SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 1

The Word of the Cross — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The church does not split over Christ; it splits over pride. God cut the ground out from under every human boast by saving the world through a crucified Messiah and calling nobodies like me — so the only boast left is in the Lord.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 1 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been ☆ sanctified in Christ Jesus, ☆ saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus,

5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge,

6 even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you,

7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

8 who will also ☆ confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 △ God is faithful, through whom you were ☆ called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and ⚠ that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are ⚠ quarrels among you.

12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

13 ⚠ Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name.

16 Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that ⚠ the cross of Christ would not be made void.

18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

29 so that no man may boast before God.

30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

Marked in the text

- **v2** "sanctified in Christ Jesus" — Promise / blessing
- **v2** "saints by calling" — Promise / blessing
- **v8** "confirm you to the end, blameless" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "God is faithful" — God — His character & actions
- **v9** "called into fellowship with His Son" — Promise / blessing
- **v10** "that you all agree" — Command / instruction
- **v10** "that there be no divisions among you" — Sin / warning
- **v10** "made complete in the same mind" — Command / instruction
- **v11** "quarrels" — Sin / warning
- **v13** "Has Christ been divided?" — Sin / warning
- **v17** "not in cleverness of speech" — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** "the cross of Christ would not be made void" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "the word of the cross" — God — His character & actions
- **v18** "those who are perishing" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "the power of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v21** "the foolishness of the message preached" — Time / place / contrast
- **v22** "Jews ask for signs" — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** "we preach Christ crucified" — God — His character & actions
- **v23** "stumbling block" — Sin / warning
- **v24** "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v27** "God has chosen" — God — His character & actions
- **v28** "the things that are not" — Time / place / contrast
- **v29** "so that no man may boast before God" — Sin / warning
- **v30** "by His doing you are in Christ Jesus" — God — His character & actions
- **v30** "righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" — Promise / blessing
- **v31** "BOAST IN THE LORD" — Command / instruction
- **v19** "wisdom" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v19** "wise" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v18** "foolishness" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** "foolish" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

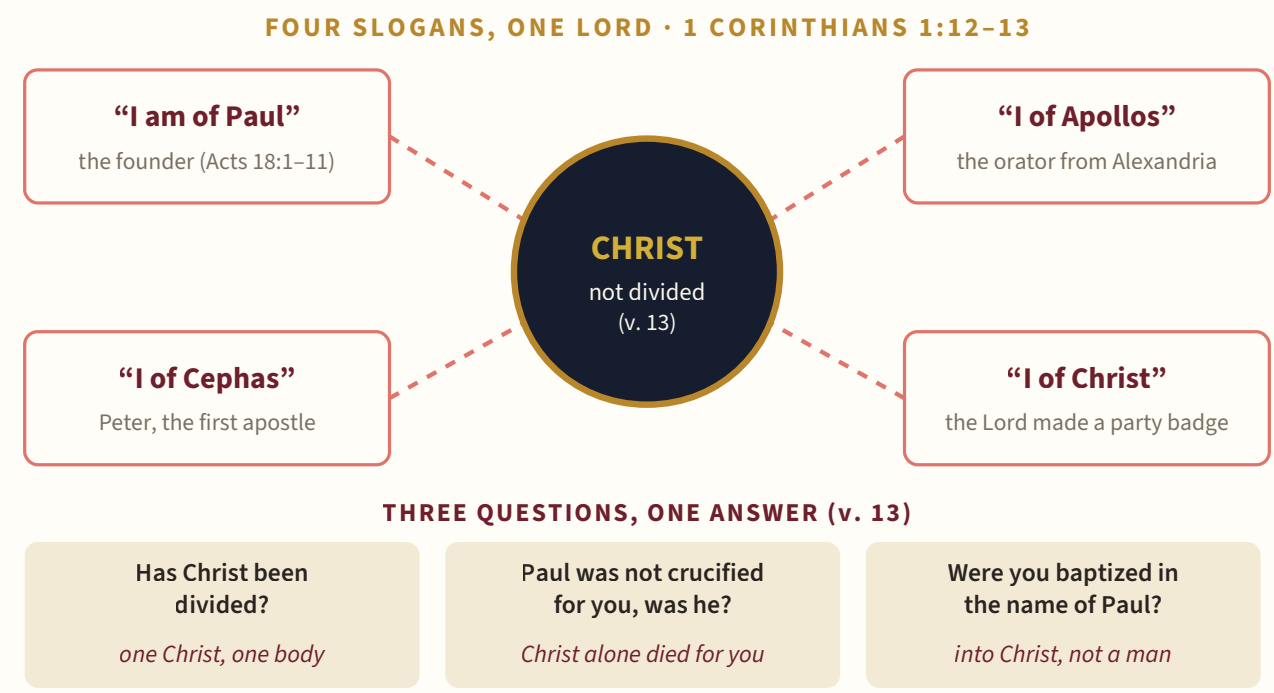
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10

"Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment."

FIGURE · FOUR SLOGANS AND THREE QUESTIONS



Every slogan tears at the same body — even "I of Christ" when it is used to stand above the brothers — and each of Paul's three questions has only one answer.

Setting. Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8) to the church he planted in Corinth around A.D. 50 and stayed with for a year and a half (Acts 18:1–11). Corinth sat on the narrow isthmus between two seas — rich, crowded, proud of its orators and notorious for its vice. News has reached Paul from "Chloe's people" (v11) that the church is splitting into fan clubs. Chapter 1 opens the letter and goes straight to the first problem: division, and the pride underneath it. The argument it starts runs through 4:21.

Who: Paul, "called as an apostle" (v1); Sosthenes our brother (probably the synagogue ruler of Acts 18:17); "the church of God which is at Corinth," "sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling" (v2), with all who call on the Name everywhere; Chloe's people (v11); Apollos, Cephas (Peter); Crispus, Gaius, the household of Stephanas (vv14–16); Jews and Greeks; the wise man, the scribe, the debater of this age (v20).

Structure:

- vv1–3 — **greeting:** who Paul is (called, by the will of God), who they are in Christ (sanctified, saints by calling), grace and peace.
- vv4–9 — **thanksgiving:** grace given in Christ Jesus; enriched in all speech and all knowledge; not lacking in any gift; awaiting the revelation of the Lord; He "will also confirm you to the end, blameless" (v8) — "God is faithful" (v9).
- vv10–17 — **the problem, divisions:** an exhortation by the Name (v10); the report of quarrels (v11); four slogans — "I am of Paul," "I of Apollos," "I of Cephas," "I of Christ" (v12); three questions (v13); Paul glad he baptized few (vv14–16); sent to preach, "not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void" (v17).
- vv18–25 — **the word of the cross:** foolishness to the perishing, God's power to the saved (v18); Isaiah 29:14 quoted (v19); four questions (v20); the world through its wisdom did not know God (v21); Jews ask for signs, Greeks search for wisdom, "we preach Christ crucified" (vv22–23); to the called, Christ the power and wisdom of God (v24); God's foolishness wiser, His weakness stronger (v25).
- vv26–31 — **look at your calling:** not many wise, mighty, noble (v26); God has chosen the foolish, weak, base, despised, "the things that are not" (vv27–28), "so that no man may boast before God" (v29); Christ became to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (v30); "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD" (v31, from Jer 9:24).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "God" ×21 — vv1, 2, 3, 4 (×2), 9, 14, 18, 20, 21 (×3), 24 (×2), 25 (×2), 27 (×2), 28, 29, 30.
- "Christ" ×17 — vv1, 2 (×2), 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17 (×2), 23, 24, 30. Ten of them in vv1–10, before the problem is named.
- "Jesus" ×10 — vv1, 2 (×2), 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 30; "Lord" ×8 — vv2 (×2), 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 31; "in Christ Jesus" ×3 — vv2, 4, 30.
- "wisdom" ×7 — vv19, 20, 21 (×2), 22, 24, 30; "wise / wiser" ×5 — vv19, 20, 25, 26, 27. Twelve in all, every one from v19 on.
- "foolish / foolishness" ×6 — vv18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27.
- "call / called / calling" ×6 — vv1, 2 (×2), 9, 24, 26.
- "baptize(d)" ×6 — vv13, 14, 15, 16 (×2), 17.
- "so that" ×6 — vv7, 15, 17, 28, 29, 31.
- "things" ×6 — vv27 (×3), 28 (×3); "chosen" ×3 — vv27 (×2), 28.
- "world" ×5 — vv20, 21, 27 (×2), 28.
- "boast(s)" ×3 — vv29, 31 (×2); "not many" ×3 — v26; "Where is" ×3 — v20.
- "Jews" ×3 — vv22, 23, 24; "Greeks" ×2 and "Gentiles" ×1 — vv22, 24; 23.
- "cleverness / clever" ×3 — vv17, 19 (×2); "power" ×2 — vv18, 24; "cross" ×2 — vv17, 18; "crucified" ×2 — vv13, 23; "grace" ×2 — vv3, 4.

Questions: v13 fires three in a row; v20 fires four ("Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?").

Lists: speech and knowledge (v5); four slogans (v12); wise, mighty, noble (v26); foolish, weak, base, despised, things that are not (vv27–28); wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption (v30).

Contrasts: the church of God ⟷ at Corinth (v2). Divisions ⟷ made complete in the same mind (v10). Baptize ⟷ preach (v17). Perishing ⟷ being saved; foolishness ⟷ the power of God (v18). The wisdom of the world ⟷ the wisdom of God (vv20–21). Signs and wisdom ⟷ Christ crucified (vv22–23). Stumbling block and foolishness ⟷ power and wisdom (vv23–24). God's foolishness and weakness ⟷ men's wisdom and strength (v25). Foolish, weak, base, "things that are not" ⟷ wise, strong, "things that are" (vv27–28). Boasting before God ⟷ boasting in the Lord (vv29, 31).

Shape of the chapter: grace (1–9), a tear (10–17), the cross (18–25), the mirror (26–31). It starts with God calling them saints and ends with God taking every boast but one.

Chapter theme (my words): The church does not divide over Christ; it divides over pride. God cut the ground out from under every human boast by saving the world through a crucified Messiah and by calling nobodies — so the only boast left is in the Lord.

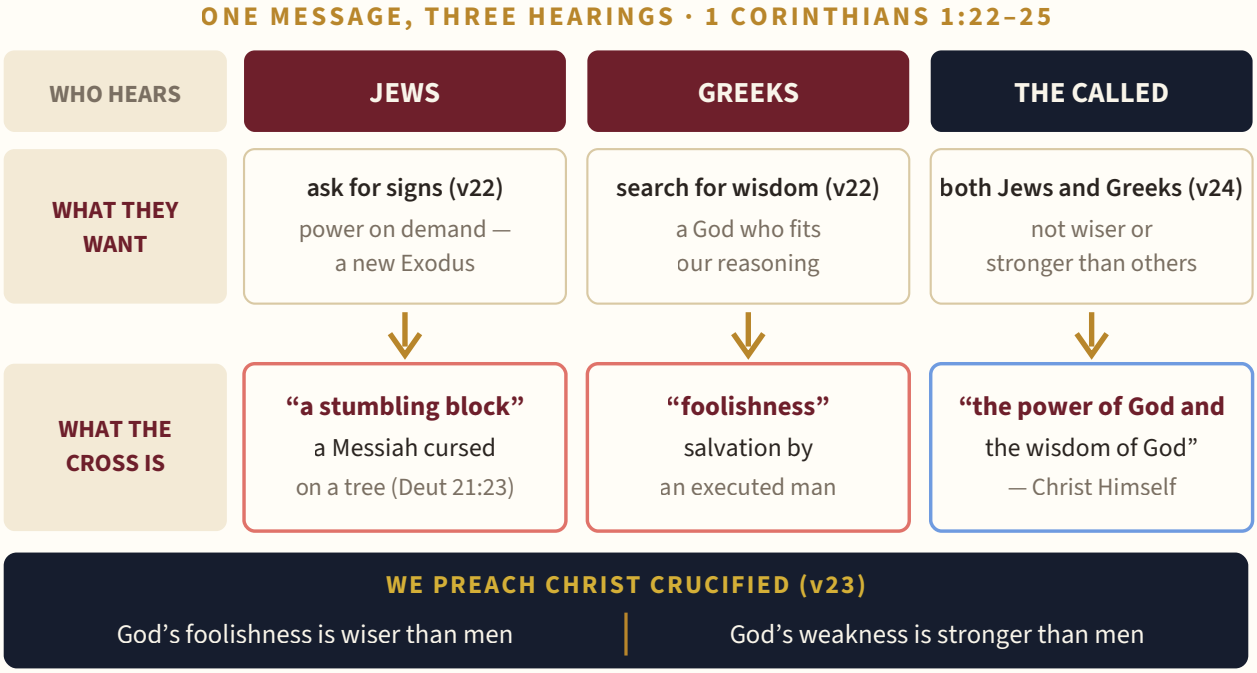
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 1:24

"but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, △Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

FIGURE · ONE MESSAGE, THREE HEARINGS



Read down each column: Jew and Greek bring their demands and find an offense or a joke; the called, from both, find Christ Himself.

Why the letter starts here. Guzik notes that Paul plants his authority in his first words — literally "a called apostle" — through the will of God, not by the Corinthians' vote; Henry: "It was not pride in Paul, but faithfulness to his trust." Yet before he corrects anything he calls them saints. Guzik: "The Corinthians were called saints, not called to be saints" — the KJV's "to be" is supplied. They are holy by God's calling and Christ's work, not by their performance, which at Corinth was poor. Calvin (in Guzik) compares Paul to a surgeon who touches the wound gently before he cuts.

Corinth. Guzik, drawing on Barclay, Fee and Morris: intellectually alert, materially prosperous, morally corrupt — Fee's "New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world." Guzik's question for the whole letter: "is the church influencing the city, or is the city influencing the church?" The church was planted in that soil, and the soil showed.

Thanksgiving for a troubled church (vv4–9). Paul thanks God for proud, divided, carnal people — but for what *God* has done in them: grace given, gifts, speech, knowledge. Spurgeon (quoted by Guzik, and in his own sermon on

v6): "gifts are nothing, unless they are laid on the altar of God." Their future rests not on their progress but on God: Christ will confirm them to the end, blameless (v8), because "God is faithful" (v9). Henry: blameless "not in rigour of law, but from rich and free grace." Paul points a broken church to Jesus before he points to the problem.

The divisions (vv10–17). Paul *exhorts* by the Name rather than commanding. "Divisions" is *schismata*, a tear — Guzik stresses it means rents in the fabric, not polite differences of opinion. "Made complete" is *katartizō*, used of mending nets (Matt 4:21) and, Barclay notes, of setting a broken bone. Henry's rule is wise: "In the great things of religion be of a mind: but, when there is not a unity of sentiment, let there be a union of affections."

What was the "Christ" group (v12)? Views differ. (1) A super-spiritual party that claimed Christ against all human teachers — Guzik's "Jesus Party," "so carnal, following after mere men"; Henry: some "were for none of them, but Christ only." (2) Paul's own retort to the other three — less likely, since he lists it with the faults and answers it with "Has Christ been divided?" (3) Not formal parties at all: Guzik notes from 4:6 that Paul may have applied these names to himself and Apollos to cover factions around local people. Either way the root was pride: "It wasn't so much that they thought Apollos was great, but that they were great for following him" (Guzik). Henry: "Pride lay at the bottom."

Baptism (vv14–17) — where our teachers differ. Paul baptized Crispus (Acts 18:8), Gaius (Rom 16:23) and Stephanas' household (16:15). Guzik argues that if baptism were essential to salvation Paul could never thank God he baptized few, yet quotes Hodge that neglecting it is "a dangerous act of disobedience." Henry reads it as a matter of priority — Paul was sent "not so much to baptize as to preach" — and elsewhere in the chapter speaks of Christians "by baptism dedicated and devoted" to Christ. Spurgeon was a Baptist; Henry and Sproul baptized infants, and many in church history hold a higher view of what baptism does. All agree on Paul's point: the one who baptizes adds nothing, and nothing may stand beside the cross.

Don't empty the cross (v17). "Cleverness of speech" could make the cross *kenoō* — emptied. Spurgeon: "The cross of Christ is sublimely simple; to adorn it is to dishonour it." Sproul, preaching 1:17–25: "the greatest threat to the church in our day is based in our profound desire to be acceptable to the secular culture."

The word of the cross (vv18–25). Guzik: the message of the cross was like "message of the electric chair – except worse!" Notice the tenses: "those who are perishing" and "us who are being saved" — two groups on two roads, both still moving. Sproul: Caiaphas, Pilate and the centurion all looked at the same cross and saw different things; "For all outward appearances, it seemed to display the weakness of Christ. And yet the apostle says, it was the power of God." Isaiah 29:14 shows God has always overturned self-confident wisdom. Henry: "When God would save the world, he took a way by himself." The foolishness is in the *kērygma*, the message — "not such in truth, but in vulgar reckoning" (Henry).

Signs and wisdom (vv22–25). Guzik, quoting Fee: both demands become idolatry when they set the terms on which God must show Himself — the Jews had God "completely figured out," the Greeks made Him "ultimate Reason." A crucified Messiah was a contradiction to a Jew — "he who is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13) — and Paul himself once took that offense. To a Greek it was ridiculous; Henry's Greek scoffs, "What, hope to be saved by one that could not save himself!" But to "the called," Christ crucified is God's power and God's wisdom. Spurgeon: the effectual call "is always a special one."

Not many wise (vv26–29) — whom did God choose? Guzik applies it to the Corinthians themselves: "Look at yourselves. You're no great bargain." Henry reads it of the first preachers too ("A few fishermen were called out") and takes "the things that are not" as the Jewish way of naming Gentiles. *Not many* — not *not any* (the countess who was glad for the letter "m"). Calvin (in Guzik): God "brings all of them down to one common level." Spurgeon preaches it as election: "There is no doctrine more truly humbling than the doctrine of election." Not every

Christian reads verses 27–28 as Spurgeon does, but all agree on the purpose clause: "so that no man may boast before God."

Christ our everything (vv30–31). "By His doing" — *ex autou*, from Him — "you are in Christ Jesus." Christ became **wisdom** from God, and that wisdom is spelled out in three gifts: **righteousness** — a right standing credited to us, not earned (Guzik); **sanctification** — set apart to God, the same root as "sanctified" in v2; **redemption** — "a word from the slave trade" (Guzik). Henry: "He never discharges from the guilt of sin, without delivering from the power of it." Spurgeon: we are redeemed by price now, by power at His coming — "You are not yet redeemed altogether." Then Jeremiah 9:24: "let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me."

Word study (Greek):

- **apostle — *apostolos* (G652):** one sent with a commission; an ambassador (v1).
- **church — *ekklēsia* (G1577):** a called-out assembly; the Septuagint's word for Israel gathered (v2).
- **sanctified — *hagiazō* (G37):** set apart as holy; perfect tense — have been and remain (v2).
- **saints — *hagios* (G40):** holy ones; with **called — *klētos* (G2822):** "called holy ones" (vv2, 24).
- **grace — *charis* (G5485)** and **gift — *charisma* (G5486):** unearned favor and the gifts it gives (vv3–4, 7).
- **confirm — *bebaioō* (G950):** make firm, guarantee (vv6, 8).
- **blameless — *anenklētos* (G410):** unaccusable; no charge that will stand (v8).
- **faithful — *pistos* (G4103):** trustworthy; first word of v9 in Greek.
- **fellowship — *koinōnia* (G2842):** sharing, partnership — with His Son (v9; 10:16).
- **divisions — *schisma* (G4978):** a tear, a rent (v10; Matt 9:16).
- **made complete — *katartizō* (G2675):** mend, restore, set a bone (v10; Matt 4:21).
- **quarrels — *eris* (G2054):** strife, rivalry (v11; Gal 5:20; 1 Cor 3:3).
- **divided — *merizō* (G3307):** parcelled out into shares (v13; Mark 3:24).
- **made void — *kenoō* (G2758):** emptied (v17; Phil 2:7).
- **cross — *stauros* (G4716):** the Roman execution stake (vv17–18).
- **foolishness — *mōria* (G3472):** nonsense; in the NT only in 1 Corinthians (1:18, 21, 23; 2:14; 3:19).
- **perishing — *apollymi* (G622) / being saved — *sōzō* (G4982):** both present tense — on the way (v18).
- **power — *dynamis* (G1411):** might, ability (vv18, 24).
- **wisdom — *sophia* (G4678):** skill, insight; the word Corinth prized most (×7 in NASB95).
- **debater — *syzētētēs* (G4804):** disputer; only here in the NT (v20).
- **message preached — *kērygma* (G2782):** the herald's announcement, the content proclaimed (v21).
- **was well-pleased — *eudokeō* (G2106):** to take delight (v21; Matt 3:17).
- **signs — *sēmeion* (G4592):** miraculous proofs (v22; Matt 12:38).
- **stumbling block — *skandalon* (G4625):** the trigger of a trap; what trips a person up (v23).
- **chosen — *eklegomai* (G1586):** chose for Himself (vv27–28, three times).
- **shame — *kataischynō* (G2617):** put to shame, disgrace (v27).
- **base — *agenēs* (G36):** low-born, without family (v28; opposite of *eugenēs*, noble, G2104).
- **despised — *exoutheneō* (G1848):** count as nothing (v28; Luke 23:11).
- **nullify — *katargeō* (G2673):** make powerless, abolish (v28; 15:26).

