple logic of Paul's forceful assault on Corinthian pride in [v. 7] is accurate: 'No room is left for taking pride in ourselves, when it is by God's grace we are what we are.' The already/not yet tension is...between spiritual immaturity and maturity. In this sense **4:8** recalls **3:1-4**: the Corinthians may think they have 'already' arrived at maturity (4:8), but in Paul's view they are 'not yet' there (3:2). The twice repeated 'already' of v. 8 refers to the Corinthians' thinking of themselves as morally and spiritually perfected, in Paul's view without 'participation in Christ's sufferings, becoming like him in his death' (**Phil. 3:10**). We could paraphrase v. 8 as: 'So soon and so easily you are filled...!' It is

not that they think they have experienced the eschaton that Paul still awaits, but rather that they have advanced to maturity ahead of Paul. Paul goes on in the following verses to contrast the cross-shaped lifestyle of the apostles with this Corinthian egotism. As Garland puts it: ‘The apostles live according to the wisdom of the cross; the Corinthians imbibe the wisdom of this age and pass themselves off as kings.’ Imaging oneself to be filled, rich, and reigning was in fact a claim made by Cynic and Stoic philosophers. The Corinthians had apparently adopted the inflated self-understanding of pagan philosophers. Hence, Corinthians problems are not to be attributed to their faulty theology or premature eschatology so much as to their conformity to the norms and values of pagan culture.

1. Verse 10 presents the first antithetical triad in which the teaching (*foolish* vs. *wise*), condition (*weak* vs. *strong*), and position (*dishonored* vs. *glorified*) of the apostles and the Corinthians are set in opposition. Dripping with irony, and recalling the themes of 1:18-2:5 (see esp. **1:26-28**), Paul effectively rebukes the Corinthians for their inflated self-esteem that takes no account of the lowly message of the cross. Appearances and reality are shown to be on collision course in view of the experience of the apostles. The issue of the Corinthians’ aspirations in terms of social status and prestige is summed up with the accusation: *You are honored, but we are dishonored*. Paul’s discussion of glory and honor in 1:26-28 makes it clear that his is not intended to be an accolade. There, God chose the dishonorable in order to shame the honored! In this light the Corinthians’ claim to be prudent, powerful, and of good repute disqualifies them from God’s call. It is not that Paul doubts their standing before God, but rather he employs ‘shock tactics’ to encourage them to match their conduct with their confession. In 6:20 and 10:31, using cognate terms, Paul will exhort the Corinthians to be more concerned about glorifying God than honoring themselves.”
  - a. **Jeremiah 9:23-24**
2. “If the Corinthians are ‘already’ replete, rich, and reigning (4:8), Paul counters in vv. 11-13 that his present experience is entirely otherwise; to underscore the contrast Paul repeats the word ‘now’ in the temporal phrases that mark off the subunit: *To this very hour* (4:11a) and ‘right up to this moment’ (4:13b). Paul’s point is that ‘the present is a time of suffering, not glory.’
  - a. “Perseverance is an unspectacular but essential Christian virtue. Paul gets knocked down, but not knocked out” (*Rosner & Ciampa*).
- iv. **Verses 14-17** –cf. **Colossians 1:28** “The command to imitate him must be understood in context. What Paul expects the Corinthians to imitate are those things that will end the boasting and factionalism in Corinth. Garland explains: ‘They are to welcome

being regarded as fools for Christ, and as weak and dishonored... They are to recognize that all that they are and have come to them as a grace-gift from God (3:10) and that they are not inherently extraordinary (4:7). They are to think of themselves as no better than menial field hands (3:5) and servants (4:1) awaiting God's judgment to determine if they were trustworthy (4:5). They are to rid themselves of all resentments and rivalries with co-workers so that they can toil together in God's field (3:5-9). They are to resist passing themselves off as wise or elite by using lofty words of wisdom or aligning themselves with those who do and to rely instead on the power of God that works through weakness, fear, and trembling (2:1-4).<sup>7</sup> These actions and attitudes constitute the pattern of Paul's life both in the present and as he had lived it out before the Corinthians. **In short, Paul is a model of the wisdom of the cross. Paul's life in its entirety had been stamped by the message of the cross, which excludes boasting and promotes humility.** Indeed, later in the letter, he will say, 'Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ' (11:1). The Corinthians (and we) should make it their aim to be able to follow Paul in calling others to imitate the pattern he has modeled (2 Tim. 2:2), which is, after all, the pattern established by Christ himself<sup>8</sup> (Rosner & Ciampa).

1. **\*!Carson**, "The guardian in the first-century Hellenistic household...exercised a certain authority over the child...but it would never equal that of a father. Paul was the one who first brought the gospel to the Corinthians; in that sense, he alone became their 'father,' a fact nothing could change that."
2. **Metaphors for the Church: God's Garden Temple, 3:5-3:17 (Ciampa & Rosner)**
- a. **3:5-9 Agricultural Analogy: The Corinthians are God's Cultivated Field/Garden.**
    - i. cf. 3:10-17 the Church is compared to a temple
    - ii. cf. 12:12-27 the Church is compared to a body
    - iii. cf. Isaiah 5:1-7; Jer. 18:9; 24:6; Ezek. 36:9-10
    - iv. God owns the field, and He makes it productive
  - b. **3:10-15 Architectural Analogy: The Corinthians are God's Building/Temple**
    - i. cf. Solomon's garden-like temple; Malachi's end-time temple (Malachi 3-4)
      1. "All this suggests that in 1 Corinthians 3:5-18 Paul is comparing the Corinthians not to just any cultivated field and temple, but to nothing less than Solomon's garden temple" (Rosner & Ciampa).
    - ii. God owns the building and inspects the quality of the work of each builder.
  - c. **3:16-17 Paul's Rhetorical Question and His Alarming Conclusion** (Carson) – "That Paul connects the temple metaphor with the Old Testament is clear from **2 Corinthians 6:16-18** where he quotes *Leviticus 26:12* and *Ezekiel 37:27*" (Rosner & Ciampa). These verses, and what

they state (in essence, “become what you are”), are crucial to the letter which continues with the ‘filling of the Spirit’ and the temple themes.

- i. Carson highlights the following ways the church can be destroyed, not just by its builders, but by *any* member: diverting attention away from the gospel onto worldly praise and acceptance; sectarianism; heresy; gossip; prayerlessness; bitterness; sustained biblical illiteracy; self-promotion; materialism.

3. **Reprise and Summary: All Things Belong to God, 3:18-23 (Rosner & Ciampa)**

- a. “1 Corinthians 3:18-23 connects this part of Paul’s argument to what he had to say about the wisdom of the cross and the Spirit in 1:18-3:4. The paragraph applies the material expounded in those chapters to the problem of divisions in the church, drawing out its practical significance. The unit is the most direct assault on Corinthians factionalism since Paul’s request for unity in 1:10. The apostle’s final appeal on the subject follows in chapter 4” (Ciampa & Rosner).
  - i. Jeremiah 9:23-24
  - ii. Verse 20 cf. Psalm 94:11
- b. **The Apostles, and all servant-leaders, BELONG to the Church, or ‘Field’ and its harvest.** Carson, “To fasten undue and exclusive affection and loyalty to one leader is to depreciate how much there is to receive from all the others. In other words, factionalists overlook the wealth of the heritage we as Christians properly enjoy. But Paul casts this truth in a form that goes beyond people. If we truly belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God, then we belong to God. And what a God! He is sovereign over these petty tyrannies; he has shown his great love for his people; he has paid for their redemption at the cost of the death of his dear Son. So none of these *tyrannies* – ‘the world or life or death or the present or the future’ – control us any longer. They have been decisively beaten. They are under the sway of a sovereign Redeemer, and since we are the company of the redeemed, they are ours. We are God’s and that transforms everything. If we truly understand this, there are no tyrannies left. Factionalism is utter folly. Not only does it hurt the church, it impoverishes all those who embrace it, for it cuts them off from the wealth of the heritage that rightly belongs to all the children of God.”

3. **1 Corinthians 4:18-7:40 “Issues of Sexual Immorality”**

a. **Thesis Statement for this Section of the Epistle is Contained in 6:18-20**

i. Summary Review “The Basis for the Exhortation to ‘Flee Sexual Immorality’”

1. 1:2 (cf. Malachi 1:11 LXX) – The Corinthians are sanctified, and this demands their sexual purity. “...Paul’s overriding aim for the Corinthians is that they may be part of the fulfillment of God’s eschatological plan to be ‘*glorified* among all the Gentiles...*in every place*. For this to happen, it is imperative that the Corinthian church be rid of the characteristic Gentile problems of sexual immorality [greed, represented in the lawsuits which also were likely results of differing degrees of social status] and idolatry, that they flee these sins and instead glorify God with their bodies and worship” (Ciampa & Rosner).

- a. Deuteronomy 17:7-12 – “Paul’s mind, it seems, moved from judgment in the church and God judging the world (5:1-13) to the Corinthians’ being judged before ‘the ungodly’ (6:1-11).” This passage also appears to be a

background for Paul proceeding in this letter to make difficult judgments, similar to those of Moses.

2. 3:16-17 – Christians must maintain the holiness of God’s Temple.
  - a. Chapter 5 – incest is an abomination to the Temple and is incongruent with their holy identity
  - b. 6:12-17 – using prostitutes is an abomination to the Temple and is incongruent with their holy identity
3. Genesis 38-39
  - a. Chapter 39, when Joseph successfully ‘flees’ from Potiphar’s wife, forms an interesting contrast to chapter 38 regarding Tamar’s prostitution
- b. **6:18** - *Negative Treatment: “**Flee Sexual Immorality**” (and Greed) (4:18-6:20)*
  - i. Verse 18 (cf. **Genesis 2:24**) – Sexual immorality is worse than other sins; because, it establishes a ‘one-flesh’ union that is ‘against the body.’ “ ‘[Sexual immorality] is uniquely body-joining, ...[and] uniquely body-defiling.’ [It] is a sin against the body’s ‘rightful ownership’; the believer’s body is under the authority of Christ the Lord (6:12-15), is a temple of the Holy Spirit (6:19), and was purchased by God (6:20). No other sin threatens to put the body under the mastery of something or someone else (v. 12b)” (Ciampa & Rosner).
    1. **\*!4:18-21** “**Warning the Believers**” Carson (pp. 112-113), “...bringing the people of God to consistent Christian living in the light of the gospel of the crucified Messiah is so important to Paul that he will not turn from its goal. If he moves people in the direction by encouragement and admonition, all to good; if severer discipline is called for, he will not flinch. But spankings still hurt, even from a father who insists that he is spanking his son because he loves him. It is much better for the son to change his behavior, so that the manner of the father’s coming will not be with discipline but with a gentle spirit.”
      - a. Verse 20 – “Their situation actually forms a contrast to the kingdom of God. Where Christ reigns, how impressive you sound is not an issue. Rather, what counts is whether your deeds are carried through effectively [only by the power (cf. verse 19) of the gospel]” (Ciampa & Rosner).
      - b. Verse 21 – “The rod that Paul threatens to brandish reluctantly is what the Old Testament wisdom believed a **father** should use to drive out folly from the heart of his children (Proverbs 22:15; 23:13-14; see 1 Cor. 4:15: ‘in Christ I became your father’).
        - i. “Whether he comes to Corinth boldly or gently, Paul expects...some form of correction. The choice is not between discipline or no discipline, but between harsh and gentle discipline [cf. Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:25 for types of ‘gentleness’ in discipline]” (Ciampa & Rosner).
  2. 5:1-13 – **INCEST** (and *Church Discipline*)
    - a. Scriptural Parallels
      - i. 1 Corinthians 5 should be read in light of **1 Corinthians 3:16-17**
        1. **Verses 3-8** are congruent with the ‘temple theme’ of which 3:16-17 is the background. “Having ‘cleansed the temple’ [v. 5], Paul calls upon the congregation to celebrate spiritually the festival of Passover/Unleavened Bread. That these events occurred to Paul’s mind may itself testify to the influence of the Old Testament temple motif, since in the Old Testament, there is an observable link between cleansing or restoring the temple and celebrating the

Passover. Following the ‘removal of all defilement from the sanctuary’ (2 *Chr.* 29:5), in order to reestablish the service of the temple of the Lord’ (2 *Chr.* 29:35), King Hezekiah in 2 *Chronicles* 30 calls upon the people to celebrate the Passover. Similarly, King Josiah, after removing the articles of idolatry from the temple and restoring the sacred ark to its rightful place, ordered the Israelites to celebrate the Passover and observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread (2 *Chr.* 35:1-19; 2 *Kings* 23:1-23). Ezra followed the same pattern; *Ezra* 6 records first the completion and dedication of the temple (6:13-18) and then a joyous Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (6:19-22). It is intriguing that, even in the Gospels (*Matt.* 21:12-13; *Mark* 11:15-18; *Luke* 19:45-47; *John* 2:13-22), as in 1 Corinthians 5, cleansing the temple and celebrating the Passover are connected. If in verses 3-5 the incestuous man must be expelled for his own good, in verses 6-8 Paul turns the Corinthians’ attention to the need to remove him before he corrupts the whole congregation. In a rich and suggestive passage Paul piles one metaphore upon another to present his gospel in miniature and drive home its implications for Christian conduct. Because of the death of Christ, the church in Corinth is the new and holy people of God. They must live up to this calling and purify God’s house (v. 6), become a new batch of dough (v. 7), and celebrate the Festival (v. 8) by removing the man from their midst. Their self-confident *boasting is not good*. It is entirely inappropriate in the present circumstances (cf. v. 2). Instead of enjoying a vibrant good health, the church was seriously ill and on the point of collapse. Only drastic surgery could save her. Paul does not, however, use medical imagery but a proverbial saying about ‘leaven’ (cf. *Gal.* 5:9) put in the form of a stinging rhetorical question ... They are in danger of being spoiled by foul fermentation” (Ciampa & Rosner).

- a. *Leaven* – Different from modern-day *yeast* which was unknown at this time. “A ‘little’ portion of a previous week’s ‘batch of dough’ which had been allowed to ferment. When added to the next batch, the leaven made the bread rise. It carried with it the slight risk of infection, especially if the process was left to go on indefinitely without starting afresh with a completely new batch. Each year the Israelites, in part perhaps as a health provision, had to cleanse their homes and the temple from all leaven (*Exod.* 12:14-20; *Deut.* 20:3-8). The unleavened bread from the Feast of Unleavened Bread would supply some ‘fresh’ leaven and start the process anew for the next twelve months of baking bread. Paul emphasizes...that though only a ‘little’ part of the

church, one person in fact, the evil would inevitably, slowly but surely, spread through the whole community, if left unchecked. The example of willful sin in the church can have serious effects. Like leaven in bread, unchecked sin in the church spreads through the whole and irretrievably changes it. The unity of the church, which Paul establishes in **1:10-4:21**, entails solidarity and corporate identity of the church. Since the church is ‘one loaf’ (**10:7**), even one moldy part can render the whole worthless. With their arrogance in the face of immorality the Corinthians have been subject to the leaven of *malice and wickedness*” (Ciampa & Rosner).

i. *Cf. 1 Timothy 5:20*

ii. **Leviticus 18** (*cf. 20:11; Genesis 49:4, see 35:22; Ezekiel 22:10-11*)

1. *Verse 7* forbids sexual relations with one’s mother which uses a different term than that in the next verse
2. *Verse 8* forbids sexual relations with ‘father’s wife’ (aka: step-mother)
  - a. This provides the background for this passage
  - b. ‘Uncovering your father’s nakedness’ reveals the oneness resulting from sexual intercourse with the allusion to seeing the wife of you father naked as the equivalent of seeing your father, himself, naked.

iii. **Deuteronomy**

1. **27:20** provides the basis for Paul ‘cursing’ the sinner
2. **23:1 (22:30)** “may have been the impetus for Paul to quote the Deuteronomy expulsion formula in v. 13. A variation of that formula appears in Deuteronomy **22:22** (*cf. 22:24*) and is presumably the penalty [expulsion from the community; ‘purging the evil’ from God’s holy People] for the incest prohibited in **23:1 (22:30)**. In quoting the Deuteronomy formula in [1 Corinthians 5:13], Paul, it appears, is simply following Torah” (Ciampa & Rosner).
  - a. **23:1 and 23:2-9 (1-8)**, according to Michael Fishbane, “are linked through the mention of the Ammonites and Moabites, who, according to **Genesis 19:31-38**, are the offspring of incest (Lot and his daughters)” (Ciampa & Rosner).

iv. **Ezra 10:8** – “It is an Ezra-like Paul who deals with the expulsion of the sinner. Just as Ezra ‘mourned’ over the sins of the community, so Paul enjoined the Corinthians to ‘mourn’ over the sin of the incestuous man. Just as Ezra demanded that the sinners separate from their foreign partners or else suffer expulsion themselves, so Paul demanded the expulsion of the sinner, unless he separate from his illicit partner.

1. “The corollary of corporate responsibility, the fear of God’s judgment on the community, which we observed in **Joshua**

7 [regarding Achan's sin], is also present in the incidents involving Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. All three assumed that the nation stood under the covenant and that breach of responsibility could jeopardize the whole group before God. ...Paul considered the expulsion of the sinner imperative to restore the church's [appropriate and pleasing] existence before God. Paul's response to the case of incest implies that churches which do not protect the holiness of God's people as a group run the risk of forfeiting God's blessing" (Ciampa & Rosner).

v. **Judges 20:13 (cf. 19:22-26)**

b. The Woman

- i. Step-mother of male member of the congregation with whom she was having on-going sexual relations; not necessarily within marriage
- ii. Non-believer; reference verse 12, Paul not judging those outside the church and the fact that she receives no rebuke from him

c. The Man

- i. The sinful 'boasting' of the Corinthians and their arrogance appear to have been toward leading figures in the congregation.
  1. The lack of church discipline toward this man thus far may indicate that he was a leading figure and quite possibly a wealthy patron of the congregation.
    - a. There appears to be a reluctance to exercise church discipline leading to this person's excommunication (cf. *Deuteronomy 19:16-20* and *Matthew 18:15-20*). This is the crucial responsibility of the congregation and based on Paul's authority with the power of Christ; to maintain the congruence of who they already are, as a corporate body, in Christ - Holy. "The identity of the Corinthians is to inform their behavior" (Ciampa & Rosner).
      - i. Because there appears to be a failure to discipline this member of the congregation, two other factors may be at play in conjunction with the sexual immorality of incest here; 1.) Greed and 2.) Social Class Distinctions
      - ii. "Paul redefines social status in the church: 'let him who boasts boast in the Lord' (*1:31*, cf. *Jer. 9:23-24*). 'For Paul it is God, not society, that can bestow real honor and disperse lasting shame.' Whereas for the sake of unity or of keeping a 'respected' member some churches would counsel a compromise, Paul rates the purity of the church above any such consideration" (Ciampa & Rosner).

- b. “In our view the incestuous man was handed over to Satan to be taught not to commit sexual immorality” (Ciampa & Rosner).
- i. Cf. *Job 1:12, 2:6; Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:24* – “‘Flesh’ refers to the person oriented away from God and ‘spirit’ to the person oriented toward God. ...where Job is ‘handed over’ to Satan, in which case suffering led to a positive result and the loss of life was specifically excluded. ‘The work of Satan is evil, but it serves God’s ultimate object almost as in the book of Job.’ ” (Ciampa & Rosner).
- d. 5:9-11 “*The assertion that 1 Corinthians may be summarized as Paul’s attempt to rid the Corinthians of the sins of sexual immorality, greed, and idolatry is given remarkable support in 1 Corinthians 5:9-10.*”
- i. “The verb ‘to associate with’ (vv. 9, 11) means to enjoy close social intercourse. Its use in *2 Thessalonians 3:14* concerns the discipline of idle busybodies who have paid no attention to a second warning (cf. *1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 5:14*). Interestingly, in that context the one being disciplined is not to be treated ‘as an enemy.’ Rather the action is designed to ‘warn him as a brother’ (*2 Thess. 3:15*), evidently in the hope that he will [be ashamed,] repent and be restored to full fellowship. Paul’s instructions may thus be compared with that in *Matthew 18:17*, ‘treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.’ [Verses 10-11] state clearly that [Paul’s] instruction in the letter was not concerned with having associations with outsiders. There are of course some forms of social intercourse with unbelievers that Paul would not allow, such as dining with them in an idolatrous temple (see *10:14-22*), but that is not the point here. Close association is to be withheld from six types of professing Christians. Such people are to be excluded from the Lord’s Table and other meals when the church gathers for fellowship. It is less certain that the church as individuals is to refuse to eat with them. The parallel teaching in *2 Thessalonians 3:15* implies that exclusion does not extend that far. However, the case of the incestuous man may be more serious than that of idle busybodies, and the words ‘not even’ point to private meals also. If Paul had meant only the Lord’s Supper, there would not have been any need for those words. *Titus 3:10* says to have ‘nothing to do’ with ‘a divisive person,’ another very serious offense, after a second warning” (Ciampa & Rosner).
1. Sexually immoral (promiscuity, adultery; *Deut. 22:21-22, 30*)
  2. Greedy (no parallel in Deut, but paired with ‘swindlers’ here in verse 9)
  3. Idolaters (idolatry; *Deut. 13:1-5; 17:2-7*)
  4. Revilers/Slanderers (malicious false testimony; *Deut. 19:16-19*)

5. Drunkards (rebellious, drunken son; *Deut. 21:18-21*)
  6. Swindlers (kidnapping, slave-trading; *Deut. 24:7*; LXX uses the noun ‘thief’).
- e. 5:12-13 “...it is not the church’s responsibility to judge outsiders [‘non-Christians’], in the sense of censuring their behavior and undertaking discipline to change them. [What Paul is doing in chapter 5 reflects a] motif of Pentateuchal community exclusion...
- i. “the man must be removed because he is guilty of covenant disloyalty
  - ii. “because while he remains, the church is implicated in his sin
  - iii. “because the community is the temple of the Holy Spirit
    1. [These first three demonstrate that ‘he should be driven out for the sake of the church’].
  - iv. “he must be ejected for his own sake.
    - a. “This [last reason for being expelled from the covenant community] may well be the distinctive Christian and ‘new’ element in Paul’s understanding of exclusion. However, to state the purpose of church discipline only in terms of motivating repentance and restoration of the sinner is to miss much of Paul’s (and his Bible’s) teaching and seriously to truncate his ecclesiology. In all of Paul’s letters no instruction speaks more forcefully about the seriousness of sin, the holiness of God’s people, and their corporate standing before him than this passage, which is the longest text in the New Testament on the subject of church discipline. The church must expel the wicked man in the hope of regaining him and, above all, to protect its standing before God and the world” (Ciampa & Rosner).
3. 6:1-11 – LAWSUITS (GREED) –p. 243
- a. “Interestingly, the only other specific vice to ‘flee’ in the New Testament, apart from sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6) and idolatry (1 Corinthians 10), is greed (*1 Tim. 6:11*; in context, literally, ‘the love of money’; (6:10). Typically Jews and Christians added greed as a third member of the unholy triad of vices that rightly condemns the heathen. In 1 Corinthians ‘greed’ is mentioned alongside sexual immorality and idolatry in each of this letter’s three vice lists (5:10, 11; 6:10), and it is likely that greed was a primary motivation for the lawsuit in 6:1-11. ...the Roman legal system, which was controlled, of course, by the upper class, reinforced the distinctions between the classes in Roman society. The modern notion of equal standing in law did not pertain [and legal proceedings involved character assassinations and numerous witnesses contributing to often-exaggerated accusations]. It is little wonder that the church in Corinth suffered strife, jealousy, and discord with members entangled in such circumstances. 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 deals with the use of secular courts for civil cases between Christians. It does not concern criminal law, which in Corinth would have covered crimes such as high treason, embezzlement, bribery at elections, exhortation in the provinces, forgery of wills or coins, violent offenses, and adultery. It also does not

cover the case of a believer and a nonbeliever entangled in legal matters” (Ciampa & Rosner).

- i. *Verses 1-6* – Christians should be able to handle their own disputes
  1. *Verse 6* – “Paul presses his point by asserting that the scope of the judicial authority of believers in the End Time will include the judgment of the angels [*cf.* Jude 6 regarding the judgment of evil angels].
    - a. *Cf.* 1 John 2:15-17
      - i. Greed, pride and power reveal an over-investment in the things of the world which are passing away.
  - ii. *Verses 7-11* – No matter who ‘wins’ the case in a pagan court, everyone actually loses
    1. *Verse 11* – This is the Gospel with a Trinitarian formula
- b. ***Exodus 18:13-26 and Deuteronomy 1:9-17 (cf. 16:18-20; 17:8-13; 25:1)*** – “The situations in which Moses in exodus 18/Deuteronomy 1 and Paul in 6:1-6 find themselves are not without similarity. Both Moses and Paul are overwhelmed by the judicial problems of the people of God. Both leaders decide to handle the more difficult cases themselves, with the Lord’s help (Paul pronounces judgment on the incestuous man in chapter 5), and appoint judges to adjudicate the lesser cases by deciding between their brothers. The situations of Paul and Moses are of course not alike in every respect. Moses was not rejecting unsuitable judges, but appointing suitable ones. Without doubt, Paul’s main task was more the former. This difference, however, is not so great that Paul could not have seen any relevance in the Moses incident with his own situation. In these two texts Moses and Paul appoint wise [wise competent laymen as] judges to judge between their brothers. Paul’s words echo Deuteronomy 1:16.
  - i. “...there is both a negative and a positive reason for keeping a good reputation for the community of God’s people: to protect the honor of God’s name and to win the heathen.
  - ii. “...that Paul and Moses both gave God’s people ten words to ensure they would receive their inheritance and become part of a kingdom is intriguing. Paul acts like Moses in a number of places in his letters. Furthermore, Paul has a high view of Exodus traditions, not least in 1 Corinthians. Whereas in Deuteronomy the inheritance, though desirable and from God, is temporal and limited, namely, the land, in ***Daniel 7*** the kingdom, as in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, is everlasting and universal (see esp. 7:27). Thus we need look no further for the inspiration of references to ‘inheriting the kingdom’ such as we find here. The Old Testament texts which influenced him in vv. 1-6 continued, it seems, to make an impact in vv. 9-11” (Ciampa & Rosner).
    1. “The ten terms used in [verses 9 and 10] are nouns that stand for individuals whose lives are characterized by the sins in question. It is not that any person who ever commits one of the sins will not inherit the kingdom; Paul is thinking of persistent rebellion against God, not the temporary backsliding or lapse of the believer. *Professing*

Christians who live such lives are tragically among those who will not inherit God's kingdom" (Ciampa & Rosner).

a. *Cf. 1 John 3:4-10*

c. **Key** – "Paul calls for believers not just to forgo their rights but willingly to suffer injustice and abuse rather than take their disputes before pagan courts. To be wronged or cheated is to be greatly preferred to wronging or cheating another, especially a brother or a sister in Christ. Both questions [in vv. 7, 8] are directed at the plaintiff, the one who brought the case to court. Their meaning is equivalent to: 'do not return evil for evil; overcome evil with good' (*Romans 12:21b*). By enduring undeserved injury believers follow the example of Christ (*Philippians 2:1-11; 1 Peter 2:19-21; cf. Leviticus 19:13a*).

i. "Paul is advocating a nonjudicial judgment ethic, not a non-dispute ethic. The dispute itself is not a defeat, but if it is taken before an unrighteous judge it is nothing but a defeat. Jesus had established the ideal for dealing with conflicts within the community (*Matt. 18:15-17*).

1. 'Litigation by its very nature promoted enmity from the slander that was part and parcel of a trial and could only have fueled the church's factionalism... Church members who were clients of one of the parties would have to side with their patron, if they were to remain clients, over against a fellow Christian.'" (Ciampa & Rosner).

4. 6:12-20 – (Temple) PROSTITUTION

a. Differing from 'sacred' or 'ritual' prostitution, 'temple' "prostitution was a part of the festivity rather than having any ritual significance; hence the label *temple*, rather than sacred, prostitution. There is considerable evidence in pagan, Jewish, and Christian writings that feasting and sexual immorality went together. And in the Greco-Roman world prostitution at pagan cultic events was not uncommon" (Ciampa & Rosner).

i. *Cf. Revelation 2:14; Acts 15*

ii. The background for this section and chapter 7 is formed by "two very common views of sex within the Roman world. Both views believed in restrained sexual relations within marriage (usually only for the purpose of procreation), with one holding that sexual pleasure and gratification should not be pursued at all and the other holding that it was to be found in relations with slaves, prostitutes, or other people outside of marriage. ...**6:12-20** suggests that some Corinthians were in agreement with the later view (sexual gratification was to be found outside of marriage), which was the most common view, while **7:1-40** suggests that other Corinthians were in agreement with the former view (that sex was to be restricted to the marriage and not for pleasure. Paul agrees that sexual relations are to be engaged in only within the marriage relationship but recognizes the need to be sensitive to each others' sexual needs (so that restricting sexual relations to the intent to procreate would be likely to leave some tempted to find their sexual needs satisfied elsewhere). The focus on the problem of contact with prostitution in 6:12-17 is embedded within the broader section focusing on sexual immorality in general and

concluding in 6:18-20, with the warning to flee sexual immorality and the call to honor God with one's body. In chapter 7 Paul will more fully address ways in which Christian men and women could glorify God with their bodies in a variety of contexts which would provide potential temptations to sexual immorality. Maintaining healthy sexual relations with one's wife is part of a married man's strategy for avoiding sexual immorality in general and the temptation of prostitution in particular. Paul is concerned with impurity and contamination, and especially the question of ownership. The key concepts for Paul are power, authority, and the body.

1. "Paul counters arrogant Corinthian claims to masterful independence with the ironic assertion that their supposed freedom will actually lead to a form of bondage! Far from being a master (with the right to do anything), they are themselves mastered and under the authority of something antithetical to pure devotion to Christ. Sin as a power finds eloquent expression in Jesus' words, 'the one who sins is a slave of sin' (John 8:34), and in Romans 5-8, especially chapter 6, where either sin or righteousness is said to reign over a person.
2. "...the Corinthians used the sentiments of v. 12a about being free to do anything with respect to both going to prostitutes and eating idol food. ...the ancient world regularly linked sexual appetite and appetite for food. The Corinthians probably also believed that just as food is meant for the stomach and vice versa, so also sexual activity is meant for the body and the body for sexual activity. The stomach and the body are useless unless we eat and have sex. In a style typical of Greek dualistic thought, the Corinthians apparently reasoned that God is concerned only with those aspects of a person that survive death, that is their soul or spirit. However, [Paul] interrupts their reasoning and objects that the body is not like the belly and food in this regard... The body is not insignificant and transient; on the contrary, it will be raised. And since it will be raised, it is important now how we behave with our bodies. It is the destiny of being raised from the dead bodily that gives 'meaning, responsibility and significance to bodily existence in the present. ...in the bodily obedience of the Christian...the lordship of Christ finds visible expression [cf. *1 Corinthians 15*].' Our resurrection is tied to Christ's because we are members of his body. The added point here is that Christians *as bodies* are members of the resurrected Christ.
  - a. "[Therefore] union with Christ excludes union with a prostitute. In going to prostitutes, the Corinthians not only renounce the lordship of Christ over their bodies and deny the resurrection life to come, but they act in a way that sullies and even does violence

to Christ's body. Paul uses [*Genesis 2:24*] to prove that sexual intercourse with a prostitute is not an insignificant affair. *Genesis 2:24* draws attention to the spiritual marriage of the believer to Christ, a union Paul assumes calls for faithfulness and purity. Paul presents two mutually exclusive alternatives [here]: cleaving to a prostitute and cleaving to the Lord. Paul is concerned about the union of believers with the [Lord Jesus] in v. 17, a good fit with nuptial imagery, and not simply with 'God.' The idea of spiritual marriage is also implicit in *1 Corinthians 7:32-35*, where pleasing the Lord and leasing one's marriage partner are compared. Verses 13b and 19b protest the Lord's right over the believer's body, a right given additional credence in the light of their nuptial union. The implication of ownership of the body of one's partner in a physical marriage is taught in *1 Corinthians 7:4*. The same implication carries for spiritual marriage, as *Ezekiel 16b* attests with reference to God's marriage to Israel: 'you became mine'" (Ciampa & Rosner).

c. **6:19-20** - *Positive Treatment: "Glorify God with Your Bodies" (7:1-40)*

i. *Verse 19-20 (cf. Hosea 3:1-3)* – "Calling God's people to repentance on the grounds that he is their husband and master places Paul in the tradition of the best of Israel's prophets. [Verses 19 and 20 arise] out of both the temple (v. 19) and slavery (v. 20) fields of meaning he has just evoked. *The glory of God is the ultimate purpose of God's temple, and the bodies of slaves literally belonged to their masters [see the implications of this in 7:21-23]. Therefore honor God with your bodies*" (Ciampa & Rosner).

1. 7:1-16 – MARITAL STATUS

- a. *Verse 1* – literally not 'to touch' as a derogatory euphemism toward a woman who is being used as a mere object to fulfill one's sexual appetite; "a unilateral act on the part of the man" (Ciampa & Rosner).
- b. *Verses 2-5* – "Paul's own thinking about sex and marriage is consistently expressed in terms of mutual and symmetrical rights and responsibilities. [Paul speaks of] an obligation to give love, not a right to demand love" (Ciampa & Rosner).

i. "Paul either envisages physical [sexual] union within marriage or celibacy.

1. "Paul never refers to procreation, even when discussing Christian heterosexual couple's relationships. ...for Paul, marriage is grounded in the goodness of creation [*cf. Genesis 2:24; Song of Solomon 2:16a; 6:3a; 7:10a*].

a. "Paul clearly does not share the late Stoic view, accepted by the church fathers who attributed it to him, that sex was to be engaged in only for the purpose of procreation [e.g. Augustine, Clement of Alexandria]" (Ciampa & Rosner).

c. *Verse 4* – "...a pointed reminder to husbands who thought they were free to continue sexual relationships with household slaves, prostitutes, or consorts that they were not in fact free to do" (Ciampa & Rosner).

- d. *Verse 7* – “...Paul does not think the couples he is addressing are prepared permanently to abstain from sex, but would be in danger of being tempted by Satan because of their ‘lack of self-control’ if they were to abstain for any but the shortest of periods” (Ciampa & Rosner).
- i. In v. 7 the *gift from God* is not celibacy itself, especially conceived as a perpetual state. ...a gift is freely and graciously bestowed by God; and gifts are given for the building up of the body of Christ. ...the states of celibacy/singleness and marriage are common gifts of providence to all creation. When Paul talks of ‘gifts’ in his letters, he means those having reference not to creation but to the new creation of the kingdom and the gospel, gifts that carry responsibilities specifically to God and God’s people. The gifts that Paul has in mind in v. 7 refer to the contentedness contributing to a life of service rather than a lifelong calling to ‘eunuch-hood’ (*cf. Matt. 19:12*). That Paul’s ‘gift’ concerns the capacity to concentrate on the work of the gospel without being distracted by sexual desires, whether unexpressed, as in the case of the celibate, or expressed, as for those married, is suggested by what follows in v. 9” (Ciampa & Rosner).
- e. *Verses 8-9* – “Paul expresses his own preference that widows and other single people remain unmarried and his concern that they may not be able to ‘control themselves’ and may ‘burn with passion’” (Ciampa & Rosner).
- f. *Verses 10-11* – “Paul’s counsel seems more directly aimed at dissuading a woman who was thinking of leaving her husband in order to marry someone else (rather than out of a preference for celibacy).
- i. “...most people divorced their spouses in order in order to marry someone else, and there is no reason to think the Corinthians were acting any differently. In fact, Paul’s directive in v. 11 would have little or no dissuasive power if the woman’s intention was in fact to remain celibate and unmarried. It could very well dissuade someone from divorcing their husband, however, if that divorce was being sought in order to marry someone else.
    1. “The incestuous marriage between Herod Antipas and Herodias that was so severely criticized by John the Baptist (*Mark 6:17-18; Matt. 14:3-4; Luke 3:19*) and subsequently cost him his life was one that was entered into only after they had each divorced their prior spouses in order to marry each other. That Jesus describes divorce and remarriage as adultery (*Mark 10:11-12; Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Luke 16:18*) and that in the Sermon on the Mount he discusses this issue immediately after warning that ‘anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart’ (*Matt 5:28*) may reflect this background in which divorce and remarriage frequently served as a way of committing legalized adultery.
  - ii. “In 6:11 Paul admitted that some of them used to be guilty of sexual immorality including specific behaviors as adulterers..., but God had washed and sanctified them, so that they were no longer to be thought of (or acting) in those ways.