- **boast — *kauchaomai* (G2744):** glory, brag (vv29, 31).
- **righteousness — *dikaiosynē* (G1343); sanctification — *hagiasmos* (G38); redemption — *apolytrōsis* (G629):** right standing, holiness, release by ransom (v30).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **Paul calls them saints before he corrects them** — sanctified, perfect tense, by God's act (v2).
2. **The Name comes before the problem** — "Christ" ten times in vv1–10.
3. **Their future rests on God's faithfulness, not their progress** (vv8–9).
4. **Division is a tear, unity is a bone set** — *schisma* and *katartizō* (v10).
5. **Party spirit is pride wearing a famous name** (Guzik, Henry).
6. **The cross can be preached into emptiness** — Spurgeon: "to adorn it is to dishonour it" (v17).
7. **The same cross sorts every hearer** — perishing and being saved are both present tense (v18; Sproul).
8. **God was glad to save this way** — *eudokēsen*, the Father's word at the Jordan (v21).
9. **Not many — not none** (v26).
10. **Christ is all four things we lack** — wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption (v30).

Cross-references: Num 16:3; Deut 21:23; 23:1; Prov 13:10; Isa 19:12; 29:14; 33:18; 55:8–9; Jer 9:23–24; Matt 3:17; 4:21; 9:16; 12:38; Mark 3:24; Luke 23:11; John 6:30; 17:21; Acts 9; 17:16–34; 18:1–18, 24–28; Rom 1:16, 22; 4:17; 9:33; 16:23; 1 Cor 2:1–5; 3:3–4; 4:6; 10:16; 15:26; 16:15; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 5:20; 6:14; Eph 4:1–6; Phil 1:6; 2:7; Col 1:22; 1 Thess 5:24; 1 Tim 3:10; Titus 1:6–7; Jas 2:5.

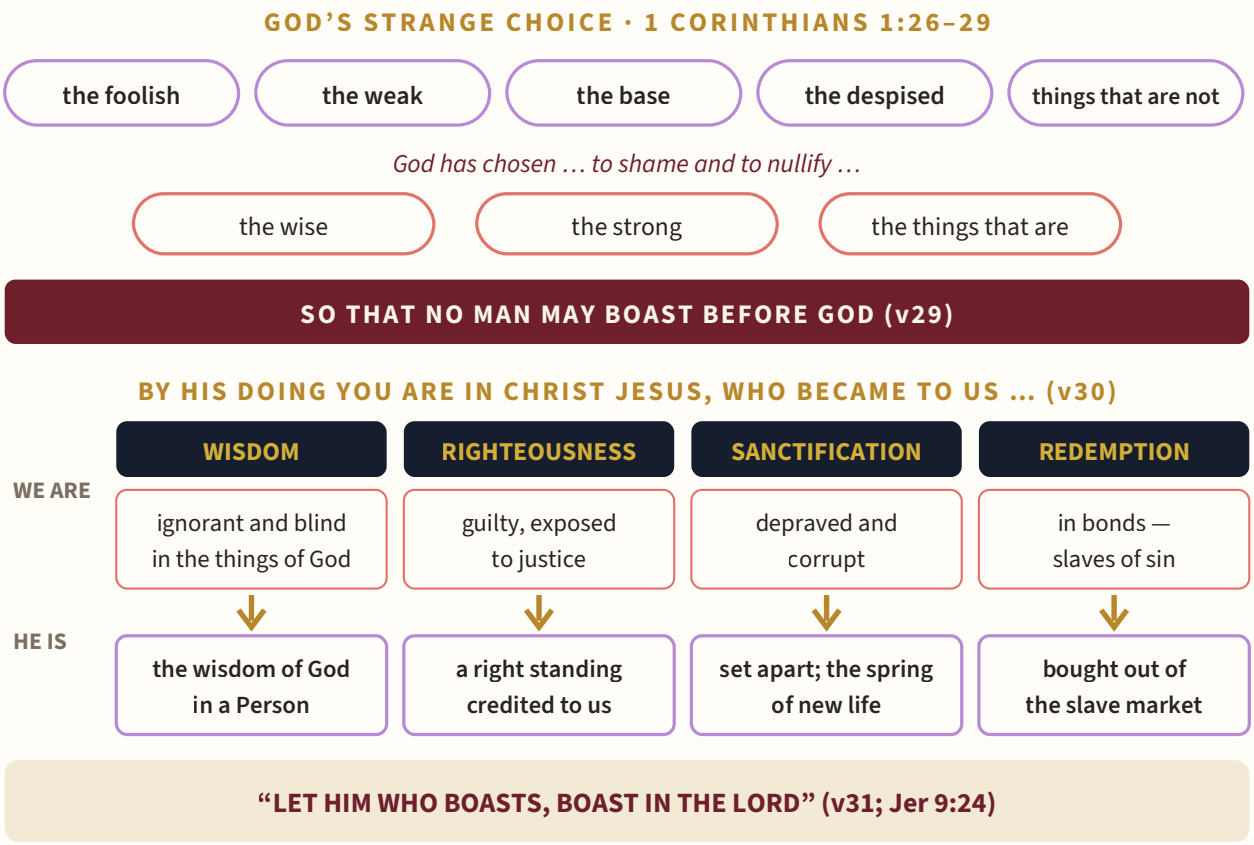
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 1:9

"△ God is faithful, through whom you were ☆ called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

FIGURE · GOD'S CHOICE AND CHRIST'S FOURFOLD GIFT



God picks the people the world counts as nothing, removes every ground for boasting, and then gives them Christ as all four things they lack (the "we are" row follows Matthew Henry).

Promise to trust — God finishes what He starts. Paul wrote "God is faithful" (v9) to a church full of mess. Christ "will also confirm you to the end, blameless" (v8). My hope of finishing does not rest on my track record; it rests on His. For the man who has relapsed and thinks God must be done with him: read verses 8 and 9 again. God called you into fellowship with His Son, and God does not quit. Spurgeon says it plainly: "To be kept holy is better than merely to be kept safe" — and the same God does both.

Truth to live in — I am a saint by calling. Paul called the Corinthians saints before he said one hard thing to them. I spent years thinking "saint" was a word for somebody else. It isn't a grade I earn; it's a name God gives when He sets me apart in Christ Jesus. Now I get to grow into the name.

Sin to confess — the pride under the division. "I am of Paul" sounds like loyalty; it is really me making myself bigger by attaching to the right name. I confess the ways I rank teachers, churches, programs and even recovery groups, and look down on brothers who sit under someone else. "Has Christ been divided?" (v13). No. Then I shouldn't be.

Command to obey — agree in Christ. "That you all agree and that there be no divisions among you" (v10). The word for "made complete" is the word for mending nets and setting a bone. Unity in a church — or in a men's group — is not everyone thinking alike on everything; it is a broken thing being set straight around Christ. Henry's word helps me: where we can't have "a unity of sentiment," we can still have "a union of affections." This week I'll go to the brother I've been keeping my distance from.

Warning to heed — don't empty the cross. Paul refused clever speech "so that the cross of Christ would not be made void" (v17). When I teach, I can impress men or I can point them to Jesus crucified. Only one of those saves anybody. I don't have to make the gospel respectable; I have to make it plain.

For the men I walk with — God chose the nobodies. "Not many wise … not many mighty, not many noble" (v26). A record, a diagnosis, an addiction, a past — the world counts those against a man. God counts them as the very place He loves to work, "so that no man may boast before God" (v29). If you feel like one of "the things that are not," you are exactly who God picks to put the proud to shame. You don't need a résumé. You need Christ.

Promise to trust — Christ is all four. He "became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (v30). I don't have to manufacture my own wisdom, my own standing with God, my own holiness or my own freedom. Redemption is a slave-market word: someone paid to walk me off the auction block. For the man in a cell and the man in chains no one else can see, that is the gospel in one word.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul called a messy church "saints" before he corrected it. What would change if I saw the men at this table — and myself — the way God has already named us? (1:2; Acts 18:10) *Sanctified, perfect tense: set apart by God before we act like it.*
2. Where do I quietly say "I am of …" — a preacher, a program, a recovery group, a church — in a way that lets me look down on another brother? (1:10–13; 3:3–4) *Henry: "Pride lay at the bottom, and this made them factious."*
3. Is there a brother I have torn away from? What would "setting the bone" look like this week? (1:10; Gal 6:1) *Katartizō: mend, restore, set back in place.*
4. When I share the gospel, do I try to make it sound impressive or reasonable — and empty it — or do I let the cross be the cross? (1:17–18, 23; 2:1–2) *Spurgeon: "to adorn it is to dishonour it."*
5. What "signs" or "wisdom" do I demand from God before I will trust Him? (1:22–24; Isa 55:9) *Both demands set the terms; God answers with Christ crucified.*
6. Which part of my past do I think disqualifies me? How do verses 26–31 answer it? (1:26–31; Jas 2:5) *God chooses "the things that are not" — so that no one boasts but in the Lord.*

Worship. The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men (v25). The cross looked like the end of Jesus and was the power of God. The church at Corinth looked like a mess and was the church of God. I look like one of "the things that are not" — and by His doing I am in Christ Jesus. Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You are my wisdom, my righteousness, my holiness and my redemption. Forgive me for boasting in men, in programs, or in myself. Heal the tears in Your body where I have helped cause them, and set

the bones back in place. Keep me from emptying Your cross with clever words. Thank You that You chose the weak and the despised — and You chose me. Keep me to the end, because You are faithful. I boast in You alone. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see 1-Corinthians-1-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.

SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 2

Christ Crucified and the Mind of Christ — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

A trembling man preached a crucified Savior in the Spirit's power, so that faith would rest on God and not on the messenger. What the world cannot see, the Spirit shows to everyone who loves God — and in Christ we are given His very mind.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 2 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,

4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

9 but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

15 But he who is spiritual ⟲ appraises all things, yet he himself is ⟲ appraised by no one.

16 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But ☆ we have the mind of Christ.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “superiority of speech” — Sin / warning
- **v1** “the testimony of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v2** “I determined” — Command / instruction
- **v2** “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” — God — His character & actions
- **v3** “in weakness and in fear and in much trembling” — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** “persuasive words of wisdom” — Sin / warning
- **v4** “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” — God — His character & actions
- **v5** “the power of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “who are passing away” — Sin / warning
- **v7** “the hidden wisdom” — God — His character & actions
- **v7** “predestined before the ages to our glory” — Promise / blessing
- **v8** “the Lord of glory” — God — His character & actions
- **v9** “ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM” — Promise / blessing
- **v10** “to us God revealed them through the Spirit” — God — His character & actions
- **v10** “the depths of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v12** “not the spirit of the world” — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** “the Spirit who is from God” — Promise / blessing
- **v12** “freely given to us by God” — Promise / blessing
- **v13** “taught by the Spirit” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God” — Sin / warning
- **v14** “foolishness to him” — Sin / warning
- **v16** “we have the mind of Christ” — Promise / blessing
- **v1** “wisdom” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v4** “Spirit” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v14** “appraised” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v15** “appraises” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

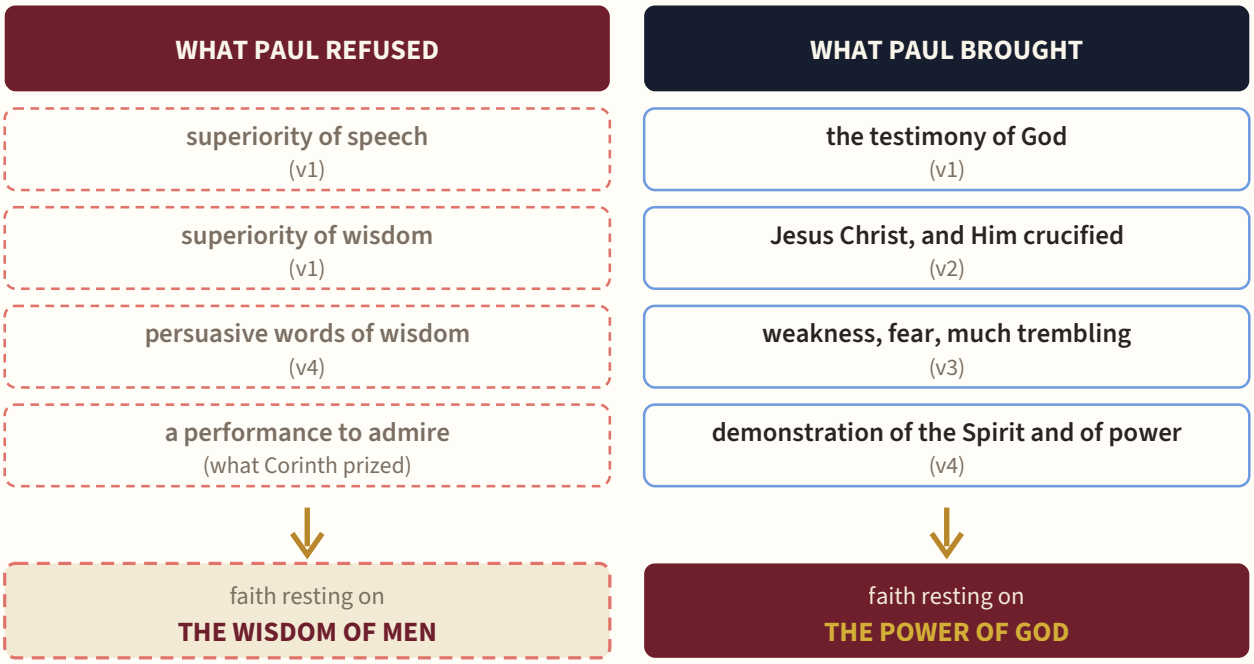
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 2:10

"For to us △God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even △the depths of God."

FIGURE · TWO FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITH



Guzik: "what you draw them with is what you draw them to." — Paul chose the right-hand column on purpose (v5).

Paul set aside everything in the left column on purpose, so that the faith of the Corinthians would rest on the foundation at the bottom right (v5).

Setting. Paul keeps going with the argument of 1:17–31. He has said God saves through the "foolish" message of the cross and calls "foolish" people; now he shows that he *preached* that way too (vv1–5). Then he turns the word "wisdom" around: the gospel *is* wisdom — God's, not the world's — and only the Spirit can open it (vv6–16). Paul had come to Corinth from Athens (Acts 17–18) and stayed a year and a half.

Who: Paul ("when I came to you, brethren," v1); the Corinthians; "those who are mature" (v6); "the rulers of this age" (vv6, 8); the Lord of glory (v8); "those who love Him" (v9); the Spirit of God (vv10–14); the natural man (v14) and the spiritual man (v15).

Structure:

- vv1–5 — **how Paul came:** not with superiority of speech or of wisdom (v1); "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (v2); in weakness, fear and much trembling (v3); not

persuasive words of wisdom but "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (v4) — **purpose:** "so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (v5).

- vv6–9 — **God's hidden wisdom:** spoken among the mature; not of this age or of its rulers, who are passing away (v6); a mystery predestined before the ages "to our glory" (v7); had the rulers understood it, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (v8); Isaiah 64:4 paraphrased (v9).
- vv10–13 — **revealed by the Spirit:** God revealed it "through the Spirit," who searches "the depths of God" (v10); only a man's spirit knows his thoughts, only God's Spirit knows God's (v11); we received the Spirit "so that we may know the things freely given to us by God" (v12), and speak in words the Spirit teaches (v13).
- vv14–16 — **two kinds of men:** the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit; they are foolishness to him (v14); the spiritual man appraises all things (v15); Isaiah 40:13 quoted, then the climax: "But we have the mind of Christ" (v16).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "wisdom" ×9 — vv1, 4, 5, 6 (×2), 7 (×2), 8, 13.
- "Spirit" ×7 — vv4, 10 (×2), 11, 12, 13, 14; plus "spirit" ×2 — v11 ("the spirit of the man"), v12 ("the spirit of the world"). Nine in all (Greek *pneuma*).
- "spiritual / spiritually" ×4 — vv13 (×2), 14, 15.
- "God" ×11 — vv1, 5, 7, 9, 10 (×2), 11 (×2), 12 (×2), 14; plus "God's" v7.
- knowing words ×8 — "know" vv2, 12; "knows" v11 (×2); "understood" v8 (×2); "understand" v14; "known" v16.
- "things" ×6 — vv9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15.
- "age / ages" ×4 — vv6 (×2), 7, 8; "rulers" ×2 — vv6, 8.
- "speech / speak" ×4 — vv1, 6, 7, 13; "words" ×3 — vv4, 13 (×2).
- "appraised / appraises" ×3 — vv14, 15 (×2) (Greek *anakrinō*).
- "man" ×4 — vv9, 11 (×2), 14; "men" ×2 — vv5, 11.
- pairs: "power" vv4, 5; "crucified" vv2, 8; "glory" vv7, 8; "Lord" vv8, 16; "mind" v16 (×2).

Contrasts: wisdom of men ⟷ power of God (v5); persuasive words ⟷ demonstration of the Spirit (v4); wisdom of this age ⟷ God's hidden wisdom (vv6–7); rulers passing away ⟷ "to our glory" (vv6–7); the spirit of the world ⟷ the Spirit who is from God (v12); words taught by human wisdom ⟷ words taught by the Spirit (v13); the natural man ⟷ the spiritual man (vv14–15); who has known the mind of the LORD? ⟷ we have the mind of Christ (v16).

Time words: "when I came to you" (v1); "before the ages" (v7); "this age … passing away" (v6).

Terms of purpose / explanation: "so that your faith would not rest" (v5); "for if they had understood it" (v8); "for the Spirit searches all things" (v10); "so that we may know" (v12); "because they are spiritually appraised" (v14).

Shape of the chapter: a descent — from the surface (what the Corinthians saw in Paul, 1–5), to a wisdom hidden beneath (6–9), into the depths of God that only the Spirit searches (10–13), and finally inside the believer, who is given the mind of Christ (14–16). "Wisdom" dominates the first half, "Spirit" the second; by verse 16 they have met.

Chapter theme (my words): God's wisdom is a crucified Christ, preached by a weak man, so that faith rests on God's power. What no eye could see, the Spirit reveals to those who love Him — and He gives them the mind of Christ.

02 Interpretation

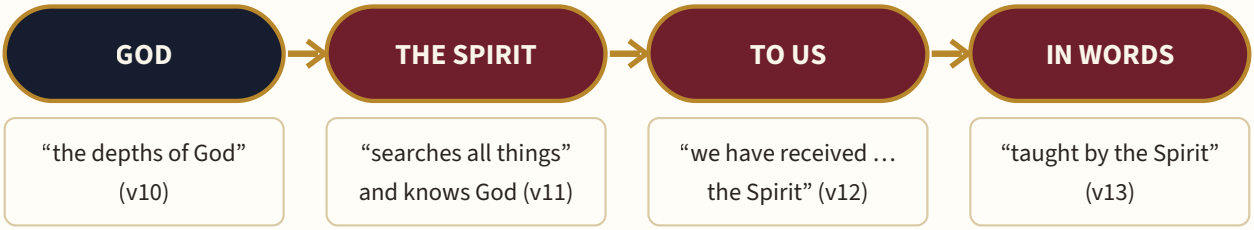
WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14

"But ⚠ a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and ⚠ he cannot understand them, because ◷ they are spiritually appraised."

FIGURE · FROM THE DEPTHS OF GOD TO THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES

HOW THE DEPTHS OF GOD REACH US · 1 CORINTHIANS 2:10–13



THE ARGUMENT OF VERSE 11 — LIKE IS KNOWN BY LIKE

the thoughts of a man	=	the thoughts of God
known only by "the spirit of the man"		known only by "the Spirit of God"

Not "the spirit of the world" but "the Spirit who is from God" —
"so that we may know the things freely given to us by God" (v12)

Follow the arrows: what no eye saw is known by the Spirit, given to us, and spoken in words He teaches — and verse 11 shows why only He can do it.

FIGURE · THE NATURAL MAN AND THE SPIRITUAL MAN

1 COR 2:14–16	THE NATURAL MAN *psychikos — soul-level only*	THE SPIRITUAL MAN *pneumatikos — Spirit-indwelt*
GOD'S THINGS	"does not accept the things of the Spirit of God" (v14)	has "received … the Spirit who is from God" (v12)
HOW THEY LOOK	"foolishness to him" (v14; compare 1:18)	"the things freely given to us by God" (v12)
ABILITY	"he cannot understand them" — no organ to see with (v14)	"appraises all things" (v15)
UNDER EXAMINATION	judges by what works, the bottom line (Guzik)	"appraised by no one" — no natural standard fits him (v15)
THE MIND	"Who has known the mind of the Lord?" (v16, from Isa 40:13)	"But we have the mind of Christ" (v16)

What moves a man from the left column to the right is not education but new birth.
Spurgeon: "you cannot educate an old nature into a new one."

Paul's two men differ not in intelligence but in the Spirit: one cannot receive God's things, the other has been given the mind of Christ.