- iii. “Paul’s prohibitions of divorce for Christian married couples is based on the teaching of Jesus, which was later preserved in *Mark 10:2-12/Luke 16:18*. ...while *Deuteronomy 24:1-4* presupposes the legitimacy of divorce, other texts disallow it under certain circumstances (*Deut. 22:19, 28-29; Mal. 2:15-16*). Jesus’ teaching on divorce is presented as the authoritative interpretation *Deuteronomy 24:1-4*, and Paul’s appeal to the teaching of Jesus shows that the Old Testament and the Lord’s teaching (which frequently consists of such scriptural interpretations) are both norms for Christian ethics. Paul stands with Jesus in holding that divorce may be justified only where one partner clearly manifests a radical refusal to respect one’s marital commitments and maintain the fundamental integrity of the marriage.
  - 1. “Wives and husbands are not well served by either overly lax or overly restrictive interpretations of biblical teachings on divorce and remarriage, and it is incumbent upon Christian leaders to provide counsel that takes seriously both God’s commitment to the preservation of marriage wherever possible and his commitment to the protection of the vulnerable (those who continue to suffer due to the hardness of human hearts)” (Ciampa & Rosner).
- g. *Verses 12-13* – “...religious differences are no reason to end the marriage. Paul, as his knowledge of Genesis 2:24 (see 1 Cor. 6:16) shows, knew that marriage was a creation ordinance and was not to be willingly dissolved except under extreme circumstances...(cf. *1 Pet. 3:7*).
- h. *Verse 14* – “The notion that holiness rather than uncleanness is contagious has only marginal biblical support (cf. Exod. 29:37; 30:29; Lev. 6:18) prior to the ministry of Jesus. When Jesus touched unclean people, however, rather than becoming unclean himself his own holiness proved contagious, making the unclean clean (e.g., Mark 1:40-44//Matt. 8:2-3//Luke 5:12-14; Mark 5:25-34, 39-42). So also in Paul’s view, perhaps due to the example of Jesus, holiness is more powerful than impurity, at least the holiness that comes through Christ’s sanctifying work. ...Christians live in a new and potent field of God’s holiness that works irrespective of gender. ...Paul differs from rabbinic teaching since, unlike them, ‘he does not rule that offspring born within an exogamous marriage take on the status of the inferior spouse; instead he affirms that the children are ‘holy,’ that is, have full access to the temple constituted by the sanctified community.’ It is the Lord’s sanctioning of their parents’ marriage which accomplishes that and allows them to experience the blessing of living within a community inhabited by the Spirit of God. Both parts of v. 14 serve to support Paul’s injunction to believers in mixed marriages not to divorce their partners (vv. 12b and 13b)” (Ciampa & Rosner).
- i. *Verse 15* – “The unbelieving spouse of a Christian ought to find in them a model of self-sacrificing love that is even more committed to the health of the marriage and to blessing their spouse than ever before, such that only a radical prejudice could explain their unwillingness to continue in the marriage. ...since believers are called to peace, it would be inappropriate for them to be so un-peace-loving as to divorce a spouse who is part of the

sanctified family unit and is willing to live with them (vv. 12-13). Rather than being antagonistic, they should take a peace-loving approach. **Romans 12:18** makes the point of v. 15 more generally” (Ciampa & Rosner).

- j. *Verse 16* – “The context favors an optimistic thrust, since Paul’s main stress is on reasons why such marriages should be preserved rather than abandoned. Verse 16 provides both Christian husbands and wives one more reason for staying in their mixed marriages. Peter certainly gives women hope that wise Christian living might lead to the conversion of their unbelieving spouse (**1 Pet. 3:1-4**). Paul’s point that the unbelieving spouse has been sanctified by their marriage to a believer (v. 14) with the result that they have been brought into an unusually powerful position from which to receive Christian influence and witness in the midst of God’s temple, the ‘sphere in which God’s holiness and transforming power operate,’ would certainly raise one’s hopes for the potential conversion of the unbelieving spouse” (Ciampa & Rosner).

2. 7:17-20 – ETHNIC STATUS

- a. “In Paul’s view, my station in life is under the sovereign and gracious direction of God. He *assigned* it to me and *called me* to it. There is no need to change to improve yourself in relation to God. God does not reckon one condition better than another in terms of serving him. In fact, God placed the Corinthians in these circumstances. The Corinthian Christians’ lot is part of their ‘assignment’ and ‘calling’.
- i. *Verse 19* - “God’s commands” = “the commands to ‘flee sexual immorality’ in **6:18** and ‘glorify God with your body’ in **6:20** dominate chapter 5-7. And it would certainly not be unlike Paul to give this command prominence, as **1 Thessalonians 4:3**, penned by Paul in Corinth, demonstrates [*cf. Galatians 5:6; 6:15*]. ‘Marriage is nothing and singleness is nothing, but keeping God’s commandments is what counts, especially avoiding sexual immorality.’
- ii. *Verse 20* – “As Paul insists in vv. 29-31, human social categories are not ultimate. Those Corinthians who thought that by changing their marital or social status they would enhance their spiritual life are indirectly rebuked by Paul in this verse. Just as there is no need for the Corinthian Christian to change their ethnic status by becoming Jews to live a life pleasing to God, so too there is no need for them to change their marital status to do so” (Ciampa & Rosner).

3. 7:21-23 – SOCIAL STATUS

- a. *Verse 21* – @“Slavery, even benign, would have placed considerable limitations on their Christian lives and service, humanly speaking. Hence Paul’s counsel concerning slavery was more pertinent and concrete than is on circumcision. In other words, they were often the objects of the sexual ‘touching’ of their master [as] the sexual property of their owners. One of the many motivations behind slaves’ desire to achieve freedom (besides the obvious benefits) would have been the ability to exercise some sovereignty over their own sexual behavior and the freedom to enter former and legal marriage. The Corinthian Christian slaves are not to worry about their low status or about presumed negative spiritual

implications resulting from it. If Paul is thinking about the sexual and moral implications of the life of a slave, part of his subtle point would presumably be that slaves are responsible only for those actions over which they have some control, not for those which are forced upon them due to their social status (otherwise they could hardly not be troubled by their situation). The general view of the time was that in these situations slaves were ‘not dishonored or regarded as acting immorally’. Before offering an eloquent explanation for this remarkable counsel in vv. 22-23, the rest of v. 21 considers what to do if the opportunity for freedom presents itself” (Ciampa & Rosner).

- b. *Verse 22* – “The reason not to worry about being a slave, if you don’t have the opportunity to be free, is that *those who were slaves when called to faith in the Lord are the Lord’s freed people; similarly, those who were free when called are Christ’s slaves*. Paul’s point is that ‘all, regardless of worldly social status, are now under the authority of Christ.’ Slaves know better than most that, when it comes to personal identity, the key issue is not who you are but whose you are.
  - c. *Verse 23* – “...*the price* ‘brings the believer into Christ’s own possession as his or her Lord, who then takes over the responsibility and care of the purchased one. The Christian *belongs to Christ*, not to himself or herself.’ This is part of what may be the most fundamental theme of this letter: the lordship of Christ under which all believers are to live their lives. ...Paul means, ‘Do not make yourselves dependent on the value judgments of men.’ [Because,] ‘to become slaves of men would be to regard social or religious status as more decisive than the calling from God in Christ.’ In the context of this particular part of Paul’s letter the most obvious danger of this kind would be that of allowing the cultural prejudices of others regarding singleness or marriage govern one’s own decisions about how best to serve the Lord. ‘Do not let social relations or public opinion or evil advisers interfere with the absolute service which is due to him who bought you with his Son’s blood.’ As such, *do not become slaves of human beings* is a remarkable comprehensive maxim for Christian ethics” (Ciampa & Rosner).
4. **7:24 – KEY ENUNCIATION OF PAUL’S EXHORTATIONS** – *do NOT seek to change your marital, ethnic or social status*
- a. “...the function of which is to reinforce Paul’s advice to be content in one’s life situation. Whether a Christian is married or single, circumcised or uncircumcised, slave or free, makes no difference to God, or more accurately ‘before God’, so there is no need to change. ...vv.17-24 run directly counter to Corinthian preoccupations with social status distinctions and their enhancement.”
    - i. *Cf. Galatians 3:28*
  - b. @NOTE Paul’s pastoral concern and approach, as one example, in his exception of this ‘enunciation’ to slaves because of their ‘belongingness’ to their human masters; to be recipients of their masters’ one-sided sexual desires (aka: ‘touching’ = to use a woman, or any person, as an object for merely sexual gratification; ‘to bang’ or ‘shag’ another to meet one’s own sexual gratification).
5. **7:25-38 “Paul’s Counsel for Single Adults”** – “In vv. 25-38 Paul addresses the question of ‘virgins,’ mainly from the point of view of their potential suitors and

actual fiancés, and he advises them to stay unmarried for three reasons: (1) because of the ‘present crisis’ (7:25-28); (2) because of the end of the world (7:29-31); and (3) because of the distractions of married life (7:32-35). However, this advice is tempered with the proviso of freedom to choose whether or not to marry (7:36-38). Verse 38 sums up Paul’s stance: ‘he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better.’

a. *Verses 25-35* – “Paul is responding to people whose preference would be to marry and who need reassurance from him that he is not adamantly opposed to the idea. He is the one who thinks it would be best for virgins to remain single, but they are free to marry and need to know that if they do they will not be sinning (vv. 25-28). He wants to spare them the troubles they will experience in life if they get married (v. 28). He wants them to be free from the concerns they will experience if they go ahead and marry (v. 32). He is concerned that his words might be interpreted as an attempt ‘to restrict’ them (v. 35)” (Ciampa & Rosner).

i. *Verses 26 – THE ‘PRESENT CRISIS’* – “In any case, in v. 26 Paul is saying that the unusually difficult circumstances in Corinth [perhaps famine] mean that staying single is advisable, at least for the time being. Paul’s advice regarding marriage in this passage may be due as much to the extenuating circumstances in the church as to abstract theological convictions. The wisdom (or not) of marrying or making other critical life decisions that will effect the lives of others may depend on the presence or absence of a more-or-less stable social environment. Important decisions in life (as well as mundane ones), if made wisely, will take into consideration the social context. Times of great social and economic upheaval and instability that reflect the extreme frailty and passing nature of this world (of which our eschatology reminds us) in tangible and threatening ways call for great caution and reflection upon our ultimate goals and mission in life and how such decisions cohere with them. We need wisdom to discern the times and understand our circumstances so as to know the best way to glorify God and avoid putting ourselves or others under unnecessary duress. Paul’s teaching about marriage in 1 Corinthians 7 is a ‘practical reflection on concrete circumstances.’”

ii. *Verse 27* – “The fact that Paul does not recommend a dissolution of the betrothal commitment suggests that at some point in the future (when *the present crises* is over) the couple might, or perhaps should, go ahead with the marriage. The men Paul has in mind in this verse would have been either betrothed to one of the ‘virgins’ mentioned in v. 25, or thinking about finding a virgin to marry. Paul is saying, ‘if you are betrothed to “a virgin” (or married), stay as you are (the Lord’s command applies here); if you are single, do not seek betrothal and marriage.’ The second part of the verse is clearly not addressed to engaged men, but to single men who are not engaged. This supports the view that the passage as a whole is (mainly) addressing single men who may (vv. 27a, 36-38) or may not (vv. 27b-28, 32-35) be engaged already.

- iii. Verse 28 – “Paul is explicitly talking about troubles or afflictions suffered especially by *those who marry*, troubles and afflictions that will not be experienced as fully by single people. In times of ‘crisis’ the blessing of a spouse and children can become a grievous burden. Paul ends the paragraph where he started, judging that for practical reasons (perhaps the impact of famine in Corinth, or some other crisis) it would be better not to marry.
  - iv. Verse 29 – “Paul’s point is that ‘the present crisis’ (the famine) is *like* that of the End, which is approaching; in other words, the present woes of vv. 25-28 are in some sense typical of the parousia woes alluded to in vv. 29-31. The primary purpose of vv. 29-31 is to set the question of whether to marry or not in proper proportion and perspective. According to Paul, being married or not is not central to the Corinthians’ (or our) identity, but rather being ‘in Christ Jesus’ (1 Cor. 1:30). Paul counsels a clear-sighted measure of detachment based on the conviction that the cross has judged the present age and the goal of history looms; such eschatological realities change forever the value to be put on current circumstances and happiness.
  - v. Verses 30-32 – “Heavenly-mindedness does not mean that the Corinthians will no longer need to ‘do business.’ But such activities are not to divert a believer in Christ from the real business of life. Two of the parables of Jesus are especially pertinent here [The Parable of the Great Banquet (*Luke 14:15-24*) and The Parable of the Coming of the Son of Man (*Luke 17:26-37*)]. Material things can cost spiritually. Paul’s advice is not ‘to hold firmly’ to them, to possess them but not to let them possess you. [Instead] live lives of undistracted devotion to the Lord. [Set proper priorities (*cf. Luke 10:40-41* regarding Martha and Mary)].
  - b. Verses 36-38 – “the Corinthian man Paul has in mind clearly ‘feels he ought to marry’; that is what ‘he wants.’ Paul is thinking of a man struggling with ‘control over his own will.’ He feels that those who are not compelled to marry do best not to do so (at least in the context of the temporary crisis in Corinth; see on v. 26), but he wants them to know that he will not blame them if they do” (Ciampa & Rosner).
6. 7: 39-40 “*Paul’s Counsel for Widows*” - “Paul indicates that a widow ‘is free to marry anyone she wishes,’ but it is his view that she would be happier if she stay single” (Ciampa & Rosner).
- a. “*...but he must belong to the Lord.*” – “*However, it would be wrong to take Paul’s words as a universal command. For a Christian to marry someone else in Christ is rather, as Fee puts it, ‘good sense.’ One thing that 1 Corinthians 7 definitely shows is that in many areas of sexual ethics Paul’s teaching cannot be reduced to ‘following orders.’ Elliptical expressions like ‘only in the Lord’ need something to be supplied to be accurately understood; in this case, ‘my advice would be...’ fits the tenor of Paul’s instructions. We do not actually know whether or not the betrothed virgins discussed in vv. 36-38 were believers. It may well have been a complicating factor if men were betrothed to virgins and then converted to Christ before the betrothal was transformed into marriage. The question about virgins may also*

*have arisen in part due to the challenges of finding a spouse from within the Christian community when it was undoubtedly a rather small group. What was a man to do if he did not feel that he could live the life of a celibate single man but there were no good options within the church? The question is not one of sin and not sin, but one of good and better”* (Ciampa & Rosner).

4. **1 Corinthians 8-14 “Issue of Idolatry”** according to Ciampa & Rosner

- a. *Negative Treatment: “Flee Idolatry” (Food Offered to Idols) (8:1-11:1)* – “Paul’s arguments in these chapters are crucial for sorting through such important and perennial issues [as:] Can it be wrong for one believer to watch R-rated movies but alright for another to do so? Or for one to observe the Sabbath but not for another? Or for one to use Eastern medical treatments? Or for one to drink alcoholic beverages? Our understanding is that the problem is not with the food per se, nor merely with the conscience of ‘weaker brothers,’ but with any association with idolatry (sharing in the offering regardless of how one construes it) and the risk of leading others, by example, into idolatry. In chapters 8-10 Paul seems to wrestle with two kinds of idolatry: **subjective** and **objective**. By ‘subjective idolatry’ we mean an occasion when a person consciously participates in an activity that they consider idolatrous. By ‘objective idolatry’ we have in mind people who do not consider themselves idolaters (they do not believe in idols or other gods) who participate in an activity that they consider innocent but which in fact is idolatrous. The ‘knowledgeable’ Corinthians do not realize that they are in danger of leading other believers to commit subjective idolatry and that they themselves are in danger of committing objective idolatry despite their touted knowledge of monotheism. The two groups involved are probably distinguished socially, with those receiving and accepting invitations to temple dinners and denying that the eating of idol food has any spiritual significance being from the upper echelons of Corinthian society. These are the social climbers who are impressed by their own philosophical sophistication and the lack of sophistication of those complaining of them. Those considered ‘weak’ by that first group probably come from the lower social levels and reflect less sophistication and/or respectability (see the discussion on weakness in 8:7-12). ‘In 1 Cor. 10:14-11:1 Paul summarizes and concludes his long, careful discussion of the problem of eating the meat offered to idols (1 Cor. 8-10) in terms of the principles of Christian liberty and the double command of love, the wholehearted devotion to God which excludes idolatry, and the love to neighbors which demands giving up one’s right for the sake of the weak brethren.’ More generally Youngman has summarized the theme of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 as ‘do everything out of love for God and people; restrict the exercise of your rights for the sake of the gospel.’ Such summaries recognize that the double command of love (Deut. 6:5 [*Shema* Deut. 6:4-5]; Lev. 19:18), though not cited here, clearly underlies Paul’s thinking. The more explicit stress on love in 13:1-14:1 and on edification in chapter 14 (and the connection Paul established between them in 8:1) suggests that the double command of love undergirds all of 1 Corinthians 8-14). On food sacrificed to idols (8:1-11:1), simply put, Paul has three basic things to say: (1) in relation to their fellow Christians (8:1-13), the Corinthians are warned not to do anything that might cause someone to stumble by falling into subjective idolatry; (2) in relation to God (9:24-10:22), the Corinthians are warned not to provoke the Lord to jealousy by a lack of self-restraint in the form of participation in objective idolatry (despite their intellectual rejection of any such thing); (3) in relation to their neighbors (10:23-11:1), the Corinthians are told to be careful not to give offense to anyone and to value the glory of God more than the exercise of their own freedom (10:31-11:1).”

- i. Instructions concerning Subjective Idolatry and the Downfall of ‘the Weak’ in Corinth, 8:1-13

1. ***Love Must Take Priority over Knowledge, 8:1-3*** – “The contrast between [verse 2] and the following one suggests that the way one ought to know is related to love. Probably, in light of 13:12, the point is that they are infatuated with abstract theological or philosophical knowledge but remain woefully deficient in their knowledge (and love) of God. True theological understanding, and certainly true knowledge of God, does not lead one to act in a way which is insensitive to others and offensive to God. As Ambrosiaster put it, ‘Only when a person has love can he be said to know as he ought to know.’ If the Corinthians had understood the issues with true Christian insight, they would not need to be reminded of their responsibilities to their brothers and sisters in Christ, nor would they have required warnings to flee idolatry. [Verse 3] contains a surprising twist [as] uses the fact that God knows us as a way of deflating the pride of the Corinthian ‘know-it-alls.’ ...the knowledge that really counts is not one we possess...which ought to promote a proper humility about whatever knowledge we do have. Why does being known by God lead to his unconditional acceptance? How can God know us and yet, given our sinfulness, not reject us? The reason is that he sees us in Christ [cf. \*8:5-6 ‘for us’ who know the One God]. Calvin explains: ‘When God beholds his image in us He does that not by looking at that which He has put into us by nature, but at that which He has put into us by grace.’ Being known by God may be defined theologically as his gracious knowing or regarding of us as we are in Christ. All humans are created in the image of God, yet in one sense only believers in Christ are being renewed in that image and are part of the one new man that is Christ. So too, all humans are defined by being known in the general sense, as relational definitions of anthropology also affirm. However, it is believers in Christ who receive the fullest affirmation of their humanity in being known by God. The reference to the love of God in the context of a controversy over idolatry and monotheism probably echoes Deuteronomy 6:4-5, where the confession that the Lord is the only God is immediately followed by a command to love him with the totality of one’s being. The love of God, reflected in sincere, wholehearted, and exclusive worship of him, is the fundamental mark of his people. To be ‘known by God’ is to be the object of his gracious elective purpose, to be one of his special people, called to serve him in the world and to be held accountable for one’s faithfulness to the mission assigned by God. To know God and to be known by him is to be in covenant with him. In Galatians 4:9 Paul refers to Christian conversion in terms of coming to be known by God. Paul returns to the relationship between human knowledge and being known by God in 13:12, making it clear that the knowledge that must be our ultimate goal is the knowledge of the One who already knows and loves us perfectly.”
  - a. ***Cf. 1 John 4:7-19; Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:34-35***
2. ***\*Christians (unlike Pagans) Acknowledge Only One God and One Lord, 8:4-6*** – “Paul resumes his argument, having broached the subject and undermined any ‘knowledge’ that was not consistent with the love for God or others that is foundational to any Christian ethic.” \**Shema* of Deuteronomy 6:4-5 provides the parallel context for this key statement in 1 Corinthians 8:5-6. “...Paul is simply setting up the interpretation he wants to provide of Deuteronomy 6:4, so that the *one Lord* and *one God* are contrasted with the *many gods and many lords* of the pagan world. This may echo Deuteronomy 10:17, where, just a few chapters after the *Shema*, the Israelites are told, ‘the Lord your God, he is God of gods and Lord of lords.’ That is the only text of the Hebrew Bible where ‘gods’ and ‘lords’ appear in the same sentence as in 1 Corinthians 8:5, and in that sentence Israel’s

God is referred to as both Lord and God (as in the *Shema*), and his superiority over any other hypothetical claimant to that title is strongly affirmed, as in 1 Corinthians 8:5 (cf. Ps. 136:2-3). While the rest of the world may be enamored with a multitude of gods and lords *for us*, that is, for all those who have that knowledge common to all Christians (vv.1,4), things are different. Paul thus simultaneously reaffirms strict Jewish monotheism and the highest possible Christology imaginable. Christ finds his identity within the very definition of that one God/Lord of Israel. Paul is probably highlighting Christ's role in both creation and our participation in new creation. 'Paul is the first to outline a sketch of a formal link between Protology [cosmology] and soteriology which proclaims before the community *God the Father, the originating Ground of all and the end-goal, alongside the one Lord, the Mediator of the first creation and the Mediator of the reality of salvation.*' The structure of [verse 6] implies both a relationship and a contrast between us and the rest of creation. All of creation originated with the Father through the Son. We are part of that creation, and our existence comes from the Father through the Son as well. But both this text and its context highlight a contrast between Christians and the non-Christian world. For them there are *many 'gods' and many 'lords,'* but for us there is only *one God and one Lord.* They are part of God's creation, but we represent the restoration, renewal, and destiny of God's creation, his new creation (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17), which is accomplished through Christ."

- a. One God, the Father = Creation
    - i. *From whom*
      1. *All things* [came into existence]
      2. *And we* [are being brought]
    - ii. *to him*
  - b. And one Lord, Jesus Christ = Re-creation
    - i. *through whom*
      1. *all things* [came into existence]
      2. *and we* [have come into existence (new life)]
    - ii. *through him*
3. ***Subjective Idolatry Is Still a Danger for Some Christians, 8:7-8*** – “It appears that the ‘knowledgeable’ Corinthians do not realize that they are in danger of leading brothers and sisters in Christ to commit subjective idolatry. That is, their example may lead weaker brothers and sisters in Christ to consciously participate in an activity that they consider idolatrous (even though the ‘stronger’ Corinthians do not consider it to be so). The Old Testament and Jewish background suggests that social pressure was the most common instigator of Idolatry in Israel. Food is the object of human action, not a subject whose action need concern us. The problem is not with what the food does to us but with what we might do with some food. The words *we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do* are taken to mean that eating or abstaining is a matter of indifference, something that is morally neutral. It is probably Paul’s point, however, being made in response to a suggestion by some Corinthians that in fact they are worse off if they do not eat food offered to idols and better off if they do (for the sake of maintaining or building relationships outside the church). If they were not going to snub their neighbors and if they were going to advance up the social ladder of Corinthians society, it would have been advantageous to participate in the many important social contexts where idol food would be served. In the Roman world the establishment and nurturing of relationships with wealthier and more well-

connected members of society were important for social and economic survival. Everyone needed to have connections with more influential individuals who might help them navigate through the difficult political, legal, or financial challenges they would face. Paul's response is that the Corinthians need to be more concerned about what will please God (not their pagan neighbors) and benefit their fellow Christians (rather than themselves). By eating idol food (out of concern to please their pagan friends and neighbors) they are putting themselves in danger of divine judgment since their behavior reflects a lack of concern for their brothers and sisters in Christ (cf. v. 7 and the development of the theme in vv. 9-13). By focusing on their social standing with their Corinthian neighbors (rather than the well-being of their Christian brothers and sisters) they have missed the weightier question of what will lead to being better off with God and may do eternal damage to themselves and others. 'Rather than implying that neither eating nor abstaining from idol food makes any difference, [verse 7] lays the foundation for his statement in 8:13, 'I will never eat meat.' Abstinance, in this case, benefits others and oneself. Christians must avoid any behavior that would put the spiritual well-being of others in such grave danger."

- a. The issue here is not about ethics but worship; not about behavior/externals but the heart/internal disposition toward God and brethren in Christ.

4. ***The Corinthians Should Forego Their Rights to Avoid Destroying Other Believers, 8:9-13***

- a. Verse 9 "builds upon and develops Paul's previous statements and should probably not be understood in contrast with the previous verse ['Take care that ...' instead of 'But take care that...']. Paul's language seems to suggest that he accepts that there is a legitimate right in question, but that its exercise must be conditioned by factors the Corinthians have overlooked. ...Paul would agree that Christians do not have to fear idol food and may, in theory, accept any food as a gift from God to be received with thanksgiving. The problem is not with eating food that has been offered to an idol per se, but with eating food that has been explicitly identified by others as idol food. If a weak brother or sister in Christ could fall into subjective idolatry by following the practice of the knowledgeable Christian (or if a pagan could naturally interpret the Christian's behavior as participation in, or affirmation of, idolatry), that practice is to be rejected. The right to eat any food God provides is qualified by the gospel priority of guarding against any possible association with, or complicity in, idolatry. ...the metaphor of the stumbling block was used in the New Testament (mainly by Paul) to describe an obstacle that keeps someone from finding their way to ultimate salvation (Rom. 9:32, 33; 14:13, 20; 1 Cor. 8:9; 1 Pet. 2:8).
- b. "[In verse 10] Paul says that a person with a weak conscience (unstable due to a lack of confidence in the correctness of his or her own convictions or a lack of strength to stand by them) will be [*encouraged*]; literally '*built up*' ] *to eat what is sacrificed to idols*. Probably that is exactly what the 'knowledgeable' Christians think should happen. In their view the weak Christian needs to gain the moral and theological strength necessary to overcome their qualms about eating such food. But Paul has already explained that the so-called edification leads not to greater Christian maturity, as the 'knowing' supposed, but to an idolatrous spiritual

breakdown. Paul introduced the language of ‘edification’ or ‘building up’ in the first verse of this chapter, and he will develop the theme later (**10:23; 14:4, 17**). It is clear that this is not the kind of ‘edification’ that he had in mind!”

- c. Verse 11 – “The sentence structure of v. 11 (in Greek) is arranged to stress the first and last words. The first word in the Greek is the verb ‘is destroyed’; the last word is the verb ‘died.’ In this way the potential effect of the Corinthian approach is contrasted with that of Christ. Christ died to save these brothers, but they are promoting their destruction, all for the sake of their so-called ‘knowledge!’ Paul has been working to get the Corinthians to rethink the relative value they are placing on their special knowledge since the first verse of this chapter (knowledge is puffing you up, but love builds up), and vv. 9-13 continue to force the issue.”
- d. Verses 12-13 - “Recall from the context just what it is that is described as being a ‘stumbling block’ (v. 9), destroying fellow Christians (v. 11), sinning against them and Christ by striking a blow to their weak conscience (v. 12), and causing them to fall (v. 13). All these statements are related to the scenario described in v. 10, where a fellow Christian happens to see one of them having a meal in an idol’s temple and winds up eating idol food as a result. The ‘weak’ Corinthians should certainly refrain from imitating any behavior they consider idolatrous, and would do well to learn, as Paul suggests in **Romans 14:3**, not to judge the strong (at least not on the basis of the history of the food they consume). The ‘strong’ Corinthians should refrain from any behavior that might lead others into subjective idolatry or confirm them in it. They must learn, as Paul asserts in **Romans 14:3**, not to despise the weak.”
  - i. Herein we see the practical working out of the New Commandment Jesus gives His disciples in **John 13:34-35** which defines us and sets us apart as Christians.
  - ii. How do the ‘knowledgeable’ Corinthians who want to exercise their ‘rights’ for their own personal gain within society and at the expense of their brethren in Christ resemble our Western American mentality in asserting our ‘rights’?
  - iii. Carson provides some other practical examples: “First, the kind of situation Paul is facing [in chapter 8] must not be confused with quite a different one. Suppose you are a Christian who, owing to your cultural background, has always engaged in social drinking. Now you move into a circle that is more socially conservative. Some senior saint comes up to you and says, ‘I have to tell you that I am offended by your drinking. Paul tells us that if anyone was offended by what you do, you must stop it. I’m offended; you must therefore stop your drinking.’ The senior saint is simply manipulating you. He (or she) is not a person with a weak conscience who is in danger of tipping on the side because of your example, and thus wounding his weak conscience. Far from it. In his [or her] eyes, he [or she] is the stronger person, not the weaker. To develop a modern example somewhat akin to what Paul faces, we would have to change the story somewhat. Now you have become a youth sponsor in a church. Some of the young people from socially conservative homes see you drinking and, ***against***

the conscience they have developed over such matters, follow suit; in time they become sloppy about all kinds of serious moral issues. You have thus become party to their substantial destruction. Strong Christians may be right on a theological issue, but unless they voluntarily abandon what is in fact their right they will do damage to the church and thus ‘sin against Christ’ (8:12). To stand on your rights may thus involve you in sin after all – not the sin connected with your rights (there, after all, you are right!), but the sin of lovelessness, the sin of being unwilling to forgo your rights for the spiritual and eternal good of others. How can Christians stand beside the cross and insist on their right? Second, Paul...dares offer himself as an example of what a strong Christian should imitate [in verse 13 of chapter 8 which serves as a transition to chapter 9; that]...he cheerfully gives up his rights for the spiritual good of others.”

1. We are exhorted to learn from the Apostle Paul’s example of **“Waiving Rights for the Sake of the Gospel, 9:1-23”** (Ciampa & Rosner) and to become **“World Christians”** (Carson).
  - a. Carson – All Christians “are world Christians – not simply American Christians or British Christians or Kenyan Christian, but...genuine believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the following things are true:
    - i. “Their allegiance to Jesus Christ and his kingdom is self-consciously set above all national, cultural, linguistic, and racial allegiances.
    - ii. “Their commitment to the church, Jesus’ messianic community, is to the church everywhere, wherever the church is truly manifest, and not only to its manifestation on home turf.
    - iii. “They see themselves first and foremost as citizens of the heavenly kingdom and therefore consider all other citizenships a secondary manner.
    - iv. “As a result, they are single-minded and sacrificial when it comes to the paramount mandate to evangelize and make disciples [which involves self-control that is an aspect of the fruit of the Holy Spirit; therefore, this cannot be accomplished apart from the enabling Spirit of Christ].
  - b. “The church, of course, is the only institution with eternal significance. If anyone ought to transcend the limitations of merely temporal allegiances, then those who constitute the church should.”
  - c. This means we must “*waive our rights for the sake of the gospel*” (Ciampa & Rosner).

- i. Chapter 10 Summary Review (Carson): “In the tenth chapter of his epistle, [Paul] absolutely prohibits any involvement in the worship conducted in the pagan temple. Behind idols are demonic forces too dangerous to play with. Besides, you cannot participate in cultic rituals without aligning yourself with the fellowship of idol worshippers. Stay away!”
- ii. Chapter 8 Summary Review (Carson): “Back in chapter 8, however, Paul’s line of thought is more nuanced. On the one hand, he agrees that [eating food offered to an idol] is no compromise in and of itself. The food/meat is not affected.] On the other hand, those who think it *is* a compromise and whose consciences Paul labels as ‘weak’ (because they think something is evil that is not really evil) should not buy and eat such meat. They would be wounding their weak consciences. Paul judges it dangerous for Christians to defy their consciences, because if they get in the habit of ignoring the voice of conscience, they might ignore that voice even when the conscience is well informed and is warning them off something that is positively evil. Doubtless, on the long haul Paul would like these weak Christians to grow in their knowledge of the Scriptures and the gospel so that they will not think something is evil that is not (like eating meat that had been offered to idols); but until they have reached such maturity, they must not defy their own consciences.”
- d. Verses 1-2: Ciampa & Rosner, “...the freedom to which Christ has liberated us is not a freedom to do as we please, but a freedom to serve God and others in the newness and power of the Spirit (cf. chs. 12-14 and Gal. 5:13-26), a freedom to do as we ought. It is freedom to live out the life of Christ in a community that glorifies God as it follows the sacrificial example of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- e. Verses 9-10: “It seems likely that Paul’s use of the argument from the lesser to the greater presupposes a previously established apostolic interpretation according to which apostolic missionaries are understood to be spiritual laborers, sowers, and reapers (*Matt. 9:37-38; 10:10; Luke 10:2, 7; John 4:36-38; Rom. 1:13; 1 Cor. 3:6-9; 9:11; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17-18*). In light of this background

we suggest that Paul has not only his missionary team in mind, but also a biblical principle that applies to all who labor (remember, in v. 8 Paul says that the text he will quote in v. 9 teaches the things he just affirmed in the rhetorical questions of v. 7), and which is applied to him and his team as well as to all apostolic missionaries, since they also fall under the category of field laborers.

- f. Verse 11: “Paul highlights the irony of the contrast between what is sown and what is reaped... The great thing or big deal is not for Paul to *reap a material harvest* but for them to have received the spiritual seed which brought them to life in Christ!
- g. Verse 12 (key): “[Paul] has not made use of [the right to be compensated as a ‘field laborer’ for his gospel proclaiming ministry; noting that a field laborer was considered to be lower-class whose wages were for mere subsistence living] due to his greater concern for the effectiveness of the gospel ministry. A gospel (evangelical) Christian is not someone who merely believes the gospel, but one whose life reflects gospel priorities. [P. Marshall] has also suggested that some Corinthians offered gifts to Paul which was an offer of friendship but which also ‘represented the vested interests of a group for people from the higher ranks in Corinth who wished to put Paul under obligation to them [suggesting] that they were Paul’s patron and he their client. Such a perception would have had potentially disastrous results for the ministry of the gospel. Paul would no longer be free (cf. 1, 19a) to be all things to all people (vv. 19b-22), but would be expected to be what his Corinthian patrons wished. He may also have not felt free to correct them as he saw fit. Others could well think that he represented the interests of the Corinthians who supported him rather than God’s interests or their own. In fact, the language of vv. 13-18 (as well as much else in Paul’s theology) strongly implies Paul’s understanding that God is his patron, and he is under obligation to serve his agenda rather than anyone else’s [cf. ch. 12:4-6]. Paul’s comment that the support he is entitled to would be merely material wealth while the Corinthians have received superior spiritual benefit from him (v. 11), along with the suggestion that he works for the Ultimate Patron, might have suggested to the Corinthians that any idea that they could be his patrons would be to get things backward.

- h. Verses 13-14: “While vv. 7-11 established the right of support for gospel workers on the basis of a preestablished analogy with agricultural field-workers, vv. 13-14 establish the same right based on the parallel between the manner of support of those dedicated to sacred service elsewhere and those dedicated to the service of the gospel of Christ. The command of the Lord Paul refers to, *that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel*, is evidently based on the tradition recorded in **Luke 10:7** and **Matthew 10:10**. As such, the agricultural analogy Paul used in the previous verses is consistent with Jesus’ approach. [As Fee, however, reiterates; the key must be for us what it was for Paul - ‘no hindrance to the gospel’].
- i. \*Verse 18: Carson, “Paul is so concerned to prove his own wholehearted, enthusiastic, voluntary commitment to the task of apostolic preaching to which he has been called, that he chooses to abandon one of his rights. He turns his back on his right to be supported, knowing that his decision will cost him an enormous amount of additional time, effort, labor, and misunderstanding. But it will enable him to preach the gospel ‘free of charge’ and thus model the freedom of grace by the way he serves. It will also enable him to show that he serves, not merely out of compulsion, but out of transformed mind and will, so that by God’s grace he is in fact laying up treasure in heaven. ...Paul is more concerned to demonstrate that he ministers out of a transformed will – out of a passion to serve, not out of a begrudging compulsion. And if the only way he can demonstrate this commitment is by abandoning some of his rights, so be it; Paul will cheerfully abandon them. Thus, Paul’s personal example has an enormous bearing on the relatively minor question raised in 1 Corinthians 8, the question as to whether Christians should eat [food] that had been offered to idols. But the fact of the matter is that Paul’s example extends far beyond the issue of meat offered to idols. It has become his lifestyle; it is the working out in one extraordinary life of what it means to take up your cross and follow Jesus [*cf. Luke 9:23-24*]. It is a demonstration of what it means to be a *world Christian*. We must not stand on our rights. As long as defending our rights remains the [guiding principle] that orders our priorities, we cannot follow the way of the cross. ...we are called to abandon our rights [which can only be enabled by

the Spirit of Christ (cf. *Philippians 2:1-11* & *Galatians 5:22-23*).

- j. \*Verse 19: “But Paul is not interested in setting aside his rights as an end in itself. Paul [even when he exerts his rights; such as when he raises the fact that he is a Roman citizen] is still acting out of a deep principle: he wants to win as many as possible. In some instances, standing on one’s rights may be exactly what is called for. Yet one should always be ready to abandon the appeal to one’s rights. Precisely which is the wisest course of action in a particular crisis may largely be determined by this question about the aim and effect of the options: How will this course of action contribute to, or hinder, the work of the gospel?”
- k. Verse 20: Ciampa & Rosner – “Although Paul understood himself to live under the conditions of the new covenant in Christ rather than under the law of Moses, he was happy enough to observe the law when living among those who might have stumbled if he had not. As Fee puts it, ‘The difference’ between Paul’s behavior ‘and that of his social companions is not in the behavior itself, which will be identical to the observer, but in the reasons for it. The latter abstain because they are ‘under law’; it is a matter of religious obligation. Paul abstains because he loves those under the law and wants to win them to Christ. Despite appearances, the differences are as night and day.’
- l. Verse 22: “It is noteworthy that Paul never says that he ‘became strong to the strong.’ Here Paul is discussing his limited accommodation in ways that would not be offensive to God but that were strategically important for bringing people people into life-transforming contact with the gospel. Of course, the commitment to becoming like those one seeks to save has never been perfectly incarnated as in the case of Christ himself, who ‘became what we are...in order that we might become what he is. Paul follows Christ’s model of taking on the form of a servant for our sakes (**Phil. 2:7, 1 Cor. 9:19**).”
- m. Verse 23 ‘sharing in gospel blessings’: Carson - “[Paul] is saying that he cannot conceive of any other way of being a Christian. He acts this way to promote the gospel, and that surely means his actions will be for the good of his hearers. But to follow the crucified Messiah means Paul must take up his own cross daily, die to self-interest, and serve the One who bought him. One cannot properly promote the gospel any other way. To promote it

this way – by dying to self-interest, giving up all insistence upon the sacredness of one’s rights, and striving to win as many as possible – is to follow Christ crucified, who died, literally, to *his* self-interest, gave up all insistence upon the sacredness of *his* very real rights, and set himself to win men and women from every people and tongue and tribe and nation. There is no other way of following Christ; there is no other way of sharing in the gospel’s blessings. That is the point of the closing paragraph of 1 Corinthians 9.”