How Paul preached (vv1–5). Guzik sets this against Corinth's love of polished rhetoric (Barclay: "Corinth put a premium on the veneer of false rhetoric and thin thinking"). Paul came as a witness, "an ambassador, not a salesman." Sproul calls verse 1 "the first principle of godly ministry and leadership—that we do not assume a posture of superiority." *(A textual note: some early manuscripts read "mystery" instead of "testimony" in v1; the meaning is close either way.)*

"Nothing … except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (v2). Not a refusal of all other knowledge. Fee (in Guzik) calls it a "singular focus"; Sproul calls it hyperbole, "a form of emphasis that uses intentional exaggeration," because "the central point of importance was the cross." Spurgeon's sermon title says it best: Paul was "The Man of One Subject." Paul had just come from Athens (Acts 17); some think he changed approach after Mars Hill, others answer that Acts 17 shows no failure. Either way the resolve is clear, and *ekrina* means a settled decision.

Weakness, fear and trembling (v3). Guzik: possibly illness, possibly the threat of persecution (Vincent; Calvin) — compare Acts 18:9–10, where the Lord told him not to be afraid. G. Campbell Morgan (in Guzik): "Those are the secrets of strength in all preaching." Henry reads it as humility — Paul "fearful of himself, lest he should mismanage in his trust." Sproul adds a pastor's angle: Paul "was constantly identifying with the weaknesses, fears, and trembling of his people."

The Spirit's demonstration (vv4–5). Guzik: "it is the preacher's job to preach and it is the Holy Spirit's job to demonstrate," and "what you draw them with is what you draw them to." Sproul: Paul's words are powerful only

"insofar as the Spirit of God attends them and uses them and carries them home." Henry: Paul preached plainly "lest it should be said that either rhetoric or logic had made them Christians."

Who are "the mature" (v6)? Guzik gives two readings: believers as opposed to unbelievers, or grown believers as opposed to infants. Since Paul calls the Corinthians "infants in Christ" in 3:1 and uses *teleios* elsewhere for grown believers (Phil 3:15; Eph 4:13; 1 Cor 14:20), the second has strong support. Henry: "those who are well instructed in Christianity."

Who are "the rulers of this age" (vv6, 8)? A real debate, going back to Origen and Chrysostom (Guzik). (1) The human rulers who crucified Jesus — Henry: "The Roman governor, and the guides and rulers of the Jewish church"; Morris (in Guzik): "Paul habitually ascribes power to the demonic forces, but not ignorance." (2) The demonic powers behind them, who did not foresee their own defeat at the cross (Col 2:15). (3) Both together. On any reading they did not understand God's plan — had they, they would never have crucified "the Lord of glory" — and they are passing away.

"The Lord of glory" crucified (v8). Guzik: perhaps the loftiest title Paul gives Jesus, "certain proof that Paul regarded Jesus as God." Henry: "a title much too great for any creature to bear." Sproul (in *The Truth of the Cross*, not on this verse) guards how to say it: the divine nature did not die, but "It's the God-man Who dies."

"Eye has not seen" (v9). Often read at funerals as a description of heaven. Guzik argues that misses the context: verse 10 says God *has revealed* these things, so Paul means the gospel now made known (Clarke agrees). Spurgeon: "the apostle is not talking about heaven at all" — though he then applies the principle to heaven. Henry holds both: things prepared "in a future life," but here especially "the subject-matter of the divine revelation under the gospel." Paul is paraphrasing Isaiah 64:4 (Hodge in Guzik: "To use the language of Scripture").

The Spirit who searches (vv10–12). Only a man's own spirit knows his thoughts; only God's Spirit knows God's. Guzik's picture: you can guess what your dog is thinking, but you won't really know unless it could tell you. Henry draws from these verses "a double argument" for the Spirit's deity. Sproul keeps it anchored: this is not "psychic experience or mystical intuition" — "through the Spirit, God speaks to us in the Scriptures." Guzik is careful: every believer can grasp the gospel's basics, but not every believer has equal wisdom.

Verse 13's last phrase. "Combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words" (NASB), "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (KJV), or "explaining spiritual things to spiritual persons" (Clarke, cited by Guzik). Henry reads it as comparing "one part of revelation with another," the New Testament with the types and prophecies of the Old. The Greek allows each.

Natural man and spiritual man (vv14–15) — faculty or will? The natural man (*psychikos*) lives on the level of the soul alone — unregenerate (Guzik). Spurgeon puts the problem in the man's equipment: "He lacks the organs, he has no ear of faith, no eye of faith," and "you cannot educate an old nature into a new one." Henry says it a little differently: "Not that the natural faculty of discerning is lost, but evil inclinations and wicked principles render the man unwilling." Both land in the same place: only the Spirit can do it. Guzik adds a warning for believers: we can drift into the natural man's way of judging — "what works," the "bottom line." And verse 15 does not put Christians above correction; it means no natural standard can rightly judge a spiritual man.

"We have the mind of Christ" (v16). Isaiah 40:13 asks who has directed the Spirit (Greek OT: the mind) of the LORD — Yahweh. Paul answers with Christ. Guzik: "because Jesus is Yahweh!" Henry: "the mind of Christ is the mind of God." Sproul: leaders must help God's people "reflect the mind of Christ and not the mind of the secular community in which we live."

Word study (Greek):

- **determined — *krinō* (G2919):** to judge, decide; a settled verdict (v2).
- **crucified — *stauroō* (G4717):** perfect participle in v2 — crucified and remaining the Crucified One (vv2, 8).
- **superiority / excellency — *hyperochē* (G5247):** a rising above; eminence (v1).
- **testimony — *martyrion* (G3142):** witness, evidence (v1).
- **weakness — *astheneia* (G769):** frailty, lack of strength, sometimes sickness (v3; 2 Cor 12:9).
- **trembling — *tromos* (G5156):** a quaking; with *phobos* (G5401), "fear and trembling" (v3).
- **persuasive — *peithos* (G3981):** enticing, persuasive; found nowhere else in the NT (v4).
- **demonstration — *apodeixis* (G585):** proof, a showing-forth; also only here (v4).
- **power — *dynamis* (G1411):** might, ability; the power of God on which faith rests (vv4, 5).
- **mature / perfect — *teleios* (G5046):** complete, full-grown (v6).
- **rulers / princes — *archōn* (G758):** a chief, a ruler (vv6, 8).
- **passing away — *katargeō* (G2673):** to make idle, nullify, abolish (v6; 1:28; 15:24, 26).
- **mystery — *mystērion* (G3466):** a secret now revealed by God, not a puzzle (v7).
- **hidden — *apokryptō* (G613):** to hide away; perfect participle, "having been hidden" (v7).
- **predestined — *proorizō* (G4309):** to mark out beforehand (v7; Rom 8:29).
- **glory — *doxa* (G1391):** honor, splendor — "to our glory," "the Lord of glory" (vv7, 8).
- **searches — *eraunaō* (G2045):** to examine closely, investigate (v10; Rom 8:27).
- **depths — *bathos* (G899):** the deep things (v10; Rom 11:33).
- **freely given — *charizomai* (G5483):** to give as a grace-gift (v12; Rom 8:32).
- **combining — *synkrinō* (G4793):** to combine, compare, interpret (v13; 2 Cor 10:12).
- **natural — *psychikos* (G5591):** soulish; of the natural life only (v14; 15:44–46; Jude 19).
- **accept — *dechomai* (G1209):** to receive, welcome (v14).
- **foolishness — *mōria* (G3472):** folly (v14; 1:18, 21, 23).
- **spiritual — *pneumatikos* (G4152):** of, from, or governed by the Spirit (vv13, 15).
- **appraise / discern — *anakrinō* (G350):** to examine and judge; ten of its sixteen NT uses are in 1 Corinthians (vv14, 15 ×2; Acts 17:11).
- **mind — *nous* (G3563):** understanding, way of thinking (v16; Rom 12:2).
- **instruct — *symbibazō* (G4822):** to bring together, teach (v16).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The cross was a decision, not a default** — *ekrina*, "I determined" (v2).
2. **Still the Crucified One** — the perfect participle; the gospel never graduates from the cross.
3. **What you draw them with is what you draw them to** (Guzik on v5).
4. **Weakness is the preacher's credential,** not his embarrassment (Sproul; 2 Cor 12:9).
5. **Verse 9 is about the gospel before it is about heaven** — verse 10 governs it (Guzik, Spurgeon).
6. **The Lord of glory was crucified** — a title "much too great for any creature to bear" (Henry).
7. **Like is known only by like** — only God's Spirit knows God's thoughts (v11).

8. **Illumination, not new revelation** — the Spirit speaks in the Scriptures (Sproul).
9. **Faculty or will?** Spurgeon and Henry put it differently; both say only the Spirit gives new life.
10. **Paul puts Christ where Isaiah put the LORD** (v16; Isa 40:13).

Cross-references: Isa 40:13; 64:4; Luke 23:34; John 5:39; 12:31; 14:26; 16:13–15; Acts 14:12; 17:11, 16–34; 18:1–11; Rom 8:5–9, 27, 32; 11:33–34; 12:2; 16:25–26; 1 Cor 1:17–31; 3:1–3; 4:20; 14:20; 15:24–26, 44–46; 2 Cor 4:5–7; 10:10; 12:9–10; Gal 6:14; Eph 3:3–7; 4:13; Phil 2:12; 3:15; Col 1:26–27; 2:15; 1 Thess 1:5; Jude 19.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 2:5

"so that your faith would not rest on ⚠the wisdom of men, but on △the power of God."

Example to follow — one subject. "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (v2). Corinth wanted a performer. Paul gave them a cross. When I sit across from a man coming off a binge, or a man counting down to his release date, or someone who just heard the word "cancer," I don't need to be clever. I need to keep bringing him back to Jesus and what He did on that cross. That is a decision I make before I walk in the room.

Promise to trust — weakness is not disqualification. Paul came "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (v3). That is a comfort to me. I don't have to feel strong to be used; I have to be willing. The Spirit does the demonstrating, "so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (v5). If a man is helped, it should be obvious it wasn't me. And I can sit *with* a man in his fear, the way Paul did, instead of talking down to him from somewhere above it.

Warning to heed — what I draw them with. Guzik is right: what you draw a man with is what you draw him to. If I win a man with my personality, the next personality can win him away. I want the men I serve leaning on Christ, not on me — which means I keep pointing past myself.

For the men I walk with — you're not on your own to figure it out. The things of God aren't learned by being smart; they are revealed "through the Spirit" (v10). A man with a GED and the Holy Spirit will understand the cross better than a scholar without Him — Sproul says sixteen Ph.D.s won't get a man into the depths of God. Don't let anyone tell you the Bible is too hard for you. Ask the Author to teach you, and open it every day. Be a Berean: examine the Scriptures (Acts 17:11 uses the same word as v15).

Promise to trust — what God has prepared. "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard … all that God has prepared for those who love Him" (v9). Paul says God has already begun to show us these things now, by His Spirit. For the one who has lost hope, or is facing a hard diagnosis: what God has prepared is bigger than you can picture, it is already in motion, and some of it He wants you to see today.

Sin to confess — thinking like a natural man. It's possible to know Christ and still judge everything by what the world calls success: numbers, money, what works. I confess the times I have measured my life and my ministry the world's way. I need to ask the Spirit to search me where I've started thinking like the natural man.

Command to obey — use the mind you've been given. "But we have the mind of Christ" (v16). Addiction trains a man's thinking in deep ruts: "I need it," "I deserve it," "no one will know." In Christ there is a different mind available. Renewing it (Rom 12:2) is a daily choice to think His thoughts after Him — in the Word, in prayer, with brothers who will call out the old thinking.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. If someone listened to me talk about my faith for a week, what would they say my one subject is? (2:2; Gal 6:14) *Paul determined to know nothing but Christ crucified — a decision, not a default.*
2. Where do I hide my weakness when I try to help another man — and what would change if I let it show? (2:3; 2 Cor 12:9) *Sproul: Paul identified with the weaknesses, fears and trembling of his people.*
3. What first drew me to Christ or to church? Is my faith resting on a person, a program, or the power of God? (2:4–5) *Guzik: what you draw them with is what you draw them to.*
4. What has the Spirit shown me in Scripture that I could never have figured out on my own? (2:10–12; John 16:13) *Only the Spirit knows the thoughts of God — and He has given them to us.*
5. Where am I still thinking like a natural man — judging my life by what works, the money, the bottom line? (2:14–15) *Guzik: believers can slip into the natural man's way of judging.*
6. Name one old rut of thinking I need to trade for the mind of Christ this week. Who will help me? (2:16; Rom 12:2) *The mind of Christ is a gift to receive and a way of thinking to practice.*

Worship. The Lord of glory let Himself be crucified by men who did not know who He was. The Spirit who searches the depths of God has opened those depths to people like me. No one can instruct the LORD — and yet He has given me the mind of His Son. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

Prayer. Holy Spirit, You search the depths of God and You know me through and through. Keep me fixed on Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Use my weakness so that no one's faith rests on me. Open the eyes of the men I serve to what You have freely given them, and renew our minds until we think the thoughts of Christ. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 3

God's Field, God's Building, God's Temple — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The church is God's field, God's building and God's temple, so the men who serve it are only servants and the only foundation is Christ. A day is coming when fire will show what each of us built — and meanwhile all things are ours, because we are Christ's.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 3 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,

3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men?

5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS";

20 and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS."

21 So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you,

22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you,

23 and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "men of flesh" — Sin / warning
- **v1** "infants in Christ" — Time / place / contrast
- **v2** "milk to drink, not solid food" — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** "jealousy and strife" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "walking like mere men" — Sin / warning
- **v4** "I am of Paul" — Sin / warning
- **v5** "the Lord gave opportunity to each one" — God — His character & actions
- **v6** "God was causing the growth" — God — His character & actions
- **v7** "God who causes the growth" — God — His character & actions
- **v8** "each will receive his own reward according to his own labor" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "God's fellow workers" — God — His character & actions
- **v9** "God's field, God's building" — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** "According to the grace of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v10** "each man must be careful how he builds on it" — Command / instruction
- **v11** "which is Jesus Christ" — God — His character & actions
- **v12** "gold, silver, precious stones" — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** "wood, hay, straw" — Time / place / contrast
- **v13** "the day will show it" — Time / place / contrast
- **v13** "the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work" — Sin / warning
- **v14** "he will receive a reward" — Promise / blessing
- **v15** "he will suffer loss" — Sin / warning
- **v15** "he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" — Promise / blessing
- **v16** "you are a temple of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v16** "the Spirit of God dwells in you" — God — His character & actions
- **v17** "God will destroy him" — Sin / warning
- **v17** "the temple of God is holy" — God — His character & actions
- **v18** "Let no man deceive himself" — Command / instruction
- **v18** "he must become foolish, so that he may become wise" — Command / instruction
- **v19** "the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God" — Sin / warning
- **v21** "let no one boast in men" — Command / instruction
- **v21** "all things belong to you" — Promise / blessing (every occurrence)
- **v23** "you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God" — God — His character & actions
- **v3** "fleshly" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v10** "foundation" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v13** "work" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v16** "temple" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 3:6

"I planted, Apollos watered, but △God was causing the growth."

FIGURE · FIELD, BUILDING, TEMPLE

GOD'S FIELD 1 Corinthians 3:5–9	GOD'S BUILDING 1 Corinthians 3:9–15	GOD'S TEMPLE 1 Corinthians 3:16–17
		
Paul planted, Apollos watered — **God caused the growth**	Paul laid the foundation, another builds on it — **the foundation is Christ**	you (plural) are God's sanctuary — His Spirit **dwells in you**
each receives his own reward for his own labor (v8)	*the fire will test the quality of each work (v13)*	*destroy the temple, and God destroys you (v17)*

ONE PEOPLE, THREE PICTURES — EACH MORE SACRED THAN THE LAST

Every picture belongs to God ("God's field, God's building … a temple of God") — none belongs to Paul or Apollos.

The same people pictured three ways — each picture belongs to God, each names what God does, and each ends in a warning that grows sharper.

Setting. Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8) to the church he planted in Corinth (Acts 18). Chapters 1–4 answer the report from "Chloe's people" (1:11) that the church had split into camps behind favorite teachers (1:12). Chapter 2 ended with the natural man and the one who is spiritual (2:14–15); chapter 3 opens by telling the Corinthians that, for all their talk of wisdom, they are still infants.

Who: Paul; Apollos; Cephas (v22); the Corinthians ("brethren," "infants in Christ"); "the Lord" who gave opportunity to each one (v5); God, who causes the growth, owns the field and the building, and dwells in the temple; "the Spirit of God" (v16); "any man" who builds (vv12–15), destroys (v17) or thinks himself wise (v18).

Structure:

- vv1–4 — **infants, not spiritual men:** milk, not solid food — "not yet able … even now you are not yet able" (v2). Jealousy and strife prove they are fleshly; "I am of Paul," "I am of Apollos" — "are you not mere men?"
- vv5–9 — **the field:** "What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants" (v5). Paul planted, Apollos watered, God was causing the growth (v6); the workers are not anything (v7) and are one (v8); each is paid according to his own labor. "We are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building" (v9).

- vv10–15 — **the building and the fire:** Paul laid the foundation as a wise master builder "according to the grace of God" (v10); no other foundation can be laid — Jesus Christ (v11). Six materials (v12); the day, the fire, the test of "quality" (v13); reward (v14) or loss — "he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (v15).
- vv16–17 — **the temple:** "you are a temple of God," indwelt by the Spirit; whoever destroys it, God will destroy him; "the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are."
- vv18–23 — **wisdom and belonging:** become foolish to become wise (v18); the world's wisdom is foolishness before God — Job 5:13 and Psalm 94:11 (vv19–20). "So then let no one boast in men" (v21): all things belong to you — Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, things present, things to come — "and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God" (v23).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "God" ×13 (counting "God's" ×3 in v9) — vv6, 7, 9 (×3), 10, 16 (×2), 17 (×3), 19, 23. Plus "Lord/LORD" ×2 (vv5, 20).
- build-words ×6 — "building" (vv9, 10), "builder" (v10), "builds" (vv10, 12), "built" (v14).
- "any man" ×5 — vv12, 14, 15, 17, 18; "each" ×5 — vv5, 8, 10, 13 (×2).
- "wise" ×5 — vv10, 18 (×2), 19, 20; with "wisdom" (v19), "foolish" (v18), "foolishness" (v19).
- "Apollos" ×4 — vv4, 5, 6, 22; "Paul" ×3 — vv4, 5, 22.
- "work" ×4 — vv13 (×2), 14, 15 (always "man's work").
- "Christ" ×4 — vv1, 11, 23 (×2).
- "foundation" ×3 — vv10, 11, 12; "fire" ×3 — vv13 (×2), 15; "temple" ×3 — vv16, 17 (×2) (the KJV has a fourth: "which temple ye are").
- plant-words ×3 — "planted" (v6), "plants" (vv7, 8); water-words ×3 — "watered" (v6), "waters" (vv7, 8); "growth" ×2 — vv6, 7.
- flesh-words ×3 — "men of flesh" (v1), "fleshly" (v3 ×2); "mere men" ×2 — vv3, 4.
- "belong(s)" ×3 — vv21, 22, 23; "all things" ×2 — vv21, 22; "reward" ×2 — vv8, 14; "not yet" ×2 — v2.

Three pictures of the church: a **field** (vv6–9), a **building** (vv9–15), a **temple** (vv16–17) — each more sacred than the last, and each called God's.

Contrasts: spiritual ⟷ men of flesh (v1); milk ⟷ solid food (v2); planting and watering (men) ⟷ causing the growth (God) (vv6–7); the one foundation ⟷ what is built on it (vv10–12); gold, silver, precious stones ⟷ wood, hay, straw (v12); work that remains ⟷ work burned up; reward ⟷ loss (vv14–15); wise in this age ⟷ foolish (v18); "boast in men" ⟷ "you belong to Christ" (vv21–23).

Lists: jealousy and strife (v3; KJV adds "divisions"); the six materials (v12); the eight things that belong to you (v22).

Commands / warnings: "each man must be careful how he builds on it" (v10); "God will destroy him" (v17); "Let no man deceive himself" (v18); "he must become foolish, so that he may become wise" (v18); "let no one boast in men" (v21).

Old Testament quoted: Job 5:13 (v19) and Psalm 94:11 (v20). Paul's wording of Psalm 94:11 says "of the wise" where the Psalm says "of man" (NASB: "The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath").

Time words: "not yet able … even now you are not yet able" (v2); "still fleshly" (v3); "the day will show it" (v13); "in this age" (v18); "things present or things to come" (v22).

Terms of conclusion: “So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything” (v7); “So then let no one boast in men” (v21).

Shape of the chapter: a nursery (1–4), a field (5–9), a building site on the day of fire (10–15), a sanctuary (16–17), and an inventory of everything the believer owns (18–23). It begins with men who say “I am of Paul” and ends with “you belong to Christ.”