- i. **Self-control** – which is an aspect of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. As an athlete, the Christian must also exercise such self-control, by God’s enabling grace, to engage in healthy sexual relationships and diet which are both things of Corinthian dispute.
- ii. Warning regarding Objective Idolatry and the Downfall of ‘the Knowledgeable’ in Corinth, 9:24-11:1
  1. 9:24-27: Ciampa & Rosner, “In our view, if vv. 19-23 indicate that Paul’s adaptive approach to his ministry is for the sake of the effectiveness of the gospel, vv. 24-27 suggest that his disciplined self-restraint keeps him from failing to receive the ultimate prize. [Key – It’s all Christ, both conversion and our on-going transformation by His enabling Holy Spirit (cf. *Philippians 1:6; Galatians 5:22-24*)].
    - a. “Paul is urging the Corinthians to ‘run’ the Christian life in such a way, in this case *by exercising proper self-control* (the emphasis in vv. 25-27) , as to obtain the eschatological reward [cf. ‘self-control’ as a characteristic of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in *Galatians 5:22-24*] (Fee). As Pfitzer emphasizes, the following verses will clarify that the way to run in order to win is through the discipline of self-control. Hays rightly reminds us that Paul’s argument does not suggest that the body is the enemy of the spiritual life; ‘rather it is the *instrument* of that life’ and ‘the *punishment* of the body refers to grueling training for the contest, seeking to bring the body to peak efficiency. To ‘enslave’ the body means, in this context, to devote it unreservedly to God’s service through service to others (cf. *9:19*), not to practice self-denial for its own sake. These verses bring to mind Paul’s imperative to ‘honor God with your bodies’ in *6:20* and the central role it plays in *chapters 5-7*. Paul’s high view of the body, in the light of the resurrection of Christ, is a pervasive theme in the letter.”
  2. 10:1-13 “demonstrates that the history of Israel shows that those who lack self-restraint are condemned. The Corinthians need to learn the dire lesson from Israel’s history and find God’s way out of their temptation to follow the same destructive path.
    - a. Verses 1-4 “discuss the redemptive blessings experienced by the whole community of Israel as parallels to those blessings experienced by Christian believers.
    - b. Verses 5-10 “discuss Israel’s experience as a warning for ‘us’ in light of the fact that God’s judgment fell on *most* of Israel due to the various things that *some* of them did [at different occasions throughout the

wilderness wandering the involved idolatry and, secondarily, sexual immorality. The result was that the majority of Israel remained scattered throughout the wilderness leaving only Joshua and Caleb remaining of the generation who witnessed Yahweh's great Redemption and Deliverance of His People from Egyptian bondage. While all of this generation were participates in the Exodus event and were sustained by God's ***Spiritual food and drink*** throughout their wilderness wanderings (note the Rock of Christ Who was with them throughout their wanderings in the desert), only a few (represented by the pair of Caleb and Joshua) did not fall in the desert as a result of participating in the ***profane food and drink offered to idols***].”

- i. Note Paul's analogous association of Israel with Christians (as God's People existing within the last days of eschatological fulfillment; Isaiah's second exodus theme) is grounded on fundamental biblical typology. Thus, this is a typological association which undergirds that which we, as Members of the New Covenant, are to learn from Israel's past and that Christ fulfilled as the True and perfect Israel, Son of God.
- ii. “It may be important that Paul does not explain how the Israelites conceived of the behavior he cites from **Exodus 32:6** [in verse 7]. He simply states that they ‘sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.’ Whether they thought of themselves as worshipping the Lord or worshipping other gods may not be as relevant as we or the Corinthians might tend to assume [according to our fallen, impartial, and immature ‘knowledge’]. They were participating in idolatrous behavior whether the conceived of it that was themselves. This may be an important warning for modern readers who cannot imagine how ancient peoples ever practiced idolatry. Modern people do not tend to give idols any more credence the some of the [‘knowledgeable’] Corinthians did. That does not exempt them or us from the dangers of behaving in idolatrous ways. We are not innocent simply because we ourselves would not conceive our relationship to those other things in society that fascinate us and compete for our loyalties and our priorities as idolatry. As Martin Luther affirmed, reflecting on the first commandment in his Larger Catechism, ‘whatever your heart clings to and relies upon, that is your God; trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and idol.’ We may broaden Luther’s definition to include the biblical themes of love and service: a god is that which one loves, trusts, and serves above all else [aka: ‘idols of the heart’].”

1. Note that, while some have also seen sexual immorality within the worship of the golden calf present in Exodus 32:6, idolatry is the main, if not only, offense there. This is in contrast to the clear and gross sin of sexual immorality addressed in verse 8 which alludes to **Numbers 25:1-9** which, nevertheless, took place within the context of idolatrous meals (*cf.* Numbers 25:2). Thus, sexual immorality and idolatry are tied together as demonstrated within 1 Corinthians as a whole, and they lead to one

another through a lack of *self-control* ('restraint') enabled by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24). These temptations are not unique but prevalent within all humanity (cf. verse 13).

- iii. Verse 12; ref. *Proverbs 3:5-6*
  - c. Verses 11-13 "conclude the passage with a final warning. The reference to the 'way out' [in this verse] and the call to *flee* in v. 14 [conjures up the image...of a seemingly defenseless people trapped between an attacking army and the shore of a sea who are urged to flee at all speed through a **divinely provided** opening in the sea (cf. Exodus 14)].
3. 10:14-22 "argues that those who worship God must refrain from any association with idolatry. Paul's exhortation to 'flee idolatry,' which serves as a summarizing plea for this whole section, is unpacked in such a way as to warn the Corinthians against allowing others to associate them with idolatry in any way. In this section the emphasis falls on the particularly egregious issue of participating in meals offered in idol temples and Paul's adamant opposition to that practice.
- a. [*Reference sermon given on **Luke 22:14-23 "The Lord's Supper: Explanation & Implications"** contained in this 1 Corinthians outline electronic file.*]
  - b. "Paul does not suggest that the Corinthians (like the Israelites) were themselves tempted to (consciously or intentionally) offer sacrifices to pagan gods (what we have called 'subjective idolatry'), but he does indicate that by knowingly partaking in meals where sacrificial food was consumed they are still to be considered participants in the sacrifices themselves (which we have called 'objective idolatry'), establishing the relevance of his argument in vv. 16-18 to his use of **Deuteronomy 32:17**. Paul's argument suggests that the problem is not with the food (or drink) itself, but with the social and spiritual significance of eating (or drinking) it in contexts that may naturally be understood as condoning and/or participating in the pagan offering itself. On the issue of eating food offered to idols the Corinthians reason purely on the basis of the nature of the food. Paul argues on the basis of the potential significance of the act of eating it. Paul's statement, *I do not want you to be participants with demons*, reflects the connection between vv. 15-19 and the first part of [verse 20]. If pagan offerings are actually offerings made to demons (and neither to gods, as the pagans suppose, nor to 'thin air,' as some Corinthians suppose), to knowingly and intentionally eat food from that offering in a context where it is acknowledged as such is to establish oneself as one in communion with those demons (whether knowingly or not). Corinthians who do participate in such meals have fallen into the same error as the Israelites who practiced pagan idolatry in the instance of the golden calf."
  - i. Ref. theology of demons (*shedim*) in relation to Genesis 6:1-4 as the departed spirits of these Nephilim/Rephaim (demi-gods; divine/human half-breed rulers who may likely have been behind the thinking of later emperor/king worship; they desire to be embodied, via possession, and/or to be worshiped, via idolatry) who are the offspring and descendants of the Watchers (lesser 'gods'/*elohim*; fallen angelic beings; 'sons of God') and human women.

4. 10:23-11:1 “urges that freedom be used for (and not to the detriment of) the glory of God. Here our interpretation differs from that of Fee and others who think Paul objects only to Christian participation in meals which take place in the precincts of an idol temple as well as others who think Paul took an even more tolerant view. While idol food in the meat market and in meals hosted in private homes raises more complex questions and requires a more nuanced answer, Paul’s basic response is to urge the Corinthians to avoid any practice that would allow others to associate them with idolatry in any way. This is for the sake of the spiritual well-being of those who are making up their minds about the possibility of serving God and/or idols. It is not their personal freedom which is to be their ultimate concern, but the glory of God.
- a. Note: “Paul is concerned only about food which is explicitly identified as having been offered to idols.”
    - i. ***Don’t Ask; Don’t Tell*** ...when shopping or dining at a guest’s dinner party. If someone identifies the food or drink as being offered to an idol, do not buy it nor consume it. If that occurs at a dinner party over a specific food or drink, the Christian is to either abstain from that dish or, if abstaining from a certain dish is not an option, the Christian is expected to withdraw him/herself during that portion of the banquet. Such occasional withdrawal could serve as an opportunity to share the gospel with other guests, including the host, regarding the Christian not eating or drinking items offered to idols behind which are demons. Furthermore, one could either inform the Christian that certain food or drink had been offered to an idol out of consideration for their monotheism, thus giving them the opportunity to abstain or excuse themselves; or, their informing the Christian could be out of interest to see how the Christian will respond. If the Christian knowingly partakes of food/drink offered to idols (especially because they desire to exercise their *rights* to do so over and above glorifying God and promoting the gospel out of love for Him and others), then with the Jew, he/she could give Jews further reasons for avoiding Christians and thus not hearing the gospel, with the Gentile, he/she could validate their pagan piety towards idols to their destruction, and with the “weaker” brethren within the Church, violate their conscience by encouraging them to engage in subjective idolatry.
    - ii. ***Psalm 24*** – Paul references in verse 26, and this Psalm was used to thank God for one’s food.
      1. Verse 1 highlights that all things are from God, including food and drink which we should feel free to eat regardless of its ‘religious’ history.
      2. Verse 4, however, highlights God’s sovereignty, and all His People are to avoid any association with idolatry.
        - a. Thus, this highlights the exception of when one should eat and drink freely; when they have been explicitly informed that such food or drink has been offered to idols/demons.
    - iii. ***Isaiah 53:11-12 LXX*** – Christ, the Suffering Servant, gave Himself for the good of the many.
      1. “God’s glory is served by the progress of the gospel.”

2. Underlying this section is the Two Great Commandments, which must take precedent over exercising one's legitimate rights so as not to cause others (Jews, Gentiles, 'weaker' brethren) 'to stumble' (aka: impede their salvation).
  3. This is what glorifies God. This is what Christ accomplished in His humiliating incarnation and death for our salvation. It is by His indwelling and enabling Spirit that we repent and deny ourselves likewise in such God-honoring service to His glory and honor.
- b. *Positive Treatment: "Glorify God" in Your Worship (11:2-14:40)*
- i. Chapter 11, Verses 4-6 (7-16): "References to shame in husband-wife or male-female relationships most often have to do with the transgression of some sexual expectation."
    1. Men with long hair=homosexual
    2. Women without their hair covered=sexually suggestive and promiscuous. "There is sufficient evidence to suggest that women's hair was understood to be an object of intense sexual attraction and even possibly as part of her genitalia. ...'a chaste woman was one who kept her hair covered'."
    - a. Today's parallel could be very revealing clothing; such as that would become popular through an upper class celebrity fashionably sporting at the Academy Awards that's provocative yet catches on in the mainstream which eventually ends up present within the Christian Assembly for worship.
      - i. "We have argued that in this letter Paul is concerned, above all, with the infiltration of Roman and Corinthian values and lifestyles into the church. Of special interest is the influence of sexual immorality and idolatry for which pagan Gentiles were infamous in Jewish thinking. A move toward the abandonment of the female head covering would have struck many at the time as a move toward a more licentious, a more sexually provocative, way of appearing in public, precisely the kind of social influence Paul is anxious to avoid."
        1. Therefore, at a minimum, we may conclude that Paul at least expected a woman to cover her head while praying or prophesying during corporate worship, if not throughout the entire Service.
  3. "Thus by passing on a tradition that entailed maintaining the traditional antithetical gender distinctions in the public display or covering of the head, Paul would both provide the minimal gender distinction that would be expected in any worship context and also avoid any suggestion that Christian women were promoting the sexual looseness of the 'new Roman women' who were known for their disregard of the traditional marks of female modesty and purity."
  4. *Shame verses Glory* (Chapter 11, Verses 7-16)
    - a. "...shame and honor may be transmitted from the wife to the husband (and in our text, through the husband to Christ and God). While the shame was probably based on an association with nakedness, the humiliation of having a woman's hair shaved off may also have to do with the suggestion that she has forfeited her very identity as a woman (which is marked by the possession of her hair) similar to the way in which a married woman's failure to cover her head in public could be understood as suggesting that she had forsaken her identity as a married woman. In the case of the

lesbian the move indicated a desire to abandon a female identity for that of a man. Paul does not want anyone to suffer *disgrace* in the congregation's worship, so the option of having the woman shave her head is not a real one, but it would have a similar effect to her uncovering her head, since in the latter case she would dishonor her head (cf. v. 5). **Head** in this last case probably refers both to her own head/self and also to her husband, who also serves as her head. She would bring shame on herself and her husband. The only real option, if honor is to be maintained for all those participating in the worship experience (and thus, presumably, for God to be honored as well), is for the woman to cover her head, at least when she prays or prophesies in church. It is important because it is appropriate for the glory of God to be reflected in worship, but not that of a man. For man's glory (the woman [because she was created from and for man]) to be uncovered in worship does not bring glory to him and/or God but shame."

- i. A parallel today could involve a man's wife who dresses provocatively and behaves flirtatiously among the congregation of Believers, even during worship and, more so, when she has an active part within the Assembly for the worship Service. She brings negative attention to herself which brings shame to her husband who she is supposed to glory/image. This is the reason why she should have her head covered; because, she is the glory of the man/husband, and the man's glory is not to be present within the Assembly (much less when the woman brings not glory, but shame, to him) which is called to be focused on God's glory as represented in the man who should not have his head covered nor have long hair like that of a woman who is called to be a proper reflection of man.
- ii. Verses 7-10: "Paul is dealing with proper behavior and adornment in the context of Christian worship. Paul's ultimate point seems to be that nothing should happen in worship that would detract from God's glory, including behavior that would draw attention to the glory of man. Hooker points out that the women's head should be covered 'not because she was in the presence of man, but because she was in the presence of God and his angels – and in their presence the glory of man must be hidden.'
  1. "The dress code that Paul had in mind was not seen merely as a symbolic expression of gender distinction to be manifested for the sake of respect...but was, at least in Paul's context, understood to be essential to avoiding the infiltration of anything that might distract worshippers' attention away from the glory of God. Clearly gender distinctions are important to Paul, and they are most certainly to be maintained by the church. Paul's concern, however, is ultimately with the need for an exclusive focus on God's glory (which would certainly be diminished by any apparent disrespect for gender distinctions in worship) which jealousy avoids the promotion of human glory, and even more zealously avoids any behavior which would

inappropriately introduce shame into the context of Christian worship.”

2. **Angels** – “According to significant Jewish tradition, angels were the guardians of creation order, and some therefore suggest that Paul was concerned to make sure nothing in the worship service would offend them. In the presence of the angelic protectors of the purity of divine worship [Note: the whole company of heaven sings ‘holy, holy, holy’] the veil [which likely only covered the hair] allowed women simultaneously to respect the men/husbands in the congregation and freely exercise a newly found authority to pray and prophesy alongside them in the sacred space of the church gathered for worship.”
  - a. “*The New Creation has Dawned*” (cf. **Joel 2:28-32** and the new covenant outpouring of the Holy Spirit)...”Ideally, Christian women were worshipping side-by-side with the men of the community, even praying and prophesying along with the men, but in a way that did not bring shame or disgrace on those men or anyone else. They were worshipping in a way that respected the proper decorum expected in the presence of God and his angelic attendants, such that the community’s full attention was on the glory of God without being distracted by either human glory or shame. It is just possible that Paul is thinking of behavior which is not only acceptable to the angels but also of behavior by which ‘the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places’ by the church as men and women (as well as Jews and Gentiles) worship God together as one (**Eph. 3:10**).”
  - b. **Psalm 8** – “...which understands the creation of mankind in Genesis 1 to entail human dominion (authority), having been ‘made a little lower than God [or the heavenly beings; LXX = angels] and crowned with glory and honor.’ John Paul Heil says that ‘the woman should take account not only of her creational status as the glory of man, but also of the creational status of both men and women as having glory and honor that approached that of the angels.’ He cites Psalm 8 and suggests that a woman ‘should exercise authority over her head by having it covered...not only to maintain her status as the glory of man (11L7b), but also to do her part in order that both men and women can maintain their lofty creational status of glory and honor that is just short of that of the angels (11:10b).’ While in the future the Corinthians will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3), in the meantime they find themselves just

below the angels, who zealously guard the honor and glory of God. By wearing her veil during public worship the woman signals her own status as created by God even while covering up any trace of human glory in the presence of God and his angelic court. The woman's head is not one over which others have authority [which the ESV properly communicates in its translation of verse 10]. God has granted her authority to pray and prophesy. She exercises that authority in a dignified way by respecting both herself and the rest of the congregation through the avoidance of provocative attire or any dress or behavior which would bring shame on herself, others, or God, in a context where all eyes and every heart should be focused on God's glory in the midst of his holy people."

b. Chapter 11, Verses 11-16:

- i. Reference my writing on the Ordination of Women that includes Ciampa and Rosner's commentary on Paul's argument from Creation that woman proceeds from man and is created for him which illustrates a creational hierarchy; something that is only fully and properly experienced, along with *new creational* equality "established by the gospel," through Spirit-enabled and Word-defined complimentary roles between the sexes *in the Lord*.
- ii. Such complementarity between man and woman was intended at Creation, prior to the Fall, and is restored properly and progressively, only by grace, in the New Creation of the Church inaugurated by Christ at His first coming. This should be appropriately expressed in the Church's corporate worship; a pre-Fall relationship between man (Adam) and woman (Eve).
- iii. In verses 14-15, it is likely that 'Paul is suggesting that the pattern established by nature or human custom provided a clue that women's heads should be covered. As Watson argues, 'the point is that women's long hair (as opposed to men's short hair) is *analogous* to the additional covering represented by the veil. In seeking to impose this extra covering on women but not men, Paul is following the example of nature [or convention] itself, which has similarly seen fit to provide women with an extra covering. These verses continue to reflect the concerns for shame and honor that have marked the whole passage. For a man to have long hair is a *disgrace*, but a woman's long hair is her *glory*. The covering of her head may be understood to cover her glory so that only God's glory is recognized in the worship setting, or it could be understood to be a glorious sign of the authority that she has to worship side-by-side with the men of the community (cf. Psalm 8, where mankind is 'crowned with glory and honor'). Paul would have the women think of their head coverings as a sign of their honor, and would have them know that to omit it would be to bring them disgrace (just as long hair would bring disgrace to a man). Since glory is something reflected in kings and other royalty or

bestowed by royalty, that God has bestowed *glory* on the woman, in the form of her hair, supports the idea that the authority mentioned in v. 10 is her own [as illustrated in the ESV's translation of verse 10. Thus, the function of the veil seems to extend] beyond the simple 'cloaking of man's glory' to the cloaking of the women's beauty. Since she has been bestowed with glory, she should cover her head with a veil as a sign of the authority she has received."