Chapter theme (my words): The church is God’s field, God’s building and God’s temple — so the men who serve it are only servants, the only foundation is Christ, and the day is coming when fire will show what each of us actually built.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 3:15

"If any man's work is burned up, ⚠ he will suffer loss; but ☆ he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

FIGURE · THREE KINDS OF MEN

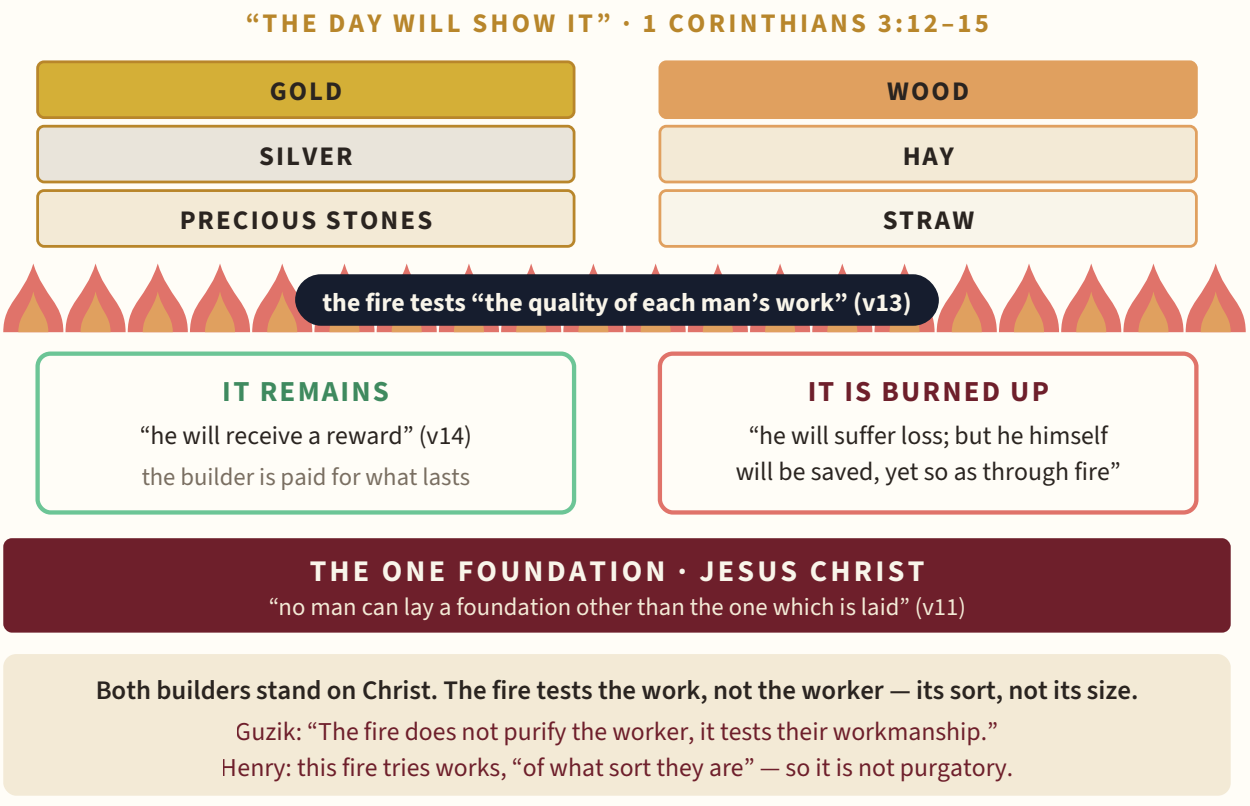
1 COR 2:14–3:4 three kinds of men	THE NATURAL MAN 2:14	MEN OF FLESH 3:1–4 · "infants in Christ"	THE SPIRITUAL MAN 2:15
THE SPIRIT	has not received the Spirit (2:12, 14)	has the Spirit — called "brethren" (3:1)	has received the Spirit from God (2:12)
THE FOOD	God's things are foolishness (2:14)	milk, not solid food; "not yet able" (3:2)	wisdom spoken to the mature (2:6)
THE SIGN	cannot understand them (2:14)	jealousy and strife; "I am of Paul" (3:3–4)	appraises all things (2:15)
THE WALK	lives as what he is: a natural man	"walking like mere men" (3:3)	grows up to solid food (3:2)

Paul still calls the middle group "brethren" and "in Christ" — and will not let them stay there.

Fee, quoted by Guzik: "Remaining worldly is not one of the options."

Read down each column: Paul's natural man and spiritual man from chapter 2, with the Corinthians in between — they have the Spirit but are living on milk and acting like mere men.

FIGURE · THE BUILDING AND THE FIRE



Two builders on the same foundation: on the day, the fire shows what sort of work each built — one is rewarded, the other loses his work but is saved, as one escaping a fire.

Context. Guzik outlines the chapter in three parts: carnality in the church (vv1–4), how to regard leaders (vv5–17, with the church as field, building and temple), and how to glorify God (vv18–23). The thread is the factions of 1:12 — the Corinthians had turned servants into celebrities. Henry: "We should take care not to deify ministers, nor put them into the place of God."

Is there such a thing as a "carnal Christian" (vv1–4)? Here our teachers differ, and I want my men to hear both. Paul calls these people "brethren" and "infants in Christ," so Guzik treats them as genuine believers in a fleshly condition, quoting Redpath: "The carnal Christian is a child of God, born again and on his way to heaven, but he is traveling third class." He sees three kinds of men across 2:14–3:3: natural, spiritual and carnal (see the figure). Sproul, preaching Romans 8, attacks the teaching that a man can be in Christ with "The self ... still on the throne" and no real change: "The idea of a carnal Christian is as far away from the Apostolic teaching as one can get" — "a deadly theology" that "creates a false sense of security." Where they agree: Paul is describing a condition to be rebuked and outgrown, not a category to rest in. Guzik, quoting Fee: "Remaining worldly is not one of the options."

Two words for flesh. *Sarkinos* (v1) is "made of flesh" — common human weakness; *sarkikos* (v3) is "fleshly" — Guzik: "the one who can and should do differently but does not." The KJV's "carnal" for both hides the shift.

Milk and solid food (v2). Guzik: "The difference between milk and solid food is one of degrees, not kind" — "There are not two gospels." God did not withhold the meat; the Corinthians had filled up on the "junk food" of eloquence

and human wisdom. Henry: a minister must teach as his hearers can bear — yet "babes in Christ should endeavour to grow."

What are Paul and Apollos (vv5–9)? Not "who" but "what": *diakonoi*, servants — "through whom you believed, not on whom you believed" (Guzik). Planted and watered are aorists, God's growing is imperfect: men take turns; God never stops working. Spurgeon: "Let your mind be set upon the Master and not upon the servants." Sproul: "Some of us can plant. Some of us can water. … When we plant and water, God will bring an increase." Reward is by labor, not results — Hodge (in Guzik): the faithful laborer in obscurity "will meet a reward far beyond" the man with great visible results.

The foundation and the fire (vv10–15). There is one foundation, Jesus Christ, already laid. Spurgeon: "It is not a question of comparison, but of monopoly." Guzik reads gold, silver and precious stones as temple materials (1 Chr 22:14, 16; 29:2) — fine building stone, not jewelry — and wood, hay and straw as cheap materials that cannot survive fire. The fire shows the *quality* of a man's work, not its quantity; Moody: converts "ought to be weighed as well as counted."

How the fire has been read:

- **The judgment of believers' works for reward** (Guzik, Henry, and most Protestant readers). "The day" is the Lord's coming (4:5; 2 Cor 5:10). The fire tests the work, not the worker; the man whose work burns loses his reward but "he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" — Spurgeon: "as a man flies out of a burning house."
- **Purgatory.** Roman Catholic teaching has used vv13–15 for a cleansing after death. Guzik rejects it: "The fire does not purify the worker, it tests their workmanship." Henry gives three reasons: the fire is figurative (no real fire consumes doctrines), it tests works rather than punishing sins, and it tests apostles too.
- **Who are the builders?** In context, first those who build the church — teachers like Paul and Apollos; Guzik: "first application to Christian leaders … but the application extends to all servants of God." Henry reads the wood and stubble mainly as corrupt doctrines and inventions built on the true foundation.

The temple (vv16–17). *Naos*, the sanctuary, not *hieron*, the temple grounds. The "you" is plural: the church together is God's dwelling; 6:19 applies the same word to each believer's body. Guzik: "The physical temple was the picture; God's dwelling in us is the reality." The same verb *phtheirō* is used twice — whoever ruins God's temple, God will ruin. Henry thinks Paul has in view false teachers whose loose doctrine would corrupt the church, while allowing that faction itself is in view; either way, "it matters to God how we treat His holy temple" (Guzik).

Two kinds of wisdom (vv18–20). Guzik hears sarcasm: of course the Corinthians thought themselves wise. The way to wisdom is to accept being a fool to the world. Paul quotes Job 5:13 and Psalm 94:11, changing the Psalm's "man" to "the wise." Sproul: "The fool is the person who has no reverence for God," and "A person can have unbounded knowledge and not have wisdom." Henry: "self-flattery is the very next step to self-deceit."

All things are yours (vv21–23). Why boast in a man? You don't belong to Paul — Paul belongs to you, and so do the world, life, death, the present and the future. Guzik: death "is our servant, not our master!" — like the angel who led Peter out (Acts 12). Henry: death "is the kind messenger that will fetch you to your Father's house." Spurgeon: "Death is ours, then, so we will not fear it." And the anchor: "you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God." Henry: "All things are ours, upon no other ground than our being Christ's."

Word study (Greek):

- **spiritual — *pneumatikos* (G4152):** belonging to and led by the Spirit (v1; 2:15).

- **of flesh — *sarkinos* (G4560):** made of flesh; ordinary human weakness (v1).
- **fleshly — *sarkikos* (G4559):** marked by the flesh in conduct; KJV "carnal" (v3 ×2).
- **infants — *nēpios* (G3516):** a baby, one not yet able to speak; opposite of "mature" (2:6).
- **milk — *gala* (G1051); solid food — *brōma* (G1033):** v2; compare Heb 5:12–14.
- **gave to drink / watered — *potizō* (G4222):** the same verb in v2 (Paul) and vv6–8 (Apollos).
- **jealousy — *zēlos* (G2205); strife — *eris* (G2054):** two of the works of the flesh (Gal 5:20).
- **servants — *diakonos* (G1249):** one who serves another, a table-waiter; a minister (v5).
- **planted — *phyteuō* (G5452):** aorist, a finished act (vv6–8).
- **was causing the growth — *auxanō* (G837):** imperfect — God's continuous work (vv6–7).
- **reward — *misthos* (G3408):** wages, pay (vv8, 14).
- **fellow workers — *synergos* (G4904):** co-laborers (v9).
- **field — *geōrgion* (G1091); building — *oikodomē* (G3619):** tilled land; a structure being built (v9).
- **master builder — *architektōn* (G753):** the head builder; our "architect" (v10).
- **foundation — *themelios* (G2310):** vv10–12; compare Isa 28:16; Eph 2:20.
- **straw / stubble — *kalamē* (G2562):** stalks left after harvest — fuel, not building stock (v12).
- **evident — *phaneros* (G5318):** visible, out in the open (v13).
- **test — *dokimazō* (G1381):** to assay metal by fire and approve what passes (v13).
- **remains — *menō* (G3306):** abides, survives the fire (v14).
- **suffer loss — *zēmioō* (G2210):** to forfeit, be fined (v15; Matt 16:26).
- **temple — *naos* (G3485):** the sanctuary itself — as opposed to *hieron* (G2411), the temple grounds (vv16–17).
- **destroy — *phtheirō* (G5351):** to ruin, corrupt — twice in v17, the sin and its judgment.
- **foolish — *mōros* (G3474):** v18; the word of 1:18–27.
- **craftiness — *panourgia* (G3834):** "ready for anything" — unscrupulous cleverness (v19; 2 Cor 11:3).
- **useless — *mataios* (G3152):** empty, futile (v20; Ps 94:11 "a mere breath").
- **boast — *kauchaomai* (G2744):** to glory, brag, rest confidence (v21; 1:31).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The chapter keeps moving the spotlight to God** — thirteen times in twenty-three verses.
2. **Made of flesh is one thing; fleshly is another** — weakness versus a chosen pattern (vv1, 3).
3. **Where the teachers part ways** — Guzik keeps the "carnal Christian" category; Sproul rejects it as a settled state; both say no one may stay there.
4. **Men take turns; God never stops** — aorist planting and watering, imperfect growth (vv6–7).
5. **Paid for labor, not results** (v8).
6. **Not comparison, but monopoly** — Christ the only foundation (Spurgeon, v11).
7. **The fire tests the work, not the worker** — its sort, not its size; not purgatory (vv13–15).
8. **Naos, not hieron** — we together are God's sanctuary (v16).
9. **The punishment matches the crime** — ruin God's temple and God ruins you (v17).
10. **The slogans turned inside out** — Paul is yours; you are Christ's (vv21–23).

Cross-references: 1 Chr 22:14–16; 29:2; Job 5:13; Ps 25:9; 94:11; Isa 5:1–7; 28:16; Matt 16:26; Acts 12:6–11; 18:1–11, 24–28; 1 Cor 1:10–13, 18–31; 2:6, 14–16; 4:5; 6:19–20; 2 Cor 5:10; 11:3; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 2:19–22; Heb 5:12–14; 1 Pet 2:2, 4–6; Rev 4:10–11.

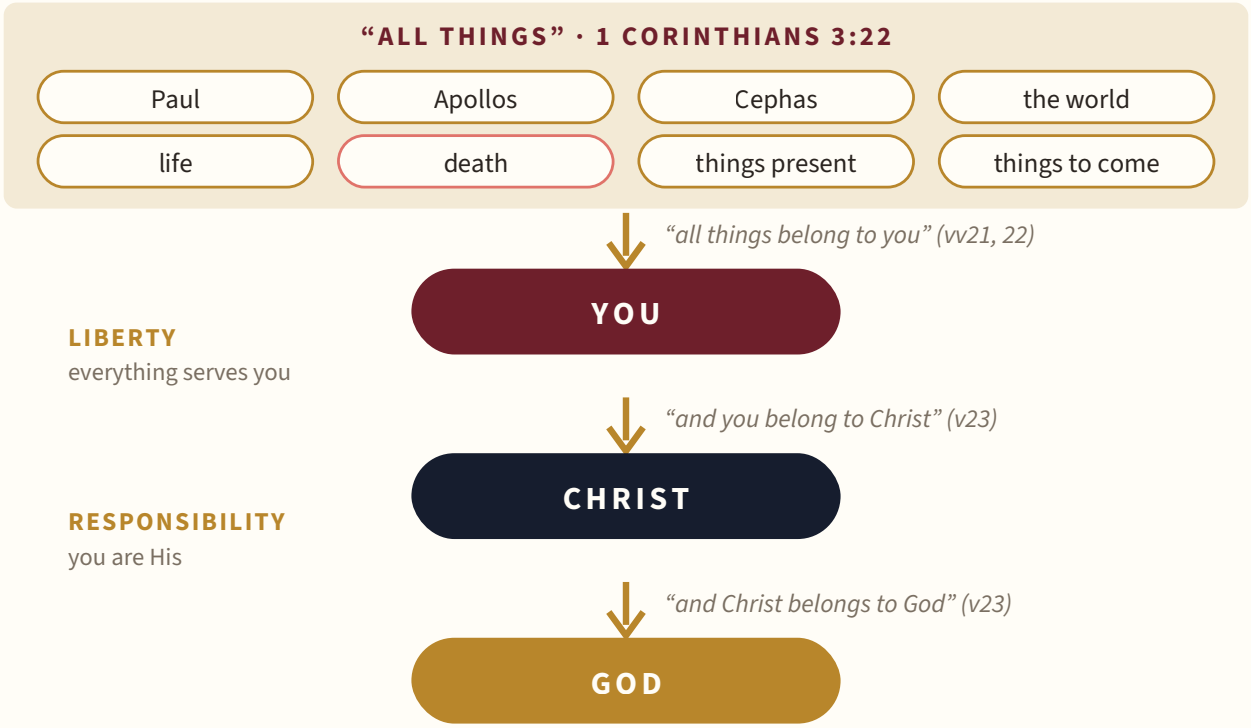
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 3:23

"and ☆ you belong to Christ; and △ Christ belongs to God."

FIGURE · THE CHAIN OF BELONGING



Guzik: "All are yours: This is Christian liberty. And you are Christ's: This is Christian responsibility."

Follow the arrows down: everything belongs to the believer, the believer belongs to Christ, and Christ belongs to God — so no one has reason to boast in men.

Sin to confess — the fan club in me. "I am of Paul," "I am of Apollos" (v4). Every age has its versions: my preacher, my program, my sponsor, my denomination, my way of doing recovery. Paul calls that fleshly — not a matter of taste. And he says the proof of the flesh isn't bad doctrine; it's jealousy and strife (v3). Lord, I confess the times I've measured men by whether they were "mine," and the times I've wanted men to be loyal to me instead of to You.

Example to follow — a servant, not a celebrity. "What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants" (v5). I plant, somebody else waters, and only God makes anything grow (v6). That takes the pressure off. When a man I've walked with relapses, it isn't mine to own as failure; when he stays sober, it isn't my trophy. I do my part faithfully and let God do His. Sproul said it plain: "Some of us can plant. Some of us can water."

Promise to trust — the hidden laborer is seen. "Each will receive his own reward according to his own labor" (v8) — not according to results. Some of the men I serve will never stand on a stage. A man faithfully praying for his cellmate, a man showing up to group one more time, a man caring for a sick wife — God pays for labor, not applause.

Warning to heed — what am I building with? There is one foundation, Jesus Christ (v11), and every one of us is building something on it. "Each man must be careful how he builds on it" (v10). The fire won't ask how big it was; it will test the "quality" of it (v13). A ministry built on my personality, my cleverness or my need to be needed is straw. A life built on the Word, prayer, honesty and love for Christ is stone. I want to be weighed, not just counted.

For the men I walk with — you are not just a building; you are a temple. "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (v16). For a man who has spent years treating his body and his mind like a trash can — with a bottle, with a screen, with whatever numbed the pain — this is the news that changes the way he sees himself. And Paul's "you" here is plural: God lives in us *together* — the group, the fellowship, the church. Gossip, division and contempt don't just hurt people; they tear at God's house (v17).

Promise to trust — even death is yours. "All things belong to you … life or death or things present or things to come" (vv21–22). For anyone facing a hard diagnosis or the end of a sentence that seems to have no end: death is not your master; in Christ it has become your servant — Henry calls it "the kind messenger that will fetch you to your Father's house." "And you belong to Christ" (v23) — that is the whole title deed.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. If someone watched how I handle conflict in the group, would they call me spiritual, or say I'm "walking like mere men"? (3:1–4; Gal 5:19–21) *Paul's proof of the flesh was not doctrine but jealousy and strife.*
2. Whose name have I been wearing like a badge — a preacher, a sponsor, a program, my own way of doing things? (3:4–5; 1:12) *Through whom you believed, not on whom you believed.*
3. Where am I frustrated because I want to water when God called me to plant — or want to make the growth happen myself? (3:6–8) *Planting and watering are done; growth is God's continuous work.*
4. What am I building on Christ right now with gold, silver and stone — and what with wood, hay and straw? (3:10–15; 2 Cor 5:10) *The fire tests what sort, not how much.*
5. How does it change the way I treat my brothers at this table to know that together we are God's temple? (3:16–17; 1 Pet 2:5) *Whoever ruins God's temple, God will ruin.*
6. What would it mean for me to believe this week that even death belongs to me because I belong to Christ? (3:21–23) *Henry: death is "the kind messenger that will fetch you to your Father's house."*

Worship. The field is His, the building is His, the temple is His. He gave the growth when nobody saw it; He laid the foundation in His Son before I ever picked up a brick; He lives in His people as in a holy house. All things are ours — and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Prayer. Lord God, You give the growth; I only plant and water. Keep me from boasting in men, including myself. Make me careful how I build, so that what I do for You will survive the fire. Remind me and the men I serve that we are Your temple — that Your Spirit lives in us — and that everything, even death, belongs to us because we belong to Christ. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 4

Servants, Stewards, and Fools for Christ — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

A servant of Christ answers to one Judge and is measured by faithfulness, not applause. Everything I have, I received — and the road Christ's servants walk looks like weakness and loss to the world, which is exactly why I should follow it.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 4 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.

4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

7 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

8 You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you.

9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.

11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless;

12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;

13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

14 I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus ☆ I became your father through the gospel.

16 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.

17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

18 Now some have become ⟲ arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.

19 But I will come to you soon, △ if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are ⟲ arrogant but their ⟲ power.

20 For △ the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.

21 What do you desire? Shall I come to you ⚠ with a rod, or with ☆ love and a spirit of gentleness?

Marked in the text

- **v1** “servants of Christ” — God — His character & actions
- **v1** “stewards of the mysteries of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v2** “be found trustworthy” — Command / instruction
- **v4** “I am not by this acquitted” — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** “the one who examines me is the Lord” — God — His character & actions
- **v5** “do not go on passing judgment before the time” — Command / instruction
- **v5** “wait until the Lord comes” — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** “until the Lord come” — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** “disclose the motives of men’s hearts” — God — His character & actions
- **v5** “each man’s praise will come to him from God” — Promise / blessing
- **v6** “not to exceed what is written” — Command / instruction
- **v7** “What do you have that you did not receive?” — God — His character & actions
- **v7** “why do you boast” — Sin / warning
- **v8** “you have become kings without us” — Sin / warning
- **v9** “God has exhibited us apostles last of all” — Time / place / contrast
- **v9** “a spectacle to the world” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “We are fools for Christ’s sake” — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** “when we are reviled, we bless” — Command / instruction
- **v13** “the scum of the world” — Sin / warning
- **v15** “I became your father through the gospel” — Promise / blessing
- **v16** “be imitators of me” — Command / instruction
- **v19** “if the Lord wills” — God — His character & actions
- **v19** “if the Lord will” — God — His character & actions
- **v20** “the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power” — God — His character & actions
- **v21** “with a rod” — Sin / warning
- **v21** “love and a spirit of gentleness” — Promise / blessing
- **v3** “examined” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v3** “examine” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v4** “examines” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v6** “arrogant” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v7** “receive” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v7** “received” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v19** “power” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 4:10

"We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor."

FIGURE · KINGS IN CORINTH, FOOLS FOR CHRIST

1 COR 4:8–13	"YOU" — THE CORINTHIANS as they saw themselves	"WE" — THE APOSTLES as God exhibited them
FULLNESS	already filled (v8)	hungry and thirsty (v11)
WEALTH	already become rich (v8)	poorly clothed; homeless (v11)
RANK	kings without us (v8)	last of all, condemned to death (v9)
WISDOM	prudent in Christ (v10)	fools for Christ's sake (v10)
STRENGTH	strong (v10)	weak (v10)
HONOR	distinguished (v10)	without honor (v10)

HOW THE APOSTLES ANSWER (vv12–13)

reviled → we bless | **persecuted → we endure** | **slandered → we try to conciliate**

and so "the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now" (v13)

Read each row across: everything the Corinthians claimed for themselves stands opposite what the apostles were actually living — and the bottom band shows how the apostles answered the abuse.

Setting. The close of Paul's long answer to the factions (chs. 1–4). Chapter 3 told the Corinthians how to regard *themselves* — God's field, building and temple. Chapter 4 tells them how to regard *Paul and Apollos*, then turns the light on the Corinthians' pride before Paul announces that Timothy is coming, and so is he. Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8) to a church he planted (Acts 18).

Who: Paul; Apollos (v6); "us apostles" (v9); the Corinthians; "the Lord" who examines and will come (vv4–5); God, who gives praise (v5) and exhibits the apostles (v9); the world, angels and men watching (v9); "countless tutors" vs. a father (v15); Timothy, "my beloved and faithful child in the Lord" (v17); "some" who have become arrogant (v18).

Structure:

- vv1–5 — **servants and stewards:** regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God; what is required is that one be found trustworthy (v2). Paul is not finally judged by the Corinthians, by any human

court, or even by himself — "the one who examines me is the Lord" (v4). So do not pass judgment before the time; the Lord will bring hidden things to light, and each man's praise will come from God (v5).

- vv6–7 — **the point of it all:** Paul applied these things to himself and Apollos so that they would learn "not to exceed what is written" and not be arrogant for one against another; three questions (v7).
- vv8–13 — **the irony:** the Corinthians already filled, rich, reigning "without us" (v8), beside the apostles — last of all, condemned to death, a spectacle (v9); fools, weak, without honor (v10); hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless, toiling (vv11–12); reviled → bless, persecuted → endure, slandered → conciliate; the scum of the world (vv12–13).
- vv14–17 — **a father's warning:** not to shame but to admonish; countless tutors, not many fathers; "be imitators of me" (v16); Timothy sent to remind them of Paul's ways in Christ (v17).
- vv18–21 — **Paul is coming:** some are arrogant as though he were not; he will come, if the Lord wills, and test their power, not their words (v19), "for the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power" (v20); a rod, or love and a spirit of gentleness? (v21).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "you" ×27 — vv3, 6 (×2), 7 (×6), 8 (×4), 10 (×3), 14 (×2), 15 (×2), 16, 17 (×2), 18, 19, 21 (×2); "we" ×13, all in vv8–13 — vv8, 9, 10 (×2), 11, 12 (×5), 13 (×3); "us" ×4 — vv1, 6, 8, 9. The chapter is built on "you" against "we."
- "I" ×17 — vv3 (×2), 4 (×2), 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17 (×2), 18, 19 (×2), 21.
- "Christ" ×6 — vv1, 10 (×2, including "Christ's"), 15 (×2), 17; "in Christ" ×4 — vv10, 15 (×2), 17.
- "Lord" ×4 — vv4, 5, 17, 19; "God" ×4 — vv1, 5, 9, 20.
- "examine / examined / examines" ×3 — vv3 (×2), 4 (Greek *anakrinō*); with "passing judgment" (v5).
- "come / comes / coming" ×5 — vv5 (×2: the Lord comes; praise will come), 18, 19, 21.
- "arrogant" ×3 — vv6, 18, 19 (KJV "puffed up").
- "receive / received" ×3 — all in v7.
- "already" ×2 — v8; "kings / reign" ×3 — v8.
- "stewards" ×2 — vv1, 2; "trustworthy / faithful" ×2 — vv2, 17.
- "world" ×2 — vv9, 13; "men / men's" ×3 — vv5, 9 (×2).
- "but" ×8 — vv4, 5, 10 (×3), 14, 19, 20.
- "words" ×2 and "power" ×2 — vv19, 20.
- "father(s)" ×2 — v15; "children / child" ×2 — vv14, 17.

Contrasts: servants and stewards ⟷ masters and owners (vv1–2). Your court, any human court, my conscience ⟷ the Lord (vv3–4). Before the time ⟷ until the Lord comes (v5). Received ⟷ boast as if not received (v7). Filled, rich, reigning (you) ⟷ last, condemned, a spectacle (us) (vv8–9); prudent ⟷ fools; strong ⟷ weak; distinguished ⟷ without honor (v10). Reviled ⟷ bless; persecuted ⟷ endure; slandered ⟷ conciliate (vv12–13). To shame ⟷ to admonish (v14). Tutors ⟷ father (v15). Words ⟷ power (vv19–20). A rod ⟷ love and a spirit of gentleness (v21).

Lists: the apostles' hardships (vv11–13) — hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless, toiling with their own hands; their three answers (vv12–13); the six claims of Corinth and their opposites (vv8–10).

Questions: three in v7 ("who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? … why do you boast…?") and two in v21 ("What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love…?").

Time words: “before the time … until the Lord comes … then” (v5); “already” (v8, twice); “to this present hour” (v11); “even until now” (v13); “soon, if the Lord wills” (v19).

Terms of conclusion: “Therefore do not go on passing judgment” (v5); “Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me” (v16); “For this reason I have sent to you Timothy” (v17).

Shape of the chapter: a job description (1–2), a courtroom (3–5), a mirror (6–7), a parade into the arena (8–13), a family (14–17), and a choice at the door (18–21). It begins with “servants of Christ” and ends with a father who would rather come in gentleness.

Chapter theme (my words): A servant of Christ answers to one Judge and is measured by faithfulness, not applause — and the path he walks looks like weakness and loss to the world, which is exactly why I should follow it.

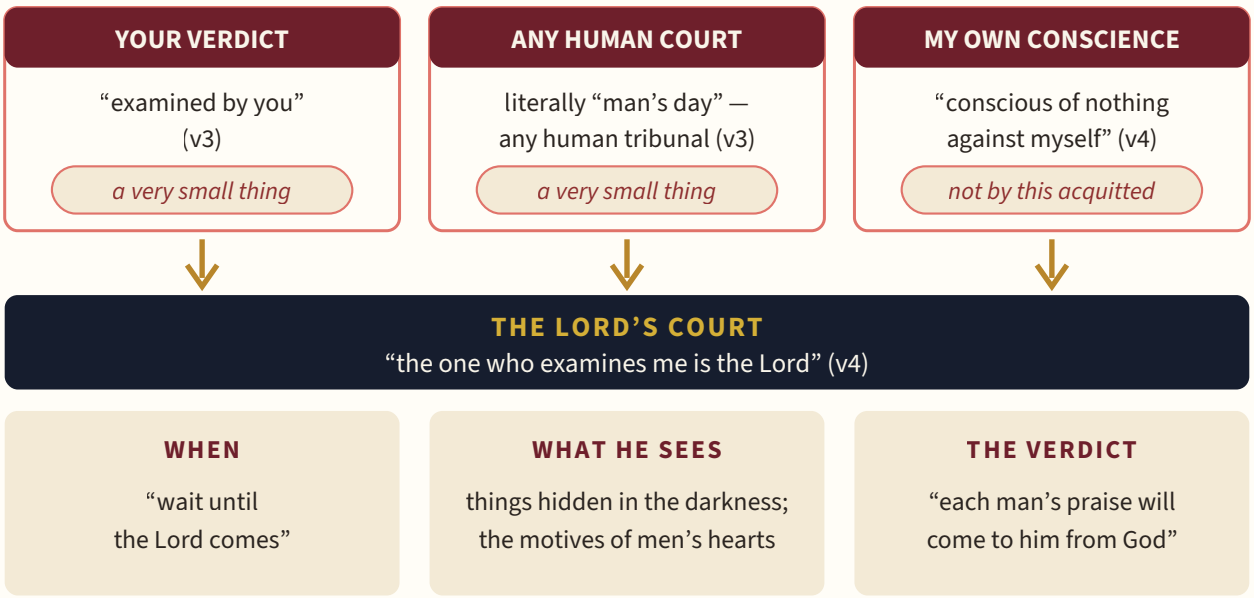
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 4:5

"Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."

FIGURE · THREE COURTS AND THE ONE THAT COUNTS



Paul sets aside the Corinthians' verdict, every human court and even his own clear conscience — only the Lord's examination at His coming is final, and it ends in praise from God.

FIGURE · LAST IN THE PROCESSION



Verse 9 pictures the apostles at the very back of a Roman parade or arena show — the men condemned to die — and Paul says God Himself put them there, in full view of the world, angels and men.

Servants and stewards (vv1–2). Paul picks two pictures. The first, *hypēretēs*, Guzik explains as an "under-rower" — a man at the oar on the lower deck of a ship — and notes Paul did not use *doulos*, the ordinary word for slave. Morgan (in Guzik): one who "acts under direction, and asks no questions." The second is the **steward** (*oikonomos*), the household manager: a slave to his master and a master to the other servants, owning nothing, giving account for everything. Sproul (on Luke 12): "The steward did not own the house." These stewards hold "the mysteries of God" — truth once hidden, now revealed. So the one question to ask of a minister is whether he faithfully gave out the truth (Guzik: "Did I give you the truth?"). And what is required is not brilliance or results but faithfulness (v2). Spurgeon: "You are responsible, not for the result of what you do."

Three courts (vv3–5). Paul names three judges and sets them all aside. The Corinthians' verdict is "a very small thing." A human court is no better. Even his own conscience is not final: "I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted" (v4). A clear conscience is not the same as being declared righteous (Guzik: "Paul knew his righteousness came from Jesus"). Henry: "It is a comfort that men are not to be our final judges."

Does verse 5 forbid all judging? No. Guzik balances it: Paul will still correct them as their father — and in 5:12 Paul himself tells the church to judge those within it. Henry draws the line exactly: not lawful judgment by those in office, nor "facts that are notorious," but judging "the secret springs and principles" of others' actions — that "is to assume the seat of God." Sproul, preaching Luke 6:37, says the same: Jesus did not abolish discernment, but forbade the censorious spirit, and asks of us the "judgment of charity" — "the benefit of the doubt," but not naïveté. What verse 5 forbids is ranking and condemning God's servants on our own scale, ahead of His. When the Lord comes, He will judge motives, and "each man's praise will come to him from God."

Not beyond what is written (v6). Paul used himself and Apollos as the example so the Corinthians would learn not to go past Scripture's measure of a man. The exact meaning of the phrase is debated — it may be a slogan, a pointer to the Old Testament passages Paul has just quoted (1:19, 31; 3:19–20), or Scripture in general — but the direction is clear: don't add your own standards and then puff yourselves up over them. Guzik applies it to the way

churches still rate preachers by "humor … entertainment value … appearance, or … skill at marketing and sales." Henry: "The word of God is the best rule by which to judge concerning men."

Three questions (v7). Who makes you different? What do you have that you did not receive? If you received it, why boast? Guzik: the root problem in Corinth was not the factions but the pride beneath them. Augustine used this verse against the Pelagians — every good thing in us, faith included, is received. Spurgeon preached it twice (1859, 1876): "Grace has done it all"; "every particle of praise we take for ourselves is so much stolen." Sproul (on Rom 3:27): "If my salvation rests completely on the grace of God, I have nothing of which to boast in myself."

The irony (vv8–13). Guzik calls Paul's sarcasm "holy laughter" (Morgan's phrase) — meant to wake them, not wound them. The Corinthians acted as though the kingdom had fully come and they were already reigning; the apostles, meanwhile, looked like the losers. For v9 Guzik pictures a Roman triumph or the coliseum, where the condemned came *last*; Henry the amphitheatre, where the *epithanatioi* fought at the end of the day. "Spectacle" is *theatron*. Guzik notes the Greek world despised manual labor and despised a man who would not retaliate — and Paul did both. On "scum" and "dregs" (v13), both Guzik and Henry mention a Greek custom of casting out a despised person in time of plague as a kind of cleansing offering; if Paul has it in mind, he is both despised and spent for others. Sproul (on chs 1–2): "Nobody wants to be considered a fool" — "what would you rather be than a fool for Christ?"

A father, not a tutor (vv14–17). The tone turns tender: not to shame but to admonish, as beloved children. The *paidagōgos* ("tutor," v15) was the household slave who walked a boy to school and watched his behavior — a guardian, not a father. Corinth could have ten thousand of those, but Paul was the one who "became your father through the gospel." Guzik: this gives a spiritual father "a special relationship," though not an apostle's authority. Henry: "not with the gall of an enemy, but the bowels of a father." "Be imitators of me" (v16) is limited by 11:1 — "just as I also am of Christ"; Henry: "Follow me as far as I follow Christ." In a world without printed Bibles in every home, people learned the faith by watching lives. Timothy, Paul's troubleshooter, is sent to remind them of those ways.

Words or power (vv18–21). Some assumed Paul was afraid to come. He will come "if the Lord wills" — Henry: "All our purposes must be formed with a dependence on Providence" (Jas 4:15) — and he will test the boasters not by their talk but by their power, because the kingdom of God is not a matter of words. This reaches back to 2:4–5: Paul's own preaching came "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." The "rod" is a shepherd's or father's rod of discipline (Guzik). The choice is theirs. Henry: "It is a happy temper in a minister to have the spirit of love and meekness predominant, and yet to maintain his just authority."

Word study (Greek):

- **servants — *hypēretēs* (G5257):** an under-oarsman; an assistant acting under orders (v1). Not *doulos* (G1401), slave.
- **stewards — *oikonomos* (G3623):** household manager over another's goods (vv1–2; Luke 12:42; 1 Pet 4:10).
- **mysteries — *mystērion* (G3466):** truth once hidden, now revealed by God (v1; 2:7).
- **trustworthy / faithful — *pistos* (G4103):** dependable; also of Timothy (vv2, 17).
- **examine — *anakrinō* (G350):** to investigate, cross-examine — three times in vv3–4; ten times in 1 Corinthians.
- **conscious — *synoida* (G4894):** to know with oneself; kin to *syneidēsis*, conscience (v4).
- **acquitted — *dikaioō* (G1344):** declared righteous (v4).
- **arrogant / puffed up — *physioō* (G5448):** to inflate like bellows; six of its seven NT uses are in 1 Corinthians (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4).

- **regards you as superior — *diakrinō* (G1252):** to separate, make a distinction (v7; KJV "maketh thee to differ").
- **boast — *kauchaomai* (G2744):** to boast, glory (v7; 1:29, 31; 3:21).
- **condemned to death — *epithanatios* (G1935):** sentenced to die; only here (v9).
- **spectacle — *theatron* (G2302):** a show, the theater (v9; Acts 19:29, 31).
- **fools — *mōros* (G3474):** foolish — the word of 1:18–27, now worn by the apostles (v10).
- **reviled — *loidoreō* (G3058):** to abuse verbally (v12; 1 Pet 2:23).
- **conciliate / exhort — *parakaleō* (G3870):** to call alongside, appeal (vv13, 16).
- **scum — *perikatharma* (G4027); dregs — *peripsēma* (G4067):** the sweepings and scrapings; each only here (v13).
- **admonish — *noutheteō* (G3560):** to put in mind, warn (v14).
- **tutors — *paidagōgos* (G3807):** the slave-guardian of a boy (v15; Gal 3:24–25).
- **became your father — *gennaō* (G1080):** to beget (v15).
- **imitators — *mimētēs* (G3402):** one who copies; "mimic" (v16; 11:1; Eph 5:1).
- **power — *dynamis* (G1411):** God's working might, not human talk (vv19–20; 2:4–5).
- **rod — *rhabdos* (G4464):** staff, rod of discipline (v21).
- **gentleness — *praütēs* (G4236):** meekness, strength under control (v21; Gal 5:23).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **An under-rower, not a celebrity** — the preacher is at an oar; the Ship belongs to Christ.
2. **Faithful, not impressive** — the one requirement of a steward (v2).
3. **A clear conscience is not a verdict** — even my own court is not final (v4).
4. **Don't hand out the trophies before the race is over** (Guzik) — the Lord judges motives at His coming (v5).
5. **The judgment of charity** (Sproul) — discernment yes, censoriousness no.
6. **Everything is received** — "those who receive all should be proud of nothing" (Henry).
7. **Puffed up is Corinth's word** — six of seven NT uses; love is never puffed up (13:4).
8. **God put the apostles at the back of the parade** (v9) — on display before the world, angels and men.
9. **Rather a fool for Christ** (Sproul) — the desire to be acceptable is the church's great threat.
10. **Many tutors, few fathers** — a father begets, loves, models, sends and comes.

Cross-references: Gen 39:4; Ps 23:4; Prov 13:24; Isa 22:20–22; Jer 9:23–24; 17:10; Matt 23:8–10; 25:21; Luke 6:37–42; 9:58; 12:42–48; John 3:27; Acts 18:1–11; 19:29; Rom 2:16; 3:27; 14:10–12; 1 Cor 1:18–31; 2:1–5; 3:5–9, 21; 5:12; 11:1; 13:4; 2 Cor 4:7–12; 5:10; 6:4–10; 10:1, 18; 11:23–28; 12:10; Gal 3:24; 4:19; 5:23; Eph 5:1; Phil 3:17; Col 1:24; 1 Thess 1:5–6; 2:7–12; Jas 4:15; 1 Pet 2:21–23; 4:10; Rev 2:23.

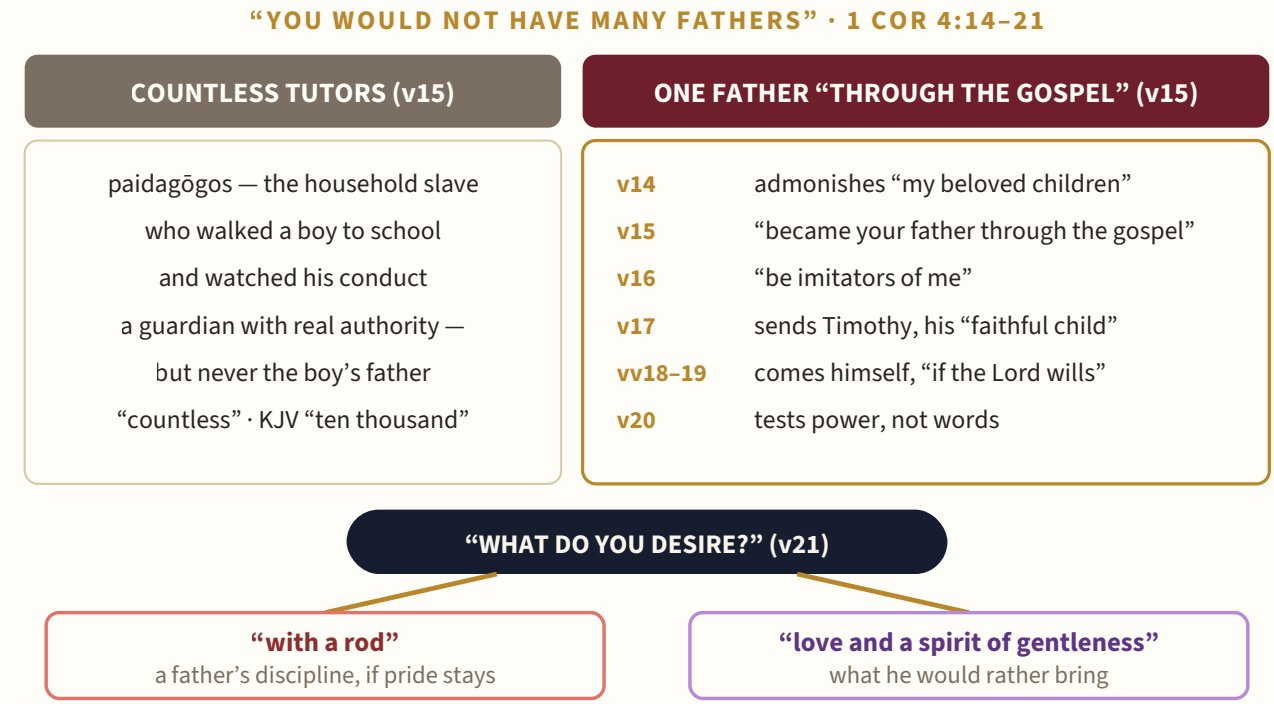
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 4:7

"For who regards you as superior? △What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, ⚠why do you boast as if you had not received it?"