1. Simply put, the woman's veil is like her New Creational and New Covenant **Crown** granted by God through the gospel of Jesus Christ which reverses the loss of dignity and sinful power struggles that dishonor God as a result of the Fall and restores them to the intended pre-fall state with the hopeful anticipation of an elevation of that state above the angels, who we will judge, upon Christ's Return and consummation of His Kingdom now inaugurated.

ii. Chapter 11, Verses 17-34:

1. Ref. "**Infant Baptism & Children at the Table**" paper included in this electronic file.
2. **Reference sermon given on Luke 22:14-23 "The Lord's Supper: Explanation & Implications"** contained in this 1 Corinthians outline electronic file.
  - a. Like in the preaching of the 'cross of Christ' as the wisdom of God, 'the identity of the meal cannot be distinguished from the manner in which it is carried out.'
3. **"The good the meetings *should* have done would be, according to the broader context, that of building up the church through love (8:1; chs. 12-14), bringing glory to God (10:31), and receiving his [God's] approval (11:19)."**

iii. Chapter 12 – "introduces the issues of spiritual gifts and their function within the body of Christ"

1. 1-3: "it is the Spirit who causes one to recognize the lordship of Jesus Christ and reject idolatry and other apostatizing influences."
  - a. The Corinthians previous pagan "spiritual experiences were thoroughly marked by deception...[and] completely untrustworthy as a guide to the ways of the one true God they have now come to know in and through Christ. ...Paul recognizes the urgency of having that ignorance replaced by a proper understanding of how the Holy Spirit works in the lives of God's people."
2. 4-11: "That it is the same /one Spirit/Lord/God who acts in various ways in the community [and who provides the church with a diversity of gifts] is stressed."
  - a. "The understanding of these special abilities as *gifts* ('given' by God, v. 7) may be particularly significant in light of the patronage system in the Roman world, where a patron was expected to receive praise and glory from his or her clients for their lavish generosity. First, it suggests how the spiritual gifts in chapters 12-14 tie in to the motif of the proper worship of the one true God (who should be recognized [and glorified] as the infinitely generous patron of the community). As deSilva stresses, 'The first component of a fulsome response of gratitude is simply giving thanks to the Giver.' It entails 'proclamation of God's favors and publicly acknowledging our debt' as we 'simply and honestly give God public praise for the gifts and help we have received from God.' It also relates to

the idea that the proper worship of God would naturally call for a similar lavish use of spiritual gifts for the well-being of the other members of the community. That a ‘prominent kind of exhortation in the New Testament promotes imitation of the virtues and generosity displayed by God and Jesus’ is natural since one is expected ‘to respond in accordance with what benefactions one has received,’ which would mean sharing our gifts with others as generously as God has shared them with us. De Silva applies this directly to spiritual gifts: “Divine endowments of this kind (whether teaching, prophetic utterance, wisdom, tongues or even monetary contributions) become opportunities and obligations for service. The proper response to receiving such gifts is not boasting (1 Cor. 4:7), which in effect suppresses the acknowledgment that these qualities stem from God’s endowment, but sharing God’s gifts with the whole church and the world. We are to exercise stewardship of the varied gifts that God has granted with the result that the honor and praise offered to God increases (1 Pet. 4:10-11; see also Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:7-16).”

- b. “That the Spirit would be manifest in *each one* was already suggested by *Joel 2:28-29* as well as *Ezekiel 36:26-27; 37:14*, and may be understood as the fulfillment of the desire expressed by Moses in *Numbers 11:29* (cf. *Isa. 32:15; 44:3*). We argued above that the passage from Joel (with its explicit reference to pouring out the Spirit on men and women) probably played a key role in informing Paul’s argument in *11:2-16*.”
- c. “Prophecy seems to be more highly occasion- or situation-focused. That is, it tends to be a responsive phenomenon. It is not about the passing on of traditional teaching and ethics, but the communication of a divine message that is understood to be especially given as a response to and tailored to the special needs and issues of those gathered to hear it. As will become clearer in chapter 14, Paul understood prophetic ministry to be essential to the building up of the church. The presence of the prophetic word in the ministry of the church was one of the sure signs that the Spirit had been poured out and that the end of the ages had arrived (*Joel 2:28-29*).”
- d. “Much of our fascination with this gift [of tongues] probably misses the point. Whether modern tongue-speaking is the same as that practiced in Corinth or not (and regardless of the nature of ancient or modern tongue-speaking) the questions have to do with whether a Christian congregation recognizes it as a gift from God that can be used in public to strengthen (build up) the body of Christ or in private for personal edification. Given Paul’s emphasis on the diversity of gifts that God was showering on the church (and can be expected to shower on the church) for its well-being, we cannot be content simply to try to understand the experience of the ancient Corinthian church but must be prepared to recognize the gifts God may be giving to members of our own congregations (be they the same of different from those given in Corinth) and to sort out how they might best be employed for the building up of the whole body of Christ. ... 1 Corinthians 13:1 seems to suggest that Paul has some kind(s) of language(s) in mind (human and/or angelic). In a case where what is being interpreted (or translated) are ‘tongues’ or ‘languages’ rather than signs, groanings, or some other thing, preference should probably be given

to the suggestion that the term refers to the translation or interpretations of whatever language is being spoken.”

3. *12-31*: “emphasize the oneness of the body which is constituted by the Spirit. The main emphasis of the chapter, then, turns out to be the oneness of the Christian community based on the oneness of the God/Lord/Spirit who establishes and serves as the patron of the community (in implied contradistinction to divisions, or at least lack of unity, that might be expected to exist among pagans pursuing diverse blessings from different patron gods/idols, each presumed to offer different benefits/gifts to its followers.”
  - a. Verses 12-14: “introduce the theme [of the church as Christ’s body] with an emphasis on the idea that one body has many parts [aka: members].”
    - i. (vv. 13-14) – “If these two statements are to be read in light of each other [as a piece of Semitic parallelism, where both clauses make essentially the same point], the drinking or drenching with the Spirit is the experience of the Spirit that is also referred to as the baptism by or of the Spirit here and elsewhere. All of this is our experience as believers now that the Spirit has been poured out as the prophets promised (**Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28-29**).
    1. “...one is united with Christ by the Spirit in \*baptism in a way which is analogous to the union of man and woman into one flesh or body (Gen. 2:24). All share one S/spirit and therefore have been incorporated into one new man who partakes of the resurrection life in which the former distinctions no longer carry the same significance. All those who have been united to Christ have become part of the same body – Christ’s body.”
      - a. \*baptism – “Whether Spirit baptism and/or water baptism need not detain us since both were associated with the [new covenant] conversion experience, with the later serving as ‘the outward and visible sign’ of the former (Bruce, 121, cited in Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 43).”
  - b. Verses 15-26: “focus on the interdependence of all the parts of the body, with verses 15-20 approaching the subject from the perspective of those who perceive themselves to be inferior members of the community and with verses 21-26 approaching the subject from the perspective of those who perceive themselves to be superior members of the community.”
    - i. “To disparage or deny one’s own place in the body (or anyone else’s) is to insult God’s wisdom and sovereign choice. One could imagine a comparison between a car’s oil drain plug and its electronic ignition system. One is low-tech (and unimpressive) as could be, while the other is highly sophisticated. But a car won’t last long without its oil drain plug no matter how impressive its ignition system! The thought of treating *the parts that we think...less honorable...with special honor* and those *that are unpresentable...with special modesty* reinforces the point of **10:24**: ‘No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.’ That was part of doing whatever one did (whether eating or drinking or whatever) ‘all for the glory of God’ (**10:31**). [Verses 24b and 25

point] out that when God himself put the body together, he gave ‘greater honor to the parts that lacked it.’

- c. Verses 27-31: “complete this section by reinforcing the point that each believer is a member of the body (v. 27), highlighting a number of functions members might have within the body (v. 28) and the fact that no function is carried out by all members of the body (vv. 29-30), and by introducing the idea of proper priorities in thinking about the pursuit and use of the gifts (v. 31).”
  - i. “...prophets seem to have been more attuned to the particular message a church needed to hear at any given moment while teachers were expected to pass on the same Christian teaching that needed to be learned by all believers in all places.”
    1. “Paul’s argument in chapter 14 will attempt to tip the balance away from an emphasis on tongues, toward a larger number of people exploring and exercising the gifts of prophecy and teaching (note esp. 14:6, 26).”
  - ii. In verse 31, “Paul prepares for his focus on love in the following verses. It seems best not to think that Paul was talking about pursuing love as a way to gain greater gifts rather than the way to live and prioritize life, but as one uses one’s gifts in constant loving service to others, God may see fit to provide further enablements to allow one’s service to be even more creative and effective [with the overall purpose of building up the church to the glory of God]. Chrysostom points out that this most excellent way is different from the gifts in that it ‘is open and common to all,’ while ‘the gifts are entrusted to some these, to others those, but not all to all people.’ In that sense, love ‘is a universal gift.’”
    1. **John 13:34-35**
- iv. Chapter 13 – “at the heart of the chiasmic structure, is also at the heart of Paul’s ethical thrust throughout this letter. [Here, Paul] stresses the importance, nature, and permanence of love, which is the only proper basis for the use of the gifts.”
  1. Ref. **John 13:34-35**
    - a. Note the exercise of replacing ‘love’ with Jesus’ Name to show the divine personification of love which is juxtaposed to our inability to love that can be noted by replacing the word ‘love’ with our own names to demonstrate how far we have fallen from such perfect love revealed perfectly in Jesus.
  2. “The chapter is primarily about living in the Christian community in a way that glorifies God, and that is by learning to treat other members of Christ’s body the way God has treated us – with self-sacrificing, other-oriented love. This is what has come to be referred to as *agape* love, based on the Greek word used for it here. That word is used ten times between 13:1 and 14:1. ...its basic meaning...is ‘warm regard for an interest in another.’ The key sources for such understanding are the love commands of the Old Testament and Christ’s example of self-sacrificing love for others (**Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; Rom. 5:8; 14:15; 2 Cor. 5:14; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:4; 5:2, 25**). A willingness to sacrifice one’s body or life for the benefit of others is a fundamental Christian value, one that is ultimately sustained by the message of the resurrection of the dead, which is extensively defended in chapter 15. It is the promise of the resurrection which warrants whatever sacrifice we might make as we live out our love for God and others. Thanks to the promise of the resurrection, we know that

all our labors of love are not in vain (**15:58**), but will result in great gain (**13:3b**). In contrast with vv. 1-3 and 8-12, which compare love with qualities of spiritual gifts, these four verses are marked by an ‘exclusive concentration’ on love’s qualities. They are also distinct in their rhetorical style since ‘the encompassing sections contain sentences with a complex grammatical structure, but those in Paul’s central section are short and simple.’ Both of those observations support the point made earlier, that this chapter reflects a chiasmic structure with these verses [4-7] serving as the centerpiece of the chiasm. These four verses also reflect a chiasmic structure, with positive affirmations about love found in vv. 4a-b and v. 7 and negative affirmations in vv. 4b-6. ...Matthew Elliott observes: ‘Love is an emotion. As with any emotion, a Christian worldview will have unique reasons for love and distinct ideas about what action and behavior it should motivate.’ 1 Corinthians 13 elaborates on these behaviors. Horrell notes that the expression ‘other-regard’ serves as ‘a concise way of defining what love implies, according to Paul.’ Another way of putting it might be to say that love entails ‘being for someone.’ Just as God, who loves and knows us fully (v. 12), is ‘for us’ in **Romans 8:31**, which in context, Paul implies, is equivalent to ‘the love of God that is in Christ Jesus’ (**Rom. 8:39**), the two expressions forming an inclusion for the unit **Romans 8:31-39**. It is God’s love for us which serves as the model and foundation for the love we have for him and each other, and that love is seen and felt in the fact that he is for us. Love is what Paul has been talking about through much of this letter. He signaled the theme back in **8:1**, and although he did not use the term in **chapter 9**, the description he gives there of the way he relates to others will, on the basis of his description of love here, now be seen as one of further examples of loving behavior. In these verses, Paul personifies love, describing it not by way of adjectives, but through verbs – in terms of its behavior. As Spicq argues, while other kinds of love, like those extolled by society today, ‘can remain hidden in the heart, it is essential’ to Christian love ‘to manifest itself, to demonstrate itself, to provide proofs, to put itself on display. Interestingly, Paul spends more time on what love does not do than on what it does. As most commentators have noted, this is in large part due to the fact that Paul’s comments about love here are not based on some abstract, context-free meditation on the subject, but on providing a stinging contrast to the behavior of some Corinthian Christians. Most, if not all, of the descriptions of love given here reflect concerns Paul has with the church in Corinth. As others have pointed out, ‘omitting the negatives in each clause leaves us with a good description of the Corinthians’ behavior. The theocentric nature of love in [verses 4-7] was mentioned above. In light of that, it is not surprising that the attributes of love that Paul describes in these verses are also ‘qualities generally attributed to God’ [referring back to the practice of replacing the word ‘love’ with Jesus in these verses]. Love is at the heart of this section dealing with the proper worship of the one true God because that God has manifested himself to us in the love of Christ and expects his loving nature and work in our lives to be reflected in our relationships with one another. The eschatological nature of Paul’s thinking about love is evident throughout [verses 8-13]. He uses a variety of images to distinguish between that which is permanent and that which, being temporary, will pass away. Hays points out that ‘love is mentioned only in the beginning and end of the unity (vv. 8a, 13); all the intervening material (vv. 8b-12) highlights the temporary status of spiritual gifts, especially tongues, prophecy, and knowledge (vv. 8b-9),’ thus confirming that the chapter as a whole and this unit in particular

were ‘composed to deal with the specific problem of the evaluation of spiritual gifts’ and not as a general ‘hymn to love.’ For Paul, love, as Wright explains, ‘is not so much a virtue to be worked at, though it is surely that as well, as the ultimate bridge, in terms of human character, from present Christian living into the future kingdom.’ Thus, ‘this exquisite chapter looks forward...to the final discussion, which will concern the resurrection, the new world that God will make, *and the continuity between the resurrection life and life here and now*. The point of 13:8-13 is that the church must be working *in the present* on the things that will last *into God’s future*. Faith, hope and love will do this; prophecy, tongues and knowledge, so highly prized in Corinth, will not. They are merely signposts to the future; when you arrive, you no longer need signposts. Love, however, is not just a signpost. It is a foretaste of the ultimate reality. Love is not merely the Christian duty; it is the Christian destiny.’ [Verses 8-13 begin] with a thesis statement (love never ends but the gifts will; v. 8). This is followed by the grounds or warrant for the thesis (the arrival of the complete version will mean the dispensing of the partial; vv. 9-10). Paul then provides a personal illustration (as an adult Paul dispenses with their childish ways; v. 11), and some further explanation (present perception is like perceiving something in a mirror [partial], but in the eschaton there will be face-to-face or complete perception; v. 12). Finally this passage and the chapter as a whole reach their conclusion (v. 13). The passage continues the theme of relationship between love and spiritual gifts, with another partial list (as they all are) serving as the point of comparison (in this case, prophecy, tongues, and knowledge, with extra, subtle attention given to prophecy and knowledge in v. 12). The praise of love reaches its zenith in Paul’s declaration that it is greater than any spiritual gift and all other virtues, even the other two cardinal virtues of faith and hope. The context [of the phrase ‘where there is knowledge, it will pass away’] makes it clear that what *will pass away* is the gift of knowledge, and not knowledge itself. The following verses indicate that all our present knowledge, including that of those with the spiritual gift of knowledge, is partial and will be replaced by complete and perfect knowledge when we see God face to face. The context (esp. v. 12) makes it abundantly clear, however, that the point at which Paul expects the gifts to pass away or disappear is when we see the Lord ‘face to face’ and ‘know [him] fully, even as [we are] fully known.’ [The Corinthians’ Spiritual gifts] are perfectly appropriate for this time in the church’s life. But when we go through the final transition at the end of this age, from the old creation to the fullness of the new heavens and the new earth, we will leave behind many of the things that were natural, good, and healthy in this world as being unsuitable for the world into which we are introduced at that point. As Garland writes: ‘There is an age appropriate to certain activities, but there comes a time when those activities are no longer appropriate.’ [Regarding verse 13] we think that Horsley is correct to assert that *and now* has ‘a temporal as well as concluding logical force. The present tense *abide* (which, together with ‘love never ends’ in v. 8, brackets vv. 8-13) connotes something present that continues into the future – that is, something that remains, endures, persists on into the kingdom of God.’ This suggests a direct connection with the first clause of v. 8 (‘Love never fails’) and a contrast with all the things mentioned between that clause and this one, which things are all marks of one age or the other (partial knowledge is of this age, full knowledge is of the next). Unlike those other things, faith, hope, and love do not belong to one age as opposed to the other. They are the most important things humans can express in

this life, and it is not a coincidence that they remain for the one to come as well. Unlike the previous verse with its twice-repeated ‘now...then’ contrast, the *now* of this verse has no contrasting ‘then.’ This *now* remains. ‘Paul contrasts the triad of prophecy, knowledge, and tongues, which are transitory, with the triad of faith, hope, and love, which last eternally.’ The inclusion of faith and hope also allows Paul to magnify love even more. Not only is love superior to spiritual gifts that are partial and will come to an end, but also it is superior to virtues that are absolutely essential to being a Christian.’ ...in agreement with those who find the superiority of love based not in the nature of love itself, but in the nature of God himself. ...Calvin also sees the superiority of love in that ‘each person derives personal blessing from his own faith and hope, whereas love is poured out for the good of others.’ This already points to a more Christocentric or theocentric answer... Garland point out that ‘it is God’s love revealed in Christ that creates the possibility of faith and hope’ and that ‘as an essential reflection of God’s character, love can never end and is elevated to the highest good. As was mentioned earlier, in placing this chapter on love in the center of his discussion of the proper worship of the one true God, Paul reflects (with no irony whatsoever) the modern maxim that ‘imitation is the sincerest form of flattery’ and the idea that our worship is to take place within a community which is marked by this divine attribute and essential Christian virtue.”