FIGURE · TUTORS OR A FATHER



A tutor supervises; a father begets, loves, models, sends and comes — and the chapter ends by leaving the Corinthians to choose which kind of visit they will get.

Command to obey — be found faithful. "It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy" (v2). Not successful. Not impressive. Faithful. What God has put in my hands — the Word, my family, the men He sends me, this ministry, even my illness or my limits — isn't mine. I manage it for Him. Today's question is simply: did I handle His things His way?

Promise to trust — one Judge. "The one who examines me is the Lord" (v4). For the man who has been judged by a court, by a family that gave up on him, by a church that whispered — and for the man whose own mind will not stop condemning him — this is freedom. Other people's verdicts are "a very small thing." Even my own verdict isn't final. The Lord's is, and for those in Christ His last word is "praise ... from God" (v5).

Warning to heed — don't hand out medals before the race is over. "Do not go on passing judgment before the time" (v5). I don't know the motives of a man's heart; God does. That goes both ways — I should not write off the

man who just relapsed, and I should not crown the man who has it all together on Sunday. I can give the judgment of charity without being naïve. Wait for the Lord.

Sin to confess — pride over what I was given. "What do you have that you did not receive?" (v7). My sobriety, my freedom, my gifts, my years of study, my salvation itself — all received. Lord, forgive me for every time I've talked like I earned what You gave. Every particle of praise I take for myself is stolen.

Example to follow — the low road. "When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure" (v12). Paul worked with his hands, went hungry, got cursed — and blessed back. For men coming out of prison with a record that follows them, men in recovery who get treated as their worst day: this is not a lesser path. It is the apostles' path, and it is Christ's (1 Pet 2:23). The world calls it being a fool; Paul called it being "fools for Christ's sake" (v10). I'd rather be that than anything else.

For the men I walk with — you need fathers, not just tutors. "You would not have many fathers" (v15). Plenty of people will instruct a man; few will father him — walk with him, stay with him, let him watch their life up close. I want to be the second kind. And "be imitators of me" (v16) is a scary sentence for any of us to say. It means my life has to be worth copying — not perfect, but honest, repentant and following Christ.

Warning to heed — words are cheap. "The kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power" (v20). Recovery talk, prison-yard testimony, church vocabulary — none of it is the kingdom. The kingdom is God's power actually changing how a man lives. I want less talk and more of His power in me.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. What has God put in my hands to manage for Him this week — and if He audited it today, would He find me trustworthy? (4:1–2; Luke 12:42) *A steward owns nothing; the one requirement is faithfulness, not results.*
2. Whose verdict do I live under — a judge, an ex, a family, the men on the yard, my own 3 a.m. voice? What does "the one who examines me is the Lord" do to it? (4:3–5) *Other courts are "a very small thing"; only the Lord's is final, and for His own it ends in praise.*
3. Who have I written off — or crowned — before the race is over? What would the judgment of charity look like toward him? (4:5; Luke 6:37) *Leave hidden motives to the Lord; give the benefit of the doubt without naïveté.*
4. Name one thing I have talked about as if I earned it — my sobriety, my gifts, my knowledge, my standing at church. Where did it come from? (4:7; John 3:27) *"What do you have that you did not receive?"*
5. Where am I trying to have the respect of the world and the power of God at the same time? (4:9–13; 1 Pet 2:23) *Guzik: "We want the power without the cost." Paul was a fool for Christ's sake.*
6. Who is my spiritual father — and whose father am I becoming? Could I honestly say to a younger man, "imitate me"? (4:15–17; 11:1) *Not perfect, but following Christ: "just as I also am of Christ."*

Worship. The Judge who sees what is hidden in the darkness still gives praise to His servants. Everything I have came from His hand — and Christ walked the low road first.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, I am Your servant and the steward of what is Yours. Make me faithful. Free me from living for other people's verdicts — and from my own. Humble me with the truth that everything I have, I received. Give me grace to bless when I'm cursed, to be a fool for Your sake, and to father the men You send me, so that they can follow me as I follow You. Let my life show Your power, not just my words. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see 1-Corinthians-4-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.

SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 5

A Little Leaven, a New Lump — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

A church that is proud of tolerating sin is not loving the sinner — it is leaving him in danger and letting the leaven spread. Because Christ our Passover was sacrificed, we are to be what we already are in Him, and even our hardest discipline is aimed at bringing a man home.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 5 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.

2 You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.

3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?

7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

8 Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people;

10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.

11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler— not even to eat with such a one.

12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church?

13 But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles” — Sin / warning
- **v1** “has his father’s wife” — Sin / warning
- **v2** “You have become arrogant” — Sin / warning
- **v2** “mourned” — Command / instruction
- **v2** “removed from your midst” — Command / instruction
- **v3** “absent in body but present in spirit” — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** “In the name of our Lord Jesus” — God — His character & actions
- **v4** “the power of our Lord Jesus” — God — His character & actions
- **v5** “deliver such a one to Satan” — Sin / warning
- **v5** “so that his spirit may be saved” — Promise / blessing
- **v5** “the day of the Lord Jesus” — Time / place / contrast
- **v6** “Your boasting is not good” — Sin / warning
- **v7** “Clean out the old leaven” — Command / instruction
- **v7** “a new lump” — Promise / blessing
- **v7** “you are in fact unleavened” — Promise / blessing
- **v7** “Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed” — God — His character & actions
- **v8** “let us celebrate the feast” — Command / instruction
- **v8** “the leaven of malice and wickedness” — Sin / warning
- **v8** “sincerity and truth” — Promise / blessing
- **v9** “not to associate with immoral people” — Command / instruction
- **v10** “go out of the world” — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** “any so-called brother” — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** “not even to eat with such a one” — Command / instruction
- **v12** “those who are within the church” — Time / place / contrast
- **v13** “God judges” — God — His character & actions
- **v13** “REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES” — Command / instruction
- **v6** “leaven” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v6** “leavens” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v7** “unleavened” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 5:2

"⚠ You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst."

Setting. Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8) to the church he planted in Corinth. Chapters 1–4 dealt with division and pride ("arrogant" — 4:6, 18, 19); now chapters 5–6 turn to reports of moral disorder inside the church. Chapter 5 opens with no greeting and no softening word — the news is that bad.

Who: Paul (absent in body, present in spirit, v3); the Corinthian church ("when you are assembled," v4); a man who "has his father's wife" (v1) — almost certainly his stepmother; Satan (v5); the Lord Jesus (vv4–5); Christ our Passover (v7); "the immoral people of this world" (v10); "any so-called brother" (v11); "outsiders" and "those who are within the church" (vv12–13); God, who judges those outside (v13).

Structure:

- vv1–2 — **the sin and the boast:** immorality of a kind that does not exist even among the Gentiles; and the church has become arrogant instead of mourning, when the man should have been removed from their midst.
- vv3–5 — **the verdict:** Paul, absent in body but present in spirit, has already judged; when the church is assembled in the name and with the power of the Lord Jesus, they are to deliver such a one to Satan "for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."
- vv6–8 — **leaven and the Passover:** "a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough" (v6). Clean out the old leaven; you are a new lump, in fact unleavened, for "Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed" (v7). Therefore celebrate the feast with sincerity and truth (v8).
- vv9–13 — **inside and outside:** the earlier letter did not mean the immoral people of the world — that would mean going out of the world (vv9–10). It meant a so-called brother living in sin — not even to eat with such a one (v11). God judges outsiders; the church judges those within: "REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES" (vv12–13; Deut 17:7).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "leaven" family ×7 — "leaven" ×4 (vv6, 7, 8 ×2), "leavens" ×1 (v6), "unleavened" ×2 (vv7, 8). All in vv6–8.
- "immorality / immoral" ×5 — "immorality" ×2 (v1), "immoral" ×3 (vv9, 10, 11).
- "judge" family ×4 — "judged" (v3), "judging" and "judge" (v12), "judges" (v13).
- "spirit" ×3 — vv3, 4, 5; "Lord Jesus" ×3 — vv4 (×2), 5; "present" ×2 — v3.
- "such a one" ×2 — v5 (deliver to Satan), v11 (not even to eat with).
- "removed / REMOVE" ×2 — v2 and v13: the chapter's first and last instruction.
- "world" ×2 — v10; "associate" ×2 — vv9, 11; "wrote" ×2 — vv9, 11.
- "lump" ×2 — vv6, 7; "old" ×2 — vv7, 8; "new" ×1 — v7.
- The sin lists: four names in v10 (immoral, covetous, swindlers, idolaters); six in v11 (immoral person, covetous, idolater, reviler, drunkard, swindler).

Contrasts: arrogant ⟷ mourning (v2). Absent in body ⟷ present in spirit (v3). Destruction of the flesh ⟷ the spirit saved (v5). Old leaven ⟷ new lump (v7). Leaven of malice and wickedness ⟷ unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (v8). The immoral of this world ⟷ a so-called brother who is immoral (vv10–11). Outsiders, whom God judges ⟷ those within, whom the church judges (vv12–13).

Commands: clean out the old leaven (v7); let us celebrate the feast (v8); do not associate … not even to eat with such a one (v11); remove the wicked man (v13).

Purpose and conclusion words: “so that his spirit may be saved” (v5); “so that you may be a new lump” (v7); “For Christ our Passover” (v7); “Therefore let us celebrate the feast” (v8).

Shape of the chapter: a scandal (1–2), a verdict (3–5), a feast (6–8), a line drawn (9–13). It opens with “removed from your midst” and closes with “REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES,” and at its center stands the Lamb who was sacrificed.

Chapter theme (my words): A church that is proud of tolerating sin is not loving the sinner — it is leaving him in danger and letting the leaven spread. Because Christ our Passover was sacrificed, we are to be what we already are in Him: clean. Discipline in the church is meant to rescue, not to destroy.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 5:5

"I have decided to ⚠ deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, ☆ so that his spirit may be saved in ◷ the day of the Lord Jesus."

FIGURE · THREE READINGS OF "DELIVER TO SATAN"

"DELIVER SUCH A ONE TO SATAN FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS FLESH" · v5

PUT OUT OF THE FELLOWSHIP *Guzik · Sproul*	GIVEN TO BODILY AFFLICTION *a reading Henry reports*	A MIXED CASE *Henry's own view*
outside the church is the world, the devil's domain "flesh" = his rebellious, sinful flesh, not the body loss of protection and of the means of grace	an apostolic power to hand him over for bodily pains "flesh" = the body itself compare 1 Tim 1:20; 1 Cor 11:30; Acts 5	the gathered church casts him out by just censure; the apostle adds an act of extraordinary power — not for his destruction, "but for his deliverance"

↓ ↓ ↓

EVERY READING HAS THE SAME GOAL

"so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (v5)

Teachers differ on what "destruction of his flesh" means, but every reading lands on the same purpose Paul states — the man's salvation.

FIGURE · PASSOVER THEN AND NOW

THE FEAST	1 · THE LAMB SLAIN	2 · THE LEAVEN OUT	3 · THE FEAST KEPT
EXODUS 12	**the blood on the houses: "I will pass over you"** (12:13)	**"on the first day you shall remove leaven from** your houses" (12:15)	**"Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread"** (12:15)
1 COR 5:7–8	**"Christ our Passover also has been** sacrificed" (v7)	**"Clean out the old leaven … you are in fact** unleavened" (v7)	**"let us celebrate the feast … with sincerity** and truth" (v8)

THE ORDER IS THE GOSPEL

The Lamb is slain first; the leaven goes out because of it, not to earn it.

"Be what you are" (Guzik) · not seven days only, "but all our days" (Henry)

Read down each column: Israel's lamb, leaven and feast in Exodus 12 become Christ sacrificed, old sin cleaned out, and a whole life kept as a feast.

What was happening (vv1–2). *Porneia* covers every kind of sexual activity outside marriage, and the present-tense verb "has" points to an ongoing relationship — Guzik: "a euphemism for an enduring sexual relationship." Leviticus 18:8 forbade it, and even pagan Corinth would not stomach it (Henry and Guzik both cite Cicero). But Paul's sharpest words are for the church. They were "arrogant." Guzik thinks they were proud of their tolerance — "Look how loving we are"; Henry suggests they admired a gifted leader, or that a rival party gloated over his fall. Either way, the right response was to "mourn," the word for grieving the dead. Sproul: this kind of action is "reserved for gross and heinous crimes by which the whole community is corrupted."

Paul's judgment (vv3–5) — and "judge not." Paul is absent in body but present in spirit — Guzik reads this as his apostolic authority carried by the letter. Does this break Jesus' "do not judge" (Matt 7:1–5)? Guzik says no: Jesus forbids hypocritical judgment, while Scripture requires the church to judge conduct (v12). Guzik, citing Wiersbe: we judge conduct, not motives. And the action belongs to the gathered church, "in the name of our Lord Jesus," not to one angry leader. Henry: "Church-censures are Christ's ordinances, and should be dispensed in his name."

"Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh" (v5) — where teachers differ.

- **Removal from the church's fellowship and covering.** Guzik: outside the church is the world, "the devil's 'domain'" (compare 1 John 5:19); the punishment "is a removal of spiritual protection and social comfort, not an infliction of evil," and "flesh" is his rebellious sinful flesh (Gal 5:24). Sproul: "Turning you over to Satan, who will sift you like wheat" — the removal of the means of grace.
- **Bodily affliction.** Henry reports that others see "a miraculous power or authority … of delivering a scandalous sinner into the power of Satan, to have bodily diseases inflicted." Readers who hold this point to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), the sick and dead at Corinth's Table (11:30), and Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim 1:20).

- **A mixed case.** Henry's own view: the church cast him out by just censure, and the apostle added an act of extraordinary power — "not for his destruction, but for his deliverance." On every reading the **purpose** is stated plainly: "so that his spirit may be saved." Guzik warns the verse was twisted to justify Inquisition torture; it gives no one license to hurt anyone. "The church does not grant salvation; it certainly cannot take it away." Many teachers connect this man with the repentant offender of 2 Corinthians 2:5–11; others think that was a different case. Either way, 2 Corinthians 2 shows the heart of discipline — the door back stays open.

Leaven and Passover (vv6–8). Leaven was a lump of old fermented dough kept back to start the next batch; a pinch works through the whole thing. Henry: "one scabbed sheep infects a whole flock." Before Passover Jewish homes searched out every crumb (Exod 12:15) — Spurgeon describes the search by candlelight. Paul's logic runs from what God has done to what we do: "you are in fact unleavened … For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed." Guzik: "Be what you are." Spurgeon: Israel "were not saved by purging out the leaven," yet "Salvation in sin is not possible, it always must be salvation from sin." Sproul shows the apostles "saw a link between the death of Christ and the Old Testament Passover celebration" — the Lord's Supper is the Passover fulfilled. Henry: the feast is kept "not for seven days only, but all our days."

Inside and outside (vv9–13). Paul's earlier letter (now lost) had told them "not to associate with immoral people" (v9), and they had misread it. Guzik: taking it as a ban on all contact would mean leaving the world — the mistake of the monastic movement. The line Paul draws is around a **professing brother** living in open, unrepentant sin; the church is not even to share a table with him in a way that says "all is well." Henry calls it a paradox: "Christians may and ought to testify more respect to loose worldlings than to loose Christians." Sproul guards the other side: there will be "always tares growing along with the wheat," and there is a New Testament warning "against precipitous action." God judges outsiders; the church's job is its own household. Corinth had it backward.

Word study (Greek):

- **immorality — *porneia* (G4202):** any sexual activity outside marriage (v1 ×2). **immoral person — *pornos* (G4205):** one who practises it (vv9, 10, 11).
- **has — *echō* (G2192):** present tense — an ongoing relationship, not a single fall (v1).
- **arrogant / puffed up — *physioō* (G5448):** inflated like a bellows; six of its seven NT uses are in 1 Corinthians (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4).
- **mourn — *pentheō* (G3996):** to grieve as for the dead (v2).
- **have judged — *krinō* (G2919):** to judge, decide (vv3, 12 ×2, 13).
- **assembled — *synagō* (G4863):** gathered together as a church (v4).
- **deliver — *paradidōmi* (G3860):** to hand over (v5; 1 Tim 1:20).
- **destruction — *olethros* (G3639):** ruin (v5; 1 Thess 5:3).
- **flesh — *sarx* (G4561):** the body, or the sinful nature — the hinge of the debate in v5.
- **be saved — *sōzō* (G4982):** the stated goal of the discipline (v5).
- **boasting — *kauchēma* (G2745):** a boast, a ground of glorying (v6).
- **leaven — *zymē* (G2219):** old fermented dough; in Scripture usually spreading corruption (Matt 16:6; Gal 5:9). **leavens — *zymoō* (G2220).**
- **lump — *phyrama* (G5445):** a mixed batch of dough (vv6, 7).
- **clean out — *ekkathairō* (G1571):** to purge thoroughly (v7; 2 Tim 2:21).

- **unleavened — *azymos* (G106):** without leaven (vv7, 8).
- **Passover — *pascha* (G3957):** the feast and the lamb itself (v7).
- **has been sacrificed — *thyō* (G2380):** to slaughter in sacrifice; aorist, a finished act (v7).
- **celebrate the feast — *heortazō* (G1858):** present tense — keep on keeping the feast (v8).
- **malice — *kakia* (G2549)** and **wickedness — *ponēria* (G4189):** ill will and active evil (v8).
- **sincerity — *eilikrineia* (G1505):** purity, transparency — often explained as something held up to the sunlight and found without flaw (v8).
- **associate — *synanamignymi* (G4874):** to mix up together; close company (vv9, 11; 2 Thess 3:14).
- **covetous — *pleonektēs* (G4123):** one who must have more (vv10–11).
- **swindler — *harpax* (G727):** a grabber, one who takes by force or fraud (vv10–11).
- **reviler — *loidoros* (G3060):** an abusive talker (v11). **drunkard — *methysos* (G3183)** (v11).
- **eat with — *synesthiō* (G4906):** to share a table (v11; Gal 2:12).
- **remove — *exairō* (G1808):** to lift out, take away (v13; TR also v2).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The church's sin was worse than the man's** — Paul spends one verse on the deed and the rest on the boasting church (Guzik).
2. **Arrogance is Corinth's word** — *physioō*, six of seven NT uses in this letter.
3. **The right response to sin in the body is grief** — "The sins of others should be our sorrow" (Henry).
4. **Discipline is a rescue mission** — "so that his spirit may be saved" (v5).
5. **Teachers differ on "the destruction of his flesh"** — sinful flesh, bodily affliction, or a mixed case; none licenses harm.
6. **The Lamb comes before the leaven** — not saved by purging leaven, but because the Lamb was slain (Spurgeon).
7. **Be what you are** — "you are in fact unleavened" (Guzik).
8. **The feast never ends** — "not for seven days only, but all our days" (Henry).
9. **The line runs around the church, not around the world** — same sins, different judges (vv10–13).
10. **Paul ends with Moses** — Deuteronomy's "purge the evil from your midst."

Cross-references: Exod 12:13, 15–20; Lev 18:8; Deut 13:5; 17:7; 22:22, 30; 27:20; Job 1:10; Matt 7:1–5; 16:6; 18:15–17; Luke 22:31–32; John 1:29; Acts 5:1–11; Rom 6:6; 1 Cor 4:6, 18–19; 11:30; 2 Cor 2:5–11; Gal 5:9, 24; 6:1; 2 Thess 3:6, 14–15; 1 Tim 1:20; 5:20; Titus 3:10; 1 Pet 1:18–19; 1 John 3:15; 5:19.

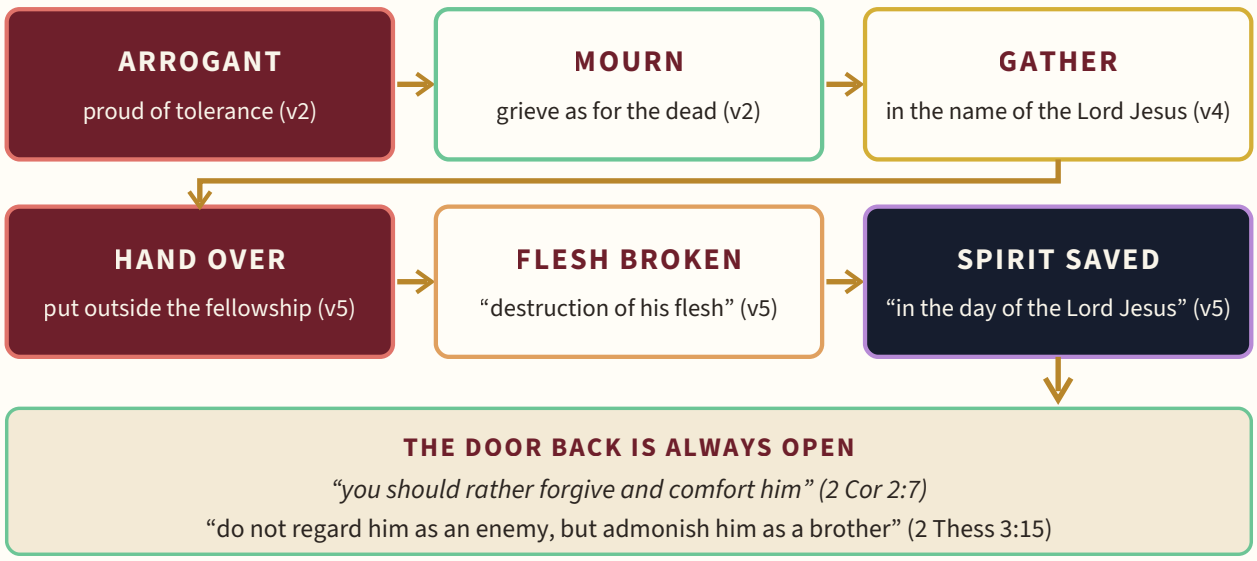
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 5:8

"Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

FIGURE · DISCIPLINE THAT AIMS TO RESCUE



Follow the arrows from pride to grief to the gathered church's action, and on to the goal — a saved man and an open door home.

Warning to heed — pride that calls itself love. The Corinthians "have become arrogant and have not mourned instead" (v2). I can do the same thing in a softer way — winking at sin in a brother because confronting it feels unkind. But leaving a man comfortable in what is killing him is not love. Guzik put it plainly: you don't show love to a body by being kind to a cancer. Real love grieves, and then it acts.

For the men I walk with — this chapter is about the unrepentant, not the struggling. A man fighting to stay sober, a man who slipped last week and called his sponsor, a man bringing his sin into the light on a Thursday night — that man is not the man of 1 Corinthians 5. This man had stopped fighting and the church was cheering him on. If you are in the fight, the church does not cast you out; it pulls up a chair. The danger is not in confessing. The danger is in hiding, or in no longer caring.

Promise to trust — the goal is rescue. "So that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (v5). Even God's hardest discipline has a door back built into it. Paul later told this church to "forgive and comfort him" so he

would not be overwhelmed by sorrow (2 Cor 2:7). Some of the men I serve have been put out — of homes, churches, families, society. God's heart toward the one who turns back is welcome, not probation.

Promise to trust — I am already unleavened. "Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed" (v7). I don't clean myself up to become God's; I clean out the old leaven *because* I am already His, bought by the Lamb. Be what you are.

Command to obey — clean out the crumbs. Jewish families went through the house with a candle looking for every crumb of leaven before Passover. Spurgeon said we must not keep even a crumb. A little leaven works through the whole lump. For a man in recovery that means the "little" things: the saved number, the hidden app, the stash, the old route home, the resentment I keep feeding. I'll name one crumb this week, tell a brother, and get it out of the house.

Example to follow — judge myself, not the world. "Do you not judge those who are within the church? … those who are outside, God judges" (vv12–13). I am not called to be shocked by unbelievers acting like unbelievers; I'm called to be honest about the household of faith — starting with me — and to love the lost enough to go sit with them. Henry said it well: the more sincerity in my own profession, the less I'll censure others.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Where have I called it "love" to say nothing while a brother is being destroyed by sin? (5:1–2, 6) *Guzik: you don't show love to a body by being kind to a cancer.*
2. When I hear of another man's fall, is my first response grief, gossip, or a quiet sense that I'm better than him? (5:2; Gal 6:1) *Henry: "It is a very wicked thing to glory over the miscarriages and sins of others."*
3. What is the difference between the man in 1 Corinthians 5 and a man who is fighting his sin and bringing it into the light? (5:1–5; 2 Cor 2:7) *This man had stopped fighting and was being cheered on; the struggler is pulled close, not put out.*
4. If the Lamb has already been sacrificed for me, what "crumb" of old leaven am I still keeping in the house? (5:7; Exod 12:15) *Spurgeon: not saved by purging the leaven — but not a crumb may stay.*
5. Am I harder on unbelievers for acting like unbelievers than on myself and my brothers? (5:9–13; Matt 7:5) *Outside, God judges; inside, we are responsible — starting with me.*
6. If a man under discipline repents, what would it look like for our table to "forgive and comfort him"? (5:5; 2 Cor 2:6–8) *The door back is part of the discipline, not an exception to it.*

Worship. The Lamb has been sacrificed. The blood is on the door. I am not saved by sweeping the house; I sweep the house because I have been saved. Christ our Passover — the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world — makes a puffed-up church into a new lump and a ruined man into a son who can come home.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, our Passover Lamb, thank You that You were sacrificed so I could be made new. Keep me from pride that tolerates what You died to remove. Give me tears for sin, courage to speak truth in love, and a heart that always holds the door open for the one who comes home. Search my house for the old leaven and help me clear it out, crumb by crumb. Let me keep the feast all my days, with sincerity and truth. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see 1-Corinthians-5-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.

SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 6

Washed, Bought, and Not Your Own — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

I am not who I was, and I am not my own. Washed, set apart and declared right with God by Jesus and His Spirit, I belong to Him — my quarrels, my freedom and my body included.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 6 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?

2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?

3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

4 So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church?

5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren,

6 but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?

7 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

8 On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

12 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

13 Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power.

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!

16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."

17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “go to law before the unrighteous” — Sin / warning
- **v2** “the saints will judge the world” — Promise / blessing
- **v3** “we will judge angels” — Promise / blessing
- **v5** “I say this to your shame” — Sin / warning
- **v6** “brother goes to law with brother” — Sin / warning
- **v7** “it is already a defeat for you” — Sin / warning
- **v7** “Why not rather be wronged?” — Command / instruction
- **v8** “you yourselves wrong and defraud” — Sin / warning
- **v9** “will not inherit the kingdom of God” — Sin / warning
- **v9** “Do not be deceived” — Command / instruction
- **v11** “Such were some of you” — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** “you were washed” — Promise / blessing
- **v11** “you were sanctified” — Promise / blessing
- **v11** “you were justified” — Promise / blessing
- **v11** “the Spirit of our God” — God — His character & actions
- **v12** “I will not be mastered by anything” — Sin / warning
- **v13** “the body is not for immorality” — Sin / warning
- **v13** “the Lord is for the body” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “will also raise us up through His power” — Promise / blessing
- **v15** “your bodies are members of Christ” — God — His character & actions
- **v17** “one spirit with Him” — Promise / blessing
- **v17** “is one spirit” — Promise / blessing
- **v18** “Flee immorality” — Command / instruction
- **v19** “a temple of the Holy Spirit” — God — His character & actions
- **v19** “you are not your own” — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** “you have been bought with a price” — God — His character & actions
- **v20** “glorify God in your body” — Command / instruction
- **v2** “do you not know” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v13** “body” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v15** “bodies” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v12** “All things are lawful” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

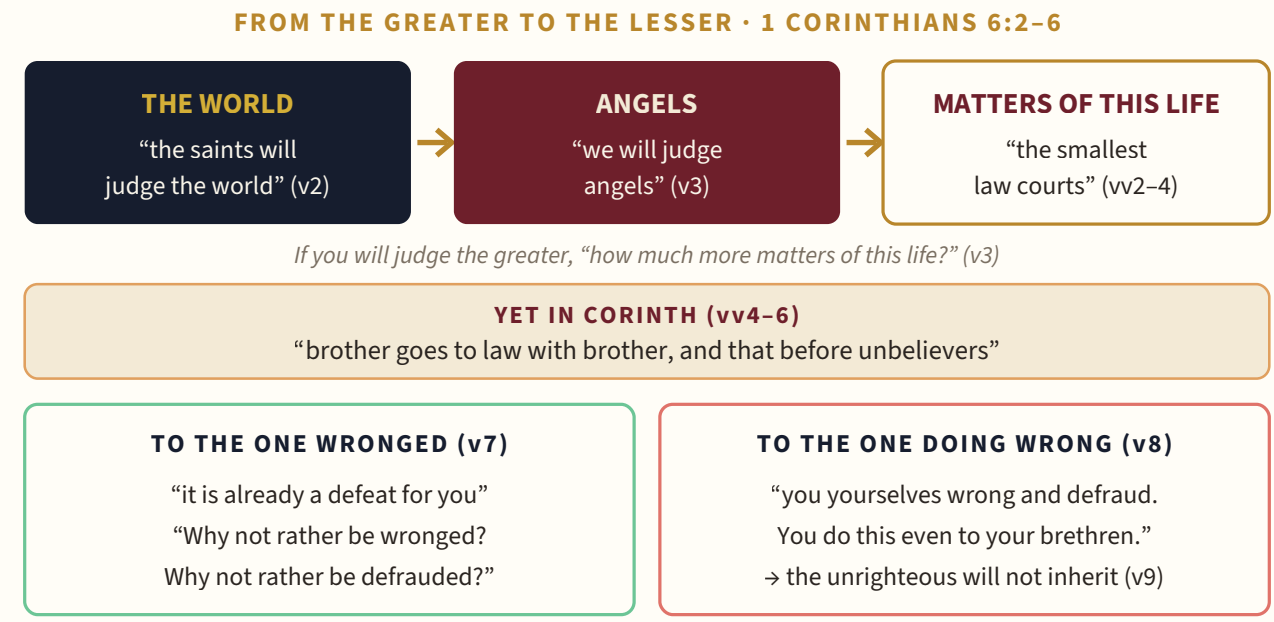
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything."

FIGURE · FROM THE GREATER TO THE LESSER



Follow the arrows: people who will judge the world and angels can surely settle the smallest cases — so Paul speaks first to the brother who was wronged, then to the brother who did the wrong.

Setting. Paul is still dealing with disorder inside the Corinthian church (chapters 5–6). Chapter 5 ended with "Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges" (5:12–13). Chapter 6 opens with believers who will not judge their own disputes but take one another before pagan courts. Then Paul returns to sexual immorality — the Corinthian habit of treating the body as if it did not matter.

Who: the Corinthian believers ("brother goes to law with brother," v6); "the unrighteous" judges outside the church (v1); "the saints" (vv1–2); angels (v3); the unrighteous who will not inherit the kingdom (vv9–10); the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God (v11); a prostitute (vv15–16); the Holy Spirit who is in the believer (v19).

Structure:

- vv1–8 — **Lawsuits between believers.**
- vv1–6: why go before the unrighteous? "The saints will judge the world" (v2), even angels (v3) — how much more matters of this life? "I say this to your shame" (v5): is there not one wise man among you?

- vv7–8: it is already a defeat to have lawsuits at all. "Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?" (v7). Instead you yourselves wrong and defraud — your own brethren (v8).
- vv9–11 — **Who will not inherit the kingdom, and who we used to be.** "Do not be deceived" (v9); ten kinds of people (vv9–10); then the turn: "Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified" (v11).
- vv12–17 — **The slogans answered.** "All things are lawful for me" — but not all things are profitable; I will not be mastered by anything (v12). "Food is for the stomach" — God will do away with both, but the body is for the Lord, and God will raise us (vv13–14). Your bodies are members of Christ; joined to a prostitute = one body (Gen 2:24); joined to the Lord = one spirit (vv15–17).
- vv18–20 — **Flee, and glorify God.** "Flee immorality" (v18); your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit; you are not your own; bought with a price; "therefore glorify God in your body" (vv19–20).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "Do you not know" ×6 — vv2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19 (four of them "Or do you not know," vv2, 9, 16, 19). Paul keeps appealing to what they already know.
- "body / bodies" ×8 — vv13 (×2), 15, 16, 18 (×2), 19, 20 (all in vv13–20).
- "God" ×7 — vv9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20; "Lord" ×5 — vv11, 13 (×2), 14, 17.
- "go to law / law courts / lawsuits" ×5 — vv1, 2, 4, 6, 7; "judge / judged / judges" ×4 — vv2 (×2), 3, 4.
- "brother(s) / brethren" ×4 — vv5, 6 (×2), 8.
- "members" ×3 — v15 (×3); "Christ" ×3 — vv11, 15 (×2).
- "but" ×10 — vv6, 11 (×3), 12 (×2), 13 (×2), 14, 18 — three of them carry the turn in v11.
- "neither … nor" — ten kinds of people in vv9–10 ("neither" once, "nor" nine times).
- "lawful" ×2 — v12; "inherit" ×2 — vv9, 10; "joins" ×2 — vv16, 17; "prostitute" ×2 — vv15, 16; "immorality" ×2 — vv13, 18 (plus "the immoral man," v18); "wrong(ed)" ×2 — vv7, 8; "defraud(ed)" ×2 — vv7, 8; "unrighteous" ×2 — vv1, 9; "this life" ×2 — vv3, 4; "raise(d)" ×2 — v14.

Compare 5:11: six of the ten names in 6:9–10 already appear in 5:11 — immoral, covetous, idolater, reviler, drunkard, swindler.

Contrasts: the unrighteous ⟷ the saints (v1). Judging the world and angels ⟷ unable to settle the smallest matters (vv2–4). Be wronged ⟷ do wrong (vv7–8). "Such were some of you" ⟷ "but you were washed" (v11). Lawful ⟷ profitable; free ⟷ mastered (v12). Food and stomach that God will do away with ⟷ the body that God will raise (vv13–14). One body with a prostitute ⟷ one spirit with the Lord (vv16–17). Every other sin is outside the body ⟷ the immoral man sins against his own body (v18). Your own ⟷ bought with a price (vv19–20).

Commands: do not be deceived (v9); flee immorality (v18); glorify God in your body (v20). The questions of v7 work as commands too.

Shape of the chapter: a courtroom (1–8), a mirror (9–11), a debate (12–17), a sanctuary (18–20). It begins with men claiming their rights and ends with the news that they are not their own.

Chapter theme (my words): I am not who I was. Washed, set apart and declared right with God by Jesus and His Spirit, I belong to Him — body included. So I settle my quarrels like family, I run from sexual sin instead of reasoning with it, and I use this bought body to honor the One who paid for it.

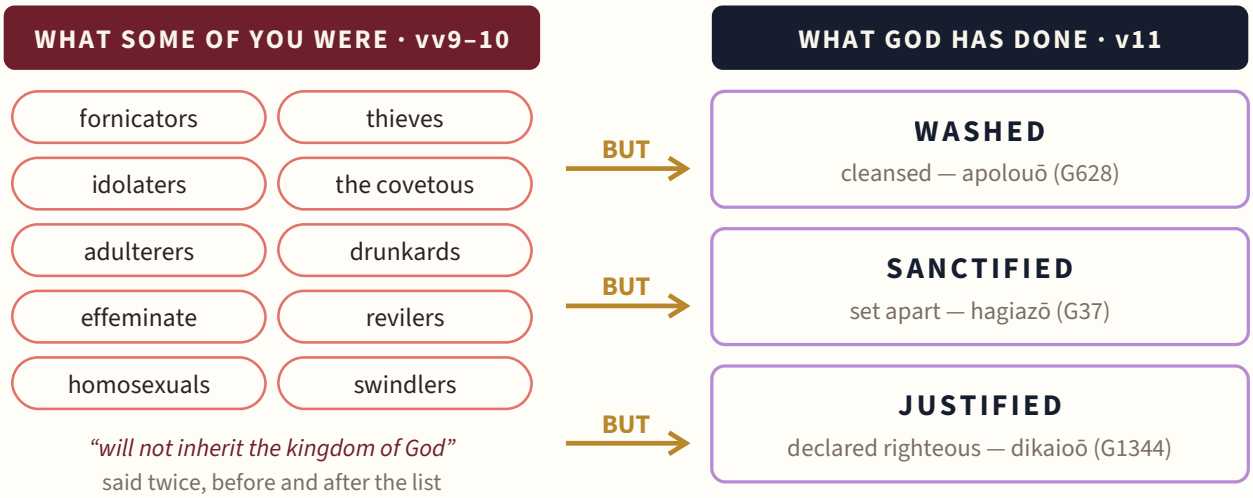
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19

"Or do you not know that △your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that ◷you are not your own?"

FIGURE · SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU



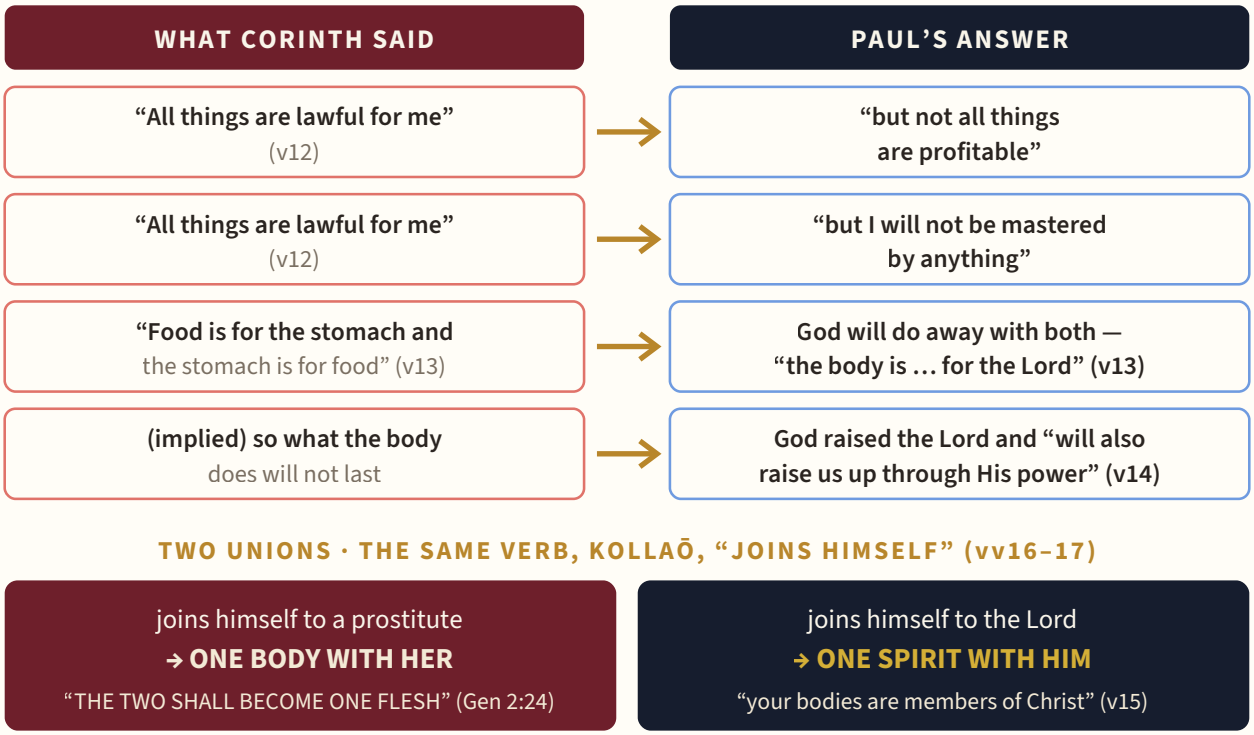
"in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God"

THE SON · THE SPIRIT · OUR GOD — ALL THREE AT WORK IN ONE VERSE

"Such were some of you" — past tense: what you were is not what you are.

Ten kinds of people who will not inherit the kingdom stand on the left; three "buts" carry some of them across to what God has done — washed, sanctified, justified.

FIGURE · WHAT CORINTH SAID, WHAT PAUL ANSWERED



Each Corinthian slogan gets a "but" from Paul, and the two unions at the bottom use the same verb — you become one with whatever you join yourself to.

Lawsuits among believers (vv1–8). Guzik says "unrighteous" (v1) is meant "in a religious sense, not a moral sense": the judges were not necessarily bad judges, "but they were not Christians." Paul himself appealed to Roman courts (Acts 25:10–11), and Romans 13 gives the state real authority, so Guzik does not read this as a ban on all legal action, or on criminal matters going to the state. Sproul draws the same line from Jesus' teaching: "there is still a legitimate place for the role of the state, the role of church courts," but personal ethics are governed by "mercy, not vengeance." Henry: "Christians should never engage in law-suits till all other remedies have been tried in vain." The issue is believers airing family quarrels before the world; the church should provide wise arbitration (v5).

What does "the saints will judge the world … we will judge angels" mean (vv2–3)? Daniel saw judgment "passed in favor of the saints" (Dan 7:22); Jesus promised the Twelve thrones (Matt 19:28). Henry takes it of the saints as "assessors to Christ" at the last day — "They are not partners in their Lord's commission, but they have the honour to sit by, and see his proceeding against the wicked world, and approve it." Guzik: we will share "in some sense or another," and the angels in view are the evil ones. Either way, if that is our destiny, a property dispute is beneath us.

"Why not rather be wronged?" (vv7–8). Guzik reads v7 as aimed at the injured party: "Just by going to court against your brother, you already lose." Paul is not telling him to suffer wrong instead of confronting the problem, but instead of bringing the dispute before unbelievers. Henry limits it to matters of small consequence: "In matters of great damage to ourselves or families, we may use lawful means to right ourselves." Then v8 turns to the one doing wrong — you yourselves defraud, and do it to your brothers.