- v. **Chapter 14** – “returns to the gifts of tongues and prophecy in particular and stresses the superiority of prophecy due to its superior ability to edify the body (the goal established by love).”
  - 1. **Overview** – “As pointed out earlier, chapters 12-14 form a unit with a chiastic structure, with chapters 12 and 14 focusing especially on the spiritual gifts and the center chapter on love (with gifts mentioned at the beginning and end of ch. 13 as well), the key to the proper use of the spiritual gifts and to the Christian life in general. While chapter 12 introduced the theme of spiritual gifts and discussed their importance in more general terms, this chapter focuses on two gifts in particular, being almost completely dedicated to establishing the superior value of prophecy over tongues. The connection between chapters 12 and 14 is shown not only by the similar topic (spiritual gifts) but also by the relationship of the final verse of chapter 12 (**12:31**...) with that of the first verse of this chapter (**14:1**...). It is here that Paul provides the explicit instruction that is anticipated in **12:21** and is underwritten by his exposition of the theme of love in **ch. 13**. This chapter also includes some guidance on how to include prophecy and tongues in the church’s public worship (and on the need to restrict some women’s participation) in order to protect the orderly nature of the experience and not dishonor the God who is worshiped. It concludes with a warning to those tempted to reject Paul’s guidance and a final word on the main subjects. Generally speaking, Paul ‘has two major concerns in this discussion: that Corinthian worship should manifest intelligibility (vv. 1-25) and that it should display order (vv. 26-40) so that all believers are built up and the unbeliever present in the assembly is challenged by the gospel, convicted, and converted (vv. 21-25).’ This chapter not only continues the discussion of spiritual gifts that was begun in chapter 12 and remains in sight in chapter 13, but it is also bound to the discussion of prayer and prophecy in **11:2-16** (where the focus is on proper attire for men and women praying and prophesying during the meeting of the church). Since tongues is understood to be a special form of prayer, this passage also deals with prayer and prophecy in the church, and comes back to the issue of men and women in worship as it moves to

its conclusion (vv. 34-35). Chapter 12 indicated that of the gifts evidently present in Corinth prophecy (12:28) was to be the most highly valued (this is the point to be reinforced through most of this chapter). Chapter 13 established that love was to be valued more highly than any spiritual gift. In this chapter Paul will highlight prophecy as a spiritual gift whose exercise would be more naturally promoted by the principle of love than the gift of tongues since it more clearly serves to edify the church (which is what love seeks).”

2. **Verse 3** – “The theme of edification or building up governs this chapter (14:3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26). The gift of prophecy (properly used) results in people being stronger in their faith in and walk with Christ. The word translated *encouragement* [TNIV] has to do with the ‘act of emboldening another in belief or course of action’ (BDAG) and here reinforces the idea of the previous word. It may also mean essentially the same thing as the following word, translated *comfort* [TNIV], which has to do with ‘that which serves as encouragement to one who is depressed or in grief’ (BDAG). These three words strongly suggest that prophetic ministry, by its very nature, must flow out of a deep concern for the well-being of those who need to be strengthened, encouraged, and comforted. As Paul describes it, it is certainly not a ministry marked by a cold communication of theological or other truths, but one marked by commitment to and compassion for other members of the body. The power of speech suggested here is remarkable, reminding one of what **James 3:5-8** says about the power of the tongue, except that Paul speaks of its positive power for edification while James has in mind its destructive power. Paul literally says that ‘those who prophecy speak strengthening, encouragement and comfort to people.’ That is, the ‘strengthening, encouragement and comfort’ are the direct objects of the verb *speak*. Thiselton describes these as ‘proleptic accusatives’ pointing to what the speaker accomplishes or hopes to accomplish through the speaking. The opportunity to bring strength, encouragement, and comfort to their brothers and sisters through our speech (as opposed to merely using speech as an opportunity to express our thoughts or feelings) is to be highly valued and liberally employed. ‘The pastoral dimension is underlined not only by the contextual particularity which distinguishes prophesying from teaching (which may be more doctrinal or general)’ but also by the impression that encouragement ‘frequently rests on a personal relationship between the speaker and addressees.’ It is interesting to note that much Old Testament prophecy hardly would have been described as comforting, since much of it was dedicated to condemning disobedience and apostasy. Jeremiah describes two phases in his prophetic ministry, one during which he uproots things (namely, the corrupt form of God’s community) and destroys them, and one during which he plants and builds up God’s new community. It is normally God who does the tearing down and uprooting, the planting and the building, but in **Jeremiah 1:10** these activities are ascribed to Jeremiah’s prophetic activity. It is because Paul is concerned about the edification of the church that he puts such a high value on the prophetic ministry, which, at this stage of salvation history, is primarily focused on building up God’s eschatological community (while previously it was focused on uprooting the community that had rebelled against him). Those gifts and ministries that most effectively build up (i.e., strengthen) the community, such as prophecy, are those which Paul most highly values and would have us value.”
3. **Verse 4** – “When believers are gathered together, love calls for the exclusive use of gifts which will serve to build up the community. This principle may and

should be applied beyond the very specific issue that Paul needed to address in Corinth. There are many other things that believers may find themselves interested in doing in worship which they find spiritually satisfying or beneficial for themselves, but which may not edify those gathered with them, or worse, which may serve as a distraction to others or otherwise detract from the edifying nature of the time spent together in worship. Love calls for all believers to exercise discernment in the use of our spiritual gifts, preferring those that will make the greatest contribution to the health of the body over ones that we might personally prefer to practice or that would seem to bring us greater respect or esteem (or power) in the community. As Witherington concludes, ‘Worship is mainly meant to be a group experience where one gives worship to God’ and shares fellowship with others ‘so that all benefit.’”

4. **Verse 5** – “The wish that they might all prophecy echoes Moses’ own ‘wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them’ (Num. 11:29), which seems to be in mind in Joel 2:28: ‘I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy.’”
5. **Verse 6** – “Hays is probably correct in suggesting that ‘the term “prophecy” should be read throughout chapter 14 as a synecdoche [a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole] for all forms of intelligible speech gifts that edify the church.’ This fits with our suggestion that in **11:4-5** prophecy and prayer serve as broad terms for virtually all discourse in worship, with prophecy being used in that case all discourse addressed to the congregation and prayer for discourse directed to God.”
6. **Verses 10-11** – “Many interpreters have suggested that since Paul compares speaking in tongues with foreign (human) languages in this verse, he must not think that they are the same thing. The logic holds to a certain point. Speaking in tongues is not the same as simply speaking a foreign language. Those speaking and hearing tongues are not actually foreigners to each other. The experience is similar (comparable) but not the same. One who speaks in tongues does not (usually) know what they are saying (unlike someone speaking a foreign language), they are not able to understand anything spoken to them in the same language, and so on. Even if the gift of tongues was understood to entail a Spirit-given ability to speak unknown human (and possibly angelic) languages to God (normally), as seems most likely, the closest thing to which some aspects of the experience could be compared would be that of engaging a foreigner where neither knows the language of the other. Such an experience, of course, is hardly conducive to clear or coherent communication, and the illustration is intended to associate speaking in tongues in public with a negative rather than a positive experience. How strange it would be for people who are not merely neighbors, but even brothers and sisters in Christ, to engage in an activity that turns them each into foreigners! This would not be a community-building experience but a community-alienating experience.”
7. **Verse 12** – “Fee applies the heart of this verse to concerns within the charismatic and Pentecostal movements: ‘...The point of everything in corporate worship is not personal experience in the Spirit, but building up the church itself. ...The building up of the community is the basic reason for corporate settings of worship; they should probably not be turned into a corporate gathering for a thousand individual experiences of worship.’ At the beginning of the first twenty-first century the seeker-driven (and to a lesser extent the seeker-sensitive) movement may benefit from a different kind of critique on the basis of this same

verse. The eagerness to communicate the message that the gospel of Christ meets the most profound needs of the human heart and provides divine guidance for more effective living seems to be drawing more and more people to churches in hope of gaining tangible benefits from the experience for their own lives. *How many Christians gather for worship with the understanding that it is not about what they might gain from the experience but that their participation in worship should be focused on seeking to benefit and build up those who have gathered together with them?*”

- a. This speaks against the individualistic consumerist mentality of Western Christianity today. Instead, we are called to serve one another in love for the good of the community; not for what we can get from the Assembly. This is what glorifies God and marks us out as Christ’s disciples.
  - i. In the balance of things, even with such an understanding, how many opportunities are there for “most of the congregation to practice any spiritual gift and to walk away having played any significant role in building up the rest of the church”?
8. **Verse 13** – “This suggests once again that our fundamental orientation in worship should not be that of seeking to receive something that will be good for us, but seeking to bring greater benefit and advantage to others [to the glory of God].”
9. **Verse 14** – “Paul wants to see ‘the spirit and the mind work together. His plea is for the complementarity of spirit and mind in prayer. Ultimately his anthropology is holistic.’ Worshipping with an unproductive and unutilized mind would have been considered an unusual situation. Since Paul has a holistic view of worship, he sees it as undesirable to worship with only the mind or the spirit. He does not say whether or not his spirit is fruitful when he prays with his mind. One would presume that it is.
10. **Verse 15** – *Understanding* in this verse basically means the same thing as *Mind* in the previous verse. Again, “Paul wants the spirit and mind engaged in worship. ...presumably he thinks that one’s spirit is engaged even when one prays with the mind.”
11. **Verse 17** - “As the saying goes, ‘It’s not about you.’ Worship is not even about ‘you and God.’ Jesus has shown us that it is always about ‘the other person.’ In some texts Paul emphasizes the importance of building up the community as a whole (the edification of the church body) and in others his focus is on building up each member of the body (the edification of each part). Here the focus is on the later. Oster comments, ‘Paul acknowledges, though perhaps with some sarcasm, that the self-centered believers are doing a good job in their individualistic “praise and thanksgiving” worship. They have, however, taken their eyes off the compass that always guides believers in the direction of serving and edifying the other person.’”
12. **Verses 20-25** (*cf. Isaiah 28:1-29 [esp. verses 11, 12]*) – “In *Isaiah 28:11-12* the tongues of outsiders are used by God to appeal, futilely, to his disobedient people for repentance. In *Isaiah 45:14* and *Zechariah 8:23* the tongues of outsiders glorifies God in the context of the redemption of his people. *Isaiah 28* is referring not to the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues, but to the foreign languages(s) spoken by the Assyrian invaders which served as a sign of God’s judgment executed against his people. In *Isaiah* those who were confronted by the foreign tongues were disobedient and unbelieving Israelites (whose disobedience and unbelief had brought the situation upon them). While unintelligible communication from God was a sign to his unbelieving people that

the curses of the Mosaic covenant had fallen on them, the powerful prophetic ministry of the church is a sign that God's presence has been restored to his redeemed (and believing) people. Seen in this way, tongues are a sign to unbelievers in that the public experience of unintelligible communication from God highlights the sense and reality of alienation between the speaker(s) and those being spoken to. [Ref. Tower of Babel curse]. Such an experience was intended for God's people only while they were in a state of rebellion and unbelief and suffering the curses of the Mosaic covenant. Thiselton points out that 'the experience of "not belonging" to which Isa. 28:11-12 witnesses as a sign of judgment...should not be illegitimately imposed upon believers who *do* belong and *should feel "at home"* in worship of the Christian community.' Prophecy was a sign for believers in that God would speak to and through them again in power only after they had been restored. If he was speaking prophetically through them again (speaking not in judgment but speaking 'to people for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort'; 1 Cor. 14:3), it was a sign to them that the age of restoration and salvation had been inaugurated. The conversion of others through their prophetic ministry was further confirmation of that sign and a reminder to the Corinthians that they 'are part of the fulfillment of God's plan to be worshipped among all the Gentiles, and it is Paul's ultimate purpose in writing to them to see them play their part in fulfilling this worldwide eschatological vision by glorifying God (see 6:20b and 10:31b). Paul's expectation that the prophetic ministry of the gathered community will lead to the conversion of visiting outsiders who will respond by bowing down and worshipping God and declaring 'God is really here in your midst!' echoes **Isaiah 45:14** and **Zechariah 8:23**. Their conversion and worship are intended to lead others to do the same. In this way, the gift which has been promoted as the one most effective at building up the community is also now seen as most effective at bring God glory through the conversion of the nations."

- a. Cf. **Joel 2:28** again and the New Covenant experience of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and the sign at Pentecost that the curse of the Tower of Babel has been undone.
    - i. Therefore, New Covenant prophesying is really gospel proclamation by the power of the Holy Spirit poured out upon all those converted who go out on mission to spread the full revealing, or *knowing*, of God as both the just and the justifier, in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.
13. **Verse 27** – "Depictions of ancient symposia (post-dinner parties where semi-formal conversations often played a key role) often depict them as discussing a series of topics in which different members would share their viewpoint and engage the viewpoints of their companions one at a time. Here and in **vv. 28-31** Paul's instructions promote a somewhat similar approach to establishing order and etiquette that would hopefully banish chaos from the worship meeting. Paul's directives here lead us to understand, with Fee, that the Spirit "does not "possess" or "overpower" the speaker...It is indeed the Spirit who speaks, but he speaks through the controlled instrumentality of the believer's own mind and tongue. In this regard it is no different from the inspired utterances of the OT prophets, which were *spoken at the appropriate times and settings*."
14. **Verse 29** – "While tongues are not to be forbidden, prophecy is essential. Paul seems to be picturing a gathering in which 0-3 prayers or songs in tongues are contributed (with someone interpreting any that are given), 2-3 prophetic

messages are given and evaluated by the congregation, and others contribute, among other things, prayers, hymns, and words of instruction (cf. v. 26).”

- a. 2-3 prophetic messages as essential may contribute to structuring the sermon around 2-3 points in which the message of the gospel is applied to the certain circumstances or needs of those gathered to hear.
15. **Verse 30** – “Paul’s wording reflects the assumption in the ancient church that the speaker would be standing so that *someone who is sitting down* refers to anyone other than the speaker. Perhaps the one who received the fresh revelation would indicate as much by standing up. If so, the first speaker was to recognize the next speaker by concluding and sitting down.”
16. **Verse 31** – “See the comments on v. 27 regarding the parallel between Paul’s preference here and common approaches to structuring conversation at an ancient Greek or Roman symposium or banquet. We have referred to *Joel 2:28* and *Numbers 11:29* at various points (see on *11:4; 14:5, 23-24*) due to the relevance of those texts to any teaching about everyone (including men and women) prophesying in church. They bear mention again here as Paul uses language once more that points to the remarkable development that is reflected in the suggestion that the gift of prophecy [gospel proclamation and application to the contextual needs of the congregation gathered] is widely distributed among God’s people.”
- a. The difference between *New Testament prophecy*, it seems, and general evangelism to which each and every disciple of Christ is called (Matt. 28:19-20), would be *the contextual application of the gospel message to the specific needs or circumstances of the congregation gathered for worship*.
    - i. There seems to be a more pastoral aspect to New Testament prophecy as opposed to simply teaching, which could include things tangential to the gospel (aka: Bible study), and evangelism.
      1. Note also women prophets in the temple such as Anna (Luke 2:36-38).
        - a. \*Nevertheless, as Paul has previously articulated in chapter 11 about women covering their heads in church with his reasoning being based on the creation account and subsequent male-headship, such ministry for women should not be one that would bring dishonor to her husband. Paul will revisit this again later in this chapter in verses 34 and 35. Key to remember with this reasoning is that a woman is a man’s glory, and a man is God’s glory, and it should be God’s glory, alone, that is reflected in worship; not that of a man. Therefore, the prophetic ministry of women must still keep that into consideration in the sense that their ministry should remain under the authority of husbands and/or other males when the community it gathered for worship. For such worship to be led by a woman would be, according to Paul’s reasoning, to detract from God’s glory by highlighting the glory of the man via the presiding woman.
    - b. “Paul may recognize the need of even that one who spoke to encourage and instruct others to be encouraged and instructed by others as well. He

may also recognize that a variety of speakers (with different styles, themes, and sensibilities) is more likely to succeed in ministering to the needs of all those gathered than any one individual message. That *everyone* would be instructed by all those who prophesy raises interesting questions about the significance of the prophetic ministry of women to which Paul referred in *11:5*.”

- i. \*Therefore, it would seem that the considerations and guidelines Paul offers there, based on the order of creation, should be maintained with regard to the prophetic ministry as well.
  1. **Verses 34-35** – “On first blush (and even on repeated readings!), the opening clause stating that *women should remain silent in the churches* seems to directly contradict Paul’s teaching that women may pray or prophecy in worship as long as they maintain proper decorum (*11:2-16*). Most solutions to the perceived tension between these verses and Paul’s position in chapter 11 have been based on understanding the silence or lack of speaking to entail refraining from a particular type of speaking. Indeed, the word translated *remain silent* [TNIV] was already used twice before in this chapter. First, in v. 28, in reference to one with the gift of tongues remaining silent when no interpreter is available to translate the unknown tongue. Then, in v. 30, in reference to a prophet who is to stop speaking if someone else receives a revelation. The inclusion here of this discussion of the silence of women or wives is most likely explained by the fact that Paul had just finished discussing those two other situations that also called for silence on the part of certain participants in the church’s worship. In neither of those other cases, of course, are those people expected to remain silent at all times. Indeed, Paul is probably thinking of particular instances where different kinds of participants in the worship meeting should refrain from speaking. Despite the fact that the most recent reference to ‘speaking’ had to do with prophesying, it does not seem possible that prophecy is the specific form of speech from which Paul is prohibiting female participation, given his discussion of it in chapter 11 (which indicates that women may prophesy as long as they do so with their heads covered). [As in chapter 11, Paul refers to the Genesis 2 creation account to establish a woman’s subordination to a man in writing ‘as the law says.’] Whether Paul has in mind participation in the critique of other prophets and their messages or disruptive (and shameful) chatter or conversation during the gathering, his main point seems to be that the women should show respect for order and for others (especially their husbands) in the [corporate] worship setting. Just what that respect and order would look like would be indicated in part by the biblical principles Paul has in mind

and in part by the social and marital context to which those principles are being applied.”

- c. **Verse 37** – “The expression *if any think* (literally, ‘if anyone thinks’) is precisely the same one that was used in **3:18** and **8:2**. Fee points out that it ‘is probably no accident that the statement “if anyone thinks that he/she is...” (3:18; 8:1; 14:37) is found in each of the three main sections of the letter (chaps. 1-4; 8-10; 12-14) and reflects these three crucial Corinthian terms (“wisdom”, “knowledge”, and “spiritual”).’ This third usage of the expression brings in a third idea of pride among some elite Corinthians believers, namely a view of themselves as being especially endowed with the Spirit and prophetic gifts, along with pretensions regarding wisdom and knowledge.”
- d. **Verses 38-39** – “Paul does not idolize order. He ‘does not seek order for order’s sake.’ Rather, it ‘is necessary only to constrain self-indulgent abuses and to create an atmosphere in which the gifts of all can work together to build up the community in love.’ Paul has already pointed out that ‘God is not a God of disorder’ (14:33), and if everything (public worship above all!) is to be done for the glory of God (10:31), it should reflect his orderly nature. ‘Paul has in mind both reverence and dignity appropriate to address to and from God.’ Paul’s instructions in this chapter have all been intended to guide the Corinthians to a more orderly worship, and that can be honored only when we maintain an atmosphere that does not distract people from his glory. Some Corinthians had manifested attitudes and behaviors which had drawn attention to themselves rather than to God, and which reflected a greater concern for self-edification than the edification of others.”

## 5. **1 Corinthians 15 “The Resurrection and Consummation”**

- a. *Climax with Paul’s Discussion of the Resurrection as It Relates to the Ultimate Triumph of Christ Over All Adversaries and the Final Transformation of Our Corruptible Humanity into Humanity that Fully Reflects God’s Glory*
- b. **Verses 1-2** – “Paul elaborates on *the gospel* through a series of four relative clauses that combine to emphasize the crucial importance of the gospel (and, thus, of the resurrection) in the Corinthians’ lives. The gospel (1) was preached to them by Paul; (2) they received it; (3) they stand on it; and (4) they are being saved through it. The four points seem to progress in chronological order, starting from their first experience with the gospel and moving to the process of salvation which they are presently experiencing and which God would bring to a completion at the end (cf. *Phil. 1:6*). They have had such a significant history and sufficient experience with the gospel that they should not really need to have Paul clarify its nature or implications for them. Paul will expand on the contents of the gospel he preached to them in vv. 3-9.”
- c. **Verses 3-8** – “Paul uses four key verbs to summarize the gospel: Christ died, was buried, was raised, and was seen (or appeared) – the two most prominent verbs are the first and third (died and was raised) – the two modified by ‘in accordance with the Scriptures.’ The second and third verbs (was buried and seen) each seem to reinforce and confirm the verb that precedes. Christ’s burial reinforces the fact that he truly died. The fact that Christ was seen by witnesses after his resurrection confirms the fact that he had truly been raised from the dead. Paul is establishing the crucial importance of the resurrection for the heart of the Christian faith, the very gospel of our salvation. Without the resurrection Christ’s death and burial would not be part of a story of good news and salvation.”

- d. **Verse 19** – “Through most of the letter Paul has been pushing his readers to embrace the partial renewal of humanity which Christ and the Spirit are working within us even now, as we reject the world’s false wisdom and the idolatry and immorality that flow from it and reflect Christ’s wisdom and purity and the proper worship of the one true God in Christ [‘inaugurated eschatology’]. But all of this is just the first taste of our ultimate complete renewal to which the resurrection of Christ points us [‘consummated eschatology’].”
- e. **Verses 20-28** – “As Wright points out, this passage ‘takes the form of a small apocalyptic account of the coming of God’s kingdom, establishing God’s rule over the world and defeating all the enemies of his kingdom, much as *Daniel 7* [vv. 14, 27; cf. Ephesians 1:20-21; 6:12; Colossians 2:15] itself drawing on the creation account in *Genesis 1-2*, in which the human race was set in authority over the beasts, envisages YHWH’s kingdom as a new creation.’ Paul’s discussion reflects a contrasting typology in which Christ, the ideal human and final representative of the human race, reverses the corruption introduced by the first human and original representative of the human race and restores things to the way they were originally intended, with God’s dominion perfectly expressed in the restored creation such that he is perfectly glorified as the one who is ‘all in all.’”
- i. **Verse 22** – reference *Romans 5:12-21*
    1. Cf. **Verses 24-26** – “...Paul has the dominions of death and sin particularly in mind, with sin and death personified such that they stand for all of the corrupt spiritual powers let loose in the world by Adam. The power of death and sin is to be utterly *destroyed* as Christ brings the kingdom of God to its climactic consummation. [Verse 24] is Paul’s interpretation of Christ’s fulfillment of *Psalms 110:1* and *8:6*.”
  - ii. **Verse 23** – “The two orders of priority are Christ himself and then *all who belong to him*. There is no further class distinction that is relevant to the order to or benefit of the resurrection. It also becomes evident that Paul is not concerned in this chapter with any resurrection of the unrighteous to judgment, but is fully focused on the question of the resurrection of the righteous, and of Christians in particular. *Those who belong to him* clarifies that not all the dead will enjoy the resurrection life Paul is describing here, but only those who are Christ’s (presumably including the faithful people of God who died before Christ’s first coming). There is no suggestion that Christ would come to take his people away (as in dispensational eschatology); the idea is that believers (and creation) will experience their ultimate renewal and glorification upon Christ’s return.”
  - iii. **Verse 24** – “While *Revelation 20* speaks of a thousand-year reign of Christ..., the oldest and widest of biblical traditions indicate that the Messiah’s reign will never end (cf. 2 Som. 7:16; 1 Chr. 17:14; Isa. 9:7; Ps. 89:36-37; Dan. 7:14, 18; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 11:15; 22:3), and of course Genesis 1:26-28 shows that God’s original intention was to have a human vice-regent reigning over all of creation in a perfect reflection of his own righteous authority. Theodoret (who is navigating the Christological issues of his own day) was on the right track: ‘In handing over the kingdom to the God and Father he is not himself stripped of the kingdom; rather, he brings into subjection the tyrannical devil and his assistants, and forces all to do obeisance and acknowledge the God of all.’ Similarly, Thiselton recognizes the importance of seeing that ‘since God and Christ as Lord are “One,” this emphasis is not upon a “discontinuation” of Christ’s lordship as such, but upon its culmination within the terms of its purpose for this world and Christ’s kingdom here.’”
- f. **Verse 29** – This verse is “undoubtedly the most difficult verse to interpret in the whole letter... Understanding its relationship with the rest of this passage [vv. 29-34], and the role this passage as a whole within the chapter, is also challenging. We think the best approach is to translate the key phrase, ‘those who are baptized on account of the dead,’ and to understand the reference to

the dead in light of the usage of the word throughout this chapter. Unless there are clear indications to the contrary, the reader should expect that a reference to ‘the dead’ would be a reference to the dead who will be raised in the resurrection, the dead to which the resurrection is expected to apply. That is, his references to ‘the dead’ have the righteous dead (i.e., dead who will be raised to glory) in mind. Paul is concerned with the resurrection of those ‘who have fallen asleep in Christ’ (v. 18), those who ‘belong to’ Christ and will be raised ‘when he comes’ (v. 23)... When he says that people are ‘baptized on account of the dead,’ we may assume that he means that they are baptized on account of the righteous dead, those who will be raised in power and glory. This, then, is more specific than dead people in general, but it does not suggest something as specific as living or deceased apostles or specific loved ones who have recently passed away. We suggest that for believers to be baptized on account of the dead who will be raised in glory means that they have heard about these dead being raised up (to new life and glory) and that they want to be part of that group. This seems to be similar to the interpretation we find in Theodoret, 231: ‘The baptized person, he is saying, is buried with the Lord so that, having shared death, they may also become sharer in the resurrection. But if the body is dead and does not rise, why on earth are they baptized?’ Hull’s note on this part of his translation of Theodoret’s commentary...is worth repeating: ‘Theodoret knows nothing of what is called “some kind of vicarious baptism.” ...Theodoret seems simply to be saying that if resurrection does not occur, the symbolism of death, burial and rising in the ritual of baptism is flawed and the rite futile.’ Thus we would paraphrase the verse as follows: ‘Now, if there is no resurrection, what will be accomplished by those who get baptized because of what they have heard about how the dead will be raised? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people undergoing baptism on account of them?’

- i. “Of course, Paul strongly ties baptism to the hope of the resurrection of the dead in **Romans 6:3-13**. Baptism itself is tied to the resurrection hope by way of its integral role in the conversion experience. It is not that baptism per se brings salvation, but baptism is understood to be the initial confirmation of faith and act of initiation into the body of Christ. Certainly this text echoes the theme of other baptism texts that indicate that baptism is part and parcel of the process of entering into Christian life and fellowship.”
- g. **Verses 30-31** – reference **Luke 9:23-24**
- h. **Verse 32** – “It is very unlikely that Paul, a Roman citizen, would have been forced to fight wild animals in an arena or other context. Beasts or wild animals were used repeatedly as symbols or metaphors for pagan rulers in **Daniel 7**.”
  - i. Reference **Isaiah 22:13** which Paul cites “to point to the utter futility of a life without the direction and motivation given by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” This passage in Isaiah “depicts the reaction of the inhabitants of Jerusalem while being besieged by Assyria and facing the grim prospect of their impending annihilation (22:12-14). Instead of repenting, they decide to ‘party like there is no tomorrow.’ Paul uses Isaiah 22:13 to underscore the depravity of the human condition... He uses the text as a way of summing up the logical entailment of denying or forgetting about resurrection. The Corinthians who doubt the resurrection are like Jerusalemites who failed to live out of the resources of their own faith [cf. **Hebrews 11:6**]. Paul effectively accuses the Corinthians who deny bodily resurrection of having a flawed basis for a lifestyle that pleases God, which will lead them to idolatrous and immoral behavior. Garland uses a beautiful phrase: ‘Resurrection means endless hope, but no resurrection means a hopeless end – and hopelessness breeds dissipation.’”
- i. **Verse 33** – “As things are, the Corinthians who deny the resurrection of the dead are themselves in danger of being *bad company* corrupting the good character of other believers who may more readily follow through with the moral implications of their denial of the resurrection.”

- j. **Verse 34** – “The whole verse reflects an extraordinary affront to the puffed-up Corinthians. They think that they are marked by intellectually superior knowledge and insight. Paul says that they need to wake up from their stupor and stop sinning since their unbelief in the resurrection reflects a lack of knowledge for which they should feel ashamed.”
- k. **Verses 35-49** – “The passage as a whole reflects considerable reflection on Genesis 1-2, presupposing the idea that protology (the study of creation’s beginning) we find keys to eschatology. It is understood that in many ways the last things will be like the first things, only even better. ...the doctrine of the resurrection entails elements of both strong continuity and remarkable discontinuity between the dead and the resurrected body...in a way similar to that in which a seed produces a plant or tree [ref. **John 12:24**]. ...our new bodies will have glory that our present ones do not. ...the reference to luminescent bodies (‘shine like the brightness of the heavens’) and stars in the description of the resurrection in **Daniel 12:2-3** may have encouraged or reinforced Paul’s use of the references to heavenly bodies in Genesis 1 to explain the nature of the resurrection body in terms of shining heavenly bodies. [In these verses from Daniel, we also find] the most explicit passage on bodily resurrection in the Old Testament.”
- i. The body is *sown in*...
    1. Corruptibility
    2. Dishonor
    3. Weakness
  - ii. The body sown *is*...
    1. Natural
  - iii. The body is *raised in*...
    1. Incorruptibility
    2. Honor/Glory
    3. Power
  - iv. The body raised *is*...
    1. Spiritual
      - a. “As we shall see, all four characteristics of the resurrection body reflect Paul’s knowledge of Christ’s own resurrection body based on both personal experience and scriptural reflection, and much of his description of the body which is *sown* may also be based on reflection on Christ’s experience and on his crucifixion in particular, as well as Paul’s own experience of weakness and dishonor as one following in Christ’s footsteps.”
        - i. Cf. **Philippians 2:7-11**
          1. “Of course the dishonor experienced by Christ, Paul, and every other human being is a result of Adam’s sin and the dishonor that sin brought on the whole human race and which is being overcome through Christ’s redemptive work.”
            - a. Cf. **Romans 8:18-21**
        - b. “Paul ‘natural’ or ‘soulish’ people with ‘spiritual’ people in **2:14-15**, and, as Wright points out, he is certainly not dealing with a distinction between people who are physical and people who are not! Rather, Paul’s usage suggests a distinction between people who ‘are living at the level of life common to all humankind’ versus those who ‘are indwelt, guided and made wise by the creator’s Spirit.’ In this passage as well the distinction has to do with the difference between ordinary human life and life empowered by God’s Spirit. The adjective Paul uses describe ‘not what

something is composed of, but what it is animated by. It is the difference between speaking of a ship made of steel or wood on the one hand and a ship driven by steam or wind on the other.’ Wright follows Hays in pointing to the helpfulness of the Jerusalem Bible’s translation of the verse [*sic.* 44]: ‘When it is sown it embodies the soul, when it is raised it embodies the spirit. If the soul has its own embodiment, so does the spirit have its own embodiment.’ To live in a resurrected body is to experience a new mode of existence, life directed and empowered by the Spirit, suitable to the age to come, in a body untainted by sin and death in any sense. As Wright suggests, Paul’s reference to a spiritual body appears to be ‘the most elegant way he can find of saying that the new body is the *result* of the Spirit’s work (answering “how does it come to be?”) and that it is the appropriate *vessel for* the Spirit’s life (answering “what sort of a thing is it?”).’

- c. “In **Romans 6** the ‘resurrection like his’ which believers await (6:5) is not only one that guarantees mortal transformation but also moral transformation, that we ‘may live a new life’ (v. 4), an existence that begins in the present. The fact that Paul tells us elsewhere that we have been sealed by the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30) and that the Holy Spirit is the first fruits (Rom. 8:23) and the ‘first installment, deposit, down payment’ (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14) on what we are to experience once our redemption has been fully consummated suggests that our resurrection experience could not be anything other than as existence in which the Spirit has full sway and through which the Spirit is fully manifest in and through us as it is in Christ himself. The contrast that Paul has in mind in this verse and the next is clarified in vv. 47-49, where Paul shifts to the contrast between the ‘earthly’ and the ‘heavenly’ man, implying a contrast between one who lives out of (merely) earthly power or resources and one who lives out of heavenly power and resources.”
- d. **Verse 45** – “This verse affirms the distinction Paul made in v. 44 between natural and spiritual bodies by pointing out that Adam was (merely) a living soul or being (with a natural body), as Genesis 2:7 attests, while Christ’s resurrection body was (as Paul experienced it and the Old Testament background might lead one to expect) wholly spiritual. Adam received life as an embodied soul in a natural body; Christ gives life as a life-giving spirit. Paul uses Genesis 2:7 to set up one side of the contrast as to lead into the other. Paul’s references to the first and the last Adam will lead into the point he makes in vv. 46-47, namely, that there is an order to these things (cf. v. 23), and that the natural comes first and then the spiritual.
- i. The first Adam was:
    1. Living being
    2. Natural (‘soulish’)
    3. First man
    4. Dust/of the earth
    5. Earthly man
      - a. His people are those who are of the earth and bear his image.

- ii. The last Adam was:

1. Life-giving spirit
2. Spiritual
3. Second man
4. Of heaven
5. Heavenly man
  - a. His people are those who are of heaven and shall bear his image.
    - i. “In **11:7** Paul tied together the ideas of God’s image and glory, and in **v. 48** he distinguished between the splendor or glory of heavenly and earthly bodies. In **v. 43** he spoke of human bodies being sown in dishonor and raised in glory. The concepts of glory and *image* are probably linked throughout these texts such that we are to understand that *the image of the earthly man* lacks the glory with which it was previously created and is now an image of impermanence, weakness, ignobility, and of earthy humanness while *the image of the heavenly man* reflects God’s glory in its incorruptible, powerful, honorable, and spiritual nature (cf. vv. 42-44). We spend these lives in bodies that reflect Adam’s state after the fall; we will spend the rest of eternity in bodies that reflect Christ’s state after his resurrection from the dead. God’s plan of redemption entails, among other things, restoring the perfect reflection of his image in his people, now by conforming them to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). These points could be deduced from what Paul writes in these verses, but they are clarified by his other texts. **Colossians 3:10** and **2 Corinthians 3:18** make it clear that the process of conforming us to Christ’s image (the perfect and unblemished image of God) is one that begins as believers grow in Christ and are transformed by his presence in their lives even now. The process that begins in this life comes to its final consummation at the moment of the resurrection when our bodies experience their complete transformation and the rest of our ultimate transformation is also achieved (cf. **Romans 8:21-23**).”

1. **Verses 50-57** – “Paul’s discussion of the ultimate defeat of death will build on the motif of victory over death in **Isaiah 25:8** and **Hosea 13:14**. Paul gives further evidence of his understanding of the relationship between sin and death in **Romans 5:12, 21; 6:16, 23; 7:5, 13;**

8:2. It seems that in Paul's thinking sin leads to spiritual death, and spiritual death is also, for everyone other than Adam, at the root of all post-Adamic sin."

6. **1 Corinthians 16 "Letter Closing"**

- a. **Verses 8-9** – "...Paul's statement, *and there are many who oppose me*, 'recalls his earlier cryptic allusion to fighting with wild animals at Ephesus (15:32; cf. Acts 19:23-41) and prefigures his later – and equally vague – comments about a terrible affliction that he suffered in Asia (2 Cor. 1:8-11).' ... the place of greatest risk may also be the place of greatest opportunity for proclaiming the gospel."
- b. **Verse 14** – "The final exhortation in Paul's punchy list reprises the key motif of love which undergirds all of Paul's moral teaching in this letter. Love comes to the surface in 8:1 and reaches the heights of praise in the paean found in the center of chapters 12-14; *Do everything in love*. This was the point of 13:1-3 – that even the most wonderful acts, if not done out of love, are worthless in the eyes of God. Elsewhere in this letter Paul has said that all things are to be done for the glory of God (10:31). God is glorified when people act in love, when they put the welfare of others first and worship God in a way that is consistent with his own character. Self-sacrificing love is the model given to us by Christ and the key to the health and growth of his church and to the maturing of both individuals and the communities to which they belong. Christ-like love is a principal manifestation of God's renewed humanity, the sign that God's work in us – the work which will ultimately result in the resurrection of the dead and our complete renewal – has already begun to manifest itself. This, the fifth of the five crisp exhortations in a row, is the clearest of them all and the one which most clearly reinforces the themes of the letter as a whole. It is not surprising that when Paul writes his own final greeting in his own hand, the final thought he will leave the Corinthians is of his own love for them (v. 24)."
  - i. **1 John 4:7-11**
  - ii. **John 3:16; 13:34-35**