Who will not inherit the kingdom (vv9–10)? Guzik's key point: Paul describes "those whose lives are dominated and characterized by these sins," not a believer who stumbles and fights back — though "a lifestyle of sin begins with single acts of sin." Sproul: "true regenerate Christians fall into these sins," but it "should be a radical exception to Christian behavior," and impenitence is what puts a man outside the church. "Do not be deceived."

The two words in verse 9. NASB "effeminate" (*malakoi*) and "homosexuals" (*arsenokoitai*). Guzik holds that together they address homosexual practice generally, not only exploitative or commercial forms; other interpreters argue for narrower readings, and the debate in the scholarship is real. Guzik's pastoral balance deserves notice: "Christians err when they excuse homosexuality, and deny that it is sin, but they also err just as badly when they single it out as a sin God is uniquely angry with." The greedy and the drunkard are named in the same breath — and all of them are things to be repented of, not identities that put anyone beyond grace.

"Such were some of you" (v11). The turning point of the chapter. Three aorist verbs, each introduced by a strong "but":

- **washed** — cleansed from the filth of sin (Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16);
- **sanctified** — set apart as God's own (Heb 10:10);
- **justified** — declared righteous, acquitted (Rom 3:24; 5:1).

All three are God's work, "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" — Father, Son and Spirit together, as Guzik notes. Henry: "All who are made righteous in the sight of God are made holy by the grace of God." Guzik: "God can take the kind of people described in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 10 and make them into the kind of people described in 1 Corinthians 6:11!"

"All things are lawful for me" (vv12–14). Guzik and Henry both read this (and "food is for the stomach") as Corinthian slogans — Christian freedom twisted into license. Paul answers twice: not everything is profitable, and "I will not be mastered by anything." The wordplay (*exestin* / *exousiazō*) says: everything may be within my rights, but I refuse to come under the rights of anything. Sproul: Christ "calls us to the royal liberty of slavery to him." Then Paul breaks the food–sex comparison: God will do away with stomach and food, but He will raise the body (v14).

Members of Christ, one flesh, one spirit (vv15–17). The believer's body is a member of Christ. Sexual union creates a "one flesh" bond (Gen 2:24) — Guzik: "In the Biblical understanding of sex, there is no such thing as 'casual sex.'" But the one who joins himself to the Lord is "one spirit with Him." Spurgeon: "Intimate association creates conformity."

Flee (v18). Not "resist," not "manage" — run. Guzik's model is Joseph (Gen 39:12); Clarke (in Guzik): "reason not, but FLY!"; Henry: "Other vices may be conquered in fight, this only by flight." Guzik reads *porneia* broadly, to include sexual gratification apart from one's spouse, pornography included. Not a worse sin than all others, Guzik says, but one with "a unique effect on the body."

Temple and price (vv19–20). *Naos* is the inner sanctuary. In 3:16 it is the church; here, each believer's body. "You are not your own … bought with a price": the language of the market, the price the blood of Christ (1 Pet 1:18–19). The KJV's "and in your spirit, which are God's" is probably a later addition (Guzik).

Word study (Greek):

- **unrighteous — *adikos* (G94):** unjust; outside God's righteousness (vv1, 9).
- **judge / go to law — *krinō* (G2919):** to judge, decide; middle voice "go to law" (vv1, 6).

- **law courts — *kritērion* (G2922):** a tribunal or case; only vv2, 4 and James 2:6.
- **defeat — *hēttēma* (G2275):** a loss, a failure (v7; Rom 11:12).
- **be wronged / wrong — *adikeō* (G91):** to act unjustly, injure (vv7, 8).
- **defraud — *apostereō* (G650):** to rob, withhold what belongs to another (vv7, 8; 7:5; Mark 10:19).
- **deceived — *planaō* (G4105):** to lead astray, make to wander (v9; 15:33).
- **inherit — *klēronomeō* (G2816):** to receive as an heir (vv9, 10).
- **effeminate — *malakos* (G3120):** literally "soft" (Matt 11:8); figurative here.
- **homosexuals — *arsenokoitēs* (G733):** "male" + "bed"; only here and 1 Tim 1:10.
- **washed — *apolouō* (G628):** to wash off, wash away (v11; Acts 22:16).
- **sanctified — *hagiazō* (G37):** to set apart as holy (v11).
- **justified — *dikaioō* (G1344):** to declare righteous; a courtroom acquittal (v11).
- **lawful — *exesti* (G1832):** it is permitted (v12).
- **profitable — *sympherō* (G4851):** to bring together for good, be advantageous (v12).
- **mastered — *exousiazō* (G1850):** to exercise authority over (v12; 7:4).
- **do away with — *katargeō* (G2673):** to render idle, abolish (v13; 15:26).
- **joins — *kollaō* (G2853):** to glue, cleave (vv16–17; Matt 19:5).
- **prostitute — *pornē* (G4204):** a harlot (vv15–16).
- **flee — *pheugō* (G5343):** run away, escape (v18; 10:14; 2 Tim 2:22).
- **immorality — *porneia* (G4202):** sexual immorality of every kind (vv13, 18).
- **temple — *naos* (G3485):** the sanctuary itself, where God dwells (v19; 3:16).
- **bought — *agorazō* (G59):** to purchase in the marketplace (v20; 7:23).
- **price — *timē* (G5092):** value, honor, price (v20).
- **glorify — *doxazō* (G1392):** to honor, show the worth of (v20).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The case is lost before it is heard** — *hēttēma*: having lawsuits at all is the defeat (v7).
2. **Future judges, present failures** — those who will judge angels can settle the smallest matters (vv2–3).
3. **Paul speaks to both men** — "be wronged" to the injured, "you yourselves wrong" to the guilty (vv7–8).
4. **Mercy first, not courts never** — Sproul and Henry both keep a place for lawful courts.
5. **The list is a mirror, not a weapon** — neither excuse any sin on it nor single one out.
6. **"Such were" is past tense** — washed, sanctified, justified are finished acts of God (v11).
7. **My rights must not become something else's rights over me** — lawful, but not mastered (v12).
8. **You become one with what you join** — the same verb for the prostitute and the Lord (vv16–17).
9. **Some sins are beaten only by running** — "this only by flight" (Henry); Joseph's cloak.
10. **The sanctuary, not the courtyard** — *naos*, and the reason is the price (vv19–20).

Cross-references: Gen 2:24; 39:7–21; Dan 7:22; Matt 5:39–40; 18:15–17; 19:5, 28; Mark 10:19; Luke 6:27–36; Acts 22:16; 25:10–11; Rom 1:24–32; 3:24; 6:12–23; 12:1; 13:3–4; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 5:11–13; 7:4, 23; 10:14; 15:26, 33; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 5:5; 1 Thess 4:3–8; 1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 2:22; Titus 3:3–7; Heb 10:10; 13:4; James 2:6; 1 Pet 1:18–19; 2:23.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 6:20

"For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

FIGURE · THE SANCTUARY AND THE PRICE



Paul chooses the word for the inner sanctuary, where God dwells; read the right column top to bottom and it ends in a command: glorify God in your body.

Command to obey — settle it like family. "Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?" (v7). Some of the men I walk with carry real injuries — money taken, trust broken, sometimes by a brother in Christ. Paul does not say the wrong does not matter. He says winning against a brother before the world can cost more than the loss. I can take it to wise believers, and I can hand the rest to God, who judges justly (1 Pet 2:23). And if I am the one in verse 8, I need to make it right this week.

Promise to trust — "Such were some of you." This is the verse I want every man I serve to read slowly. *Were*. Past tense. The list in vv9–10 reads like a roll call of the men around our table — the drinking, the sexual sin, the stealing, the using — and of me. Then come three words God has already spoken over everyone in Christ:

- **Washed.** The stain is gone, not just covered over. You are not dirty.
- **Sanctified.** You are set apart — God's own property now, not your addiction's.
- **Justified.** The Judge has ruled in your favor because of Jesus. The case is closed.

None of these is a reward for a clean streak. They are done "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." When the enemy reads you your old record, answer with God's verdict.

For the men I walk with — identity before effort. Recovery that starts with "I have to stop" runs out of gas. Paul starts with who you are (v11), whose you are (vv15, 19), and what you cost — "bought with a price" (v20). You don't fight to *become* clean; you fight because you *are* clean and you won't go back to the mud.

Warning to heed — "I will not be mastered by anything." "All things are lawful for me" is the voice of every addiction: *I'm free; I can handle it.* Is this thing serving me, or am I serving it? Anything that has me is my master — and I already have One.

Command to obey — flee. "Flee immorality" (v18). Not debate it, not see how close I can get, not test my strength — Joseph ran (Gen 39:12). For a man fighting sexual addiction, fleeing is planned ahead: filters on the phone, the device out of the bedroom, the route that avoids the old places, the brother I text before — not after — I'm in trouble. Running is not weakness. It is obedience.

Example to follow — this body is a sanctuary. "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you … you are not your own" (v19). For a man getting out of prison, in treatment, or failing to illness — your body is not trash and not a cell. God lives there, and He intends to raise it (v14). That changes what I put into it, what I let it do, and how I rest it and work with it.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Is there a brother I am holding something against — money, a broken promise, an injury — and how would Paul have me settle it? (6:1–8; Matt 18:15) *Why not rather be wronged? Settle it like family, before the world is watching.*
2. When have I been the one in verse 8 — the one who wronged or cheated a brother and expected grace to cover it? (6:8–9) *Paul speaks to both men; the defrauder stands next to the list in verse 9.*
3. Read verses 9–10 slowly. Which names would have described me? What does "such were some of you" say to that man? (6:9–11; Titus 3:5) *Washed, sanctified, justified — past tense, God's work, not my streak.*
4. What "All things are lawful for me" do I tell myself? What has started to master me? (6:12; Rom 6:16) *Freedom that enslaves is not freedom; I already have a Master.*
5. What does fleeing look like for me this week — specifically, ahead of time, and with whom? (6:18; Gen 39:12; 2 Tim 2:22) *Not resisting, not testing, not reasoning: running, like Joseph.*
6. If my body is a sanctuary God bought, what changes in how I use it, feed it, rest it, and work with it? (6:19–20; Rom 12:1) *Spurgeon: chastity, temperance, industry — the body glorifying God.*

Worship. The Judge has already ruled over me — washed, sanctified, justified. The Spirit lives in this body, and the price was the precious blood of Christ. I am His.

Prayer. Father, thank You that I am washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Jesus and by Your Spirit — not by my record. Such was I, and You made me new. Give me the humility to settle my quarrels like a brother and the courage to flee what I cannot flirt with. Break anything that has started to master me. I am not my own; I was bought with the blood of Your Son. Take this body and use it for Your glory — and keep the men at our table in the same grace. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 7

Married, Single, and Called — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Married or single, bound or free, God's call meets me exactly where I am. Marriage is a holy gift given in both directions, singleness is a gift with its own freedom, and either one is lived with an undivided heart toward a Lord whose world is passing away.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 7 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.

3 The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

6 But this I say by way of concession, not of command.

7 Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

8 But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.

9 But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband

11 (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.

13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

15 Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

17 Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches.

18 Was any man called when he was already circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised.

19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.

20 Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called.

21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that.

22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.

23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

24 Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called.

25 Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.

26 I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.

27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

28 But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none;

30 and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess;

31 and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.

32 But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord;

33 but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife,

34 and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

35 This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

36 But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry.

37 But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, he will do well.

38 So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.

39 A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

40 But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

Marked in the text

- **v2** "because of immoralities" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "fulfill his duty" — Command / instruction
- **v4** "does not have authority over his own body" — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** "Stop depriving one another" — Command / instruction

- **v5** “so that Satan will not tempt you” — Sin / warning
- **v6** “by way of concession, not of command” — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** “each man has his own gift from God” — Promise / blessing
- **v9** “it is better to marry than to burn with passion” — Time / place / contrast
- **v9** “it is better to marry than to burn” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “not I, but the Lord” — God — His character & actions
- **v11** “be reconciled to her husband” — Promise / blessing
- **v14** “now they are holy” — Promise / blessing
- **v15** “not under bondage” — Time / place / contrast
- **v15** “God has called us to peace” — God — His character & actions
- **v17** “in this manner let him walk” — Command / instruction
- **v19** “the keeping of the commandments of God” — Command / instruction
- **v22** “the Lord’s freedman” — Promise / blessing
- **v23** “You were bought with a price” — God — His character & actions
- **v23** “do not become slaves of men” — Sin / warning
- **v24** “remain with God” — Command / instruction
- **v26** “the present distress” — Time / place / contrast
- **v28** “you have not sinned” — Promise / blessing
- **v29** “the time has been shortened” — Time / place / contrast
- **v31** “the form of this world is passing away” — Time / place / contrast
- **v32** “free from concern” — Promise / blessing
- **v35** “undistracted devotion to the Lord” — Promise / blessing
- **v39** “only in the Lord” — Command / instruction
- **v40** “I also have the Spirit of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v15** “called” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v8** “remain” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v40** “remains” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

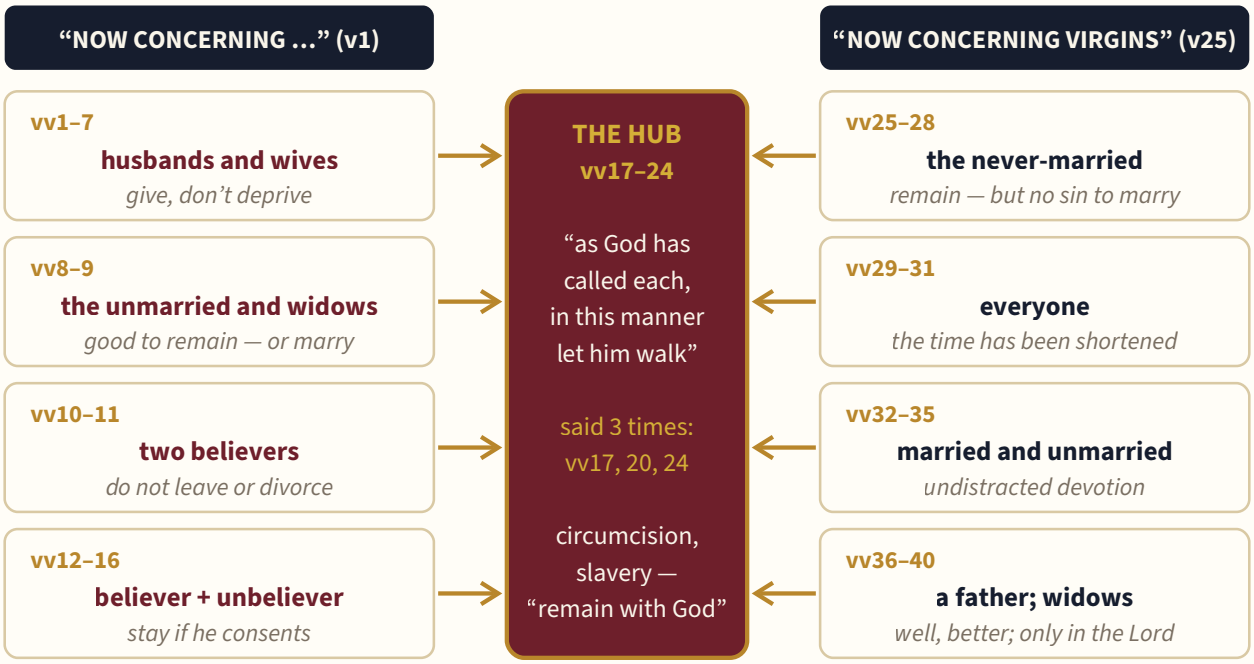
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 7:7

"Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, ☆each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that."

FIGURE · THE WHEEL OF CHAPTER 7



Paul answers each group the Corinthians asked about, and every answer turns on the hub he states three times in verses 17–24: walk with God where He called you.

Setting. Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8) to the church in Corinth, a port city famous for sexual license. Chapters 1–6 answered reports he had heard; chapter 7 opens their own letter: "Now concerning the things about which you wrote" (v1). The same "now concerning" marks each new question (7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12). Chapter 6 ended with "Flee immorality" and "you have been bought with a price"; chapter 7 turns from the brothel to the marriage bed.

Who: Paul — sometimes reporting "the Lord" (v10), sometimes giving his own apostolic word (vv12, 25, 40); husbands and wives; the unmarried and widows (v8); believers married to unbelievers (vv12–16) and their children (v14); the circumcised and uncircumcised (vv18–19); slaves and the free (vv21–23); virgins (vv25, 28, 34, 36–38); widows (vv39–40).

Structure:

- vv1–9 — **marriage is not less holy:** the Corinthians' claim, "it is good for a man not to touch a woman"; Paul's "But because of immoralities …" (v2). Mutual duty (vv3–4); stop depriving one another except by agreement, for a time, for prayer (v5); "this I say by way of concession" (v6); each has his own gift from God (v7); to the unmarried and widows — remain, or marry rather than burn (vv8–9).
- vv10–16 — **divorce:** to two believers, the Lord's command — do not leave; if separated, remain unmarried or be reconciled (vv10–11). To a believer with an unbelieving spouse — do not divorce if the spouse consents (vv12–13); the spouse is sanctified, the children holy (v14); if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave — not under bondage; God has called us to peace (v15); how do you know whether you will save your spouse? (v16).
- vv17–24 — **the principle:** walk as God called you (v17), illustrated by circumcision (vv18–19) and slavery (vv21–23), and said three times (vv17, 20, 24). "You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men" (v23).
- vv25–31 — **the present distress:** no command of the Lord, but an opinion (v25); remain as you are (vv26–27); marrying is not sin, but brings trouble (v28); the time has been shortened — five "as though" clauses (vv29–31); the form of this world is passing away (v31).
- vv32–40 — **undistracted devotion:** free from concern (v32); the married rightly divided (vv33–34); not a restraint, but devotion (v35); a man and his virgin daughter — well and better (vv36–38); a widow free to marry, only in the Lord; happier as she is; "I also have the Spirit of God" (vv39–40).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "wife / wives" ×18 — vv2, 3 (×2), 4 (×2), 10, 11, 12, 14 (×2), 16 (×2), 27 (×3), 29, 33, 39.
- "husband" ×17 — vv2, 3 (×2), 4 (×2), 10, 11 (×2), 13 (×2), 14 (×2), 16 (×2), 34, 39 (×2).
- "Lord" ×12 (incl. "Lord's," v22) — vv10, 12, 17, 22 (×2), 25 (×2), 32 (×2), 34, 35, 39.
- "marry / married / marries / marriage" ×11 — vv9 (×2), 10, 28 (×2), 33, 34, 36, 38 (×2), 39; plus "unmarried" ×4 — vv8, 11, 32, 34.
- "called" ×9 — vv15, 17, 18 (×2), 20, 21, 22 (×2), 24.
- "remain(s)" ×6 — vv8, 11, 20, 24, 26, 40.
- "God" ×6 — vv7, 15, 17, 19, 24, 40.
- "virgin(s)" ×6 — vv25, 28, 34, 36, 37, 38.
- "each" ×6 — vv2 (×2), 7, 17 (×2), 24.
- "concerned / concern" ×5 — vv32 (×2), 33, 34 (×2).
- "unbeliever / unbelieving" ×5 — vv12, 13, 14 (×2), 15.
- "circumcised / uncircumcised / (un)circumcision" ×5 — vv18 (×4), 19.
- "as though" ×5 — vv29, 30 (×3), 31.
- "good" ×4 — vv1, 8, 26 (×2); "well / better" ×4 — vv9, 37, 38 (×2).
- "slave(s)" ×4 — vv21, 22 (×2), 23; "free / freedman" ×4 — vv21, 22 (×2), 39.
- "leave(s)" ×4 — vv10, 11, 15 (×2); "divorce" ×2 — vv11, 12.
- "world" ×4 — vv31 (×2), 33, 34; "please" ×3 — vv32, 33, 34.
- "sinned / sin" ×3 — vv28 (×2), 36; "likewise" ×3 — vv3, 4, 22.

Symmetry — count the "likewise." Husband ⟷ wife in almost every line of vv2–4, again in vv10–16 and vv32–34. In a world where a wife was property, Paul writes duties in both directions.

Paul's labels for his authority — watch them: "by way of concession, not of command" (v6); "not I, but the Lord" (v10); "I say, not the Lord" (v12); "I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion" (v25); "I think that I also have the Spirit of God" (v40).

Contrasts: married ⟷ unmarried; believer ⟷ unbeliever; unclean ⟷ holy (v14); slave ⟷ freedman (v22); bound ⟷ released (v27); the things of the Lord ⟷ the things of the world (vv32–34); does well ⟷ does better (v38).

Shape of the chapter: a wheel — questions answered on every side (vv1–16, 25–40), and one hub in the middle (vv17–24): walk with God where He called you.

Chapter theme (my words): Married or single, bound or free, God's call meets me where I am. Marriage is a holy gift to be given in both directions, singleness is a gift with its own freedom, and either one is lived with an undivided heart toward a Lord whose world is passing away.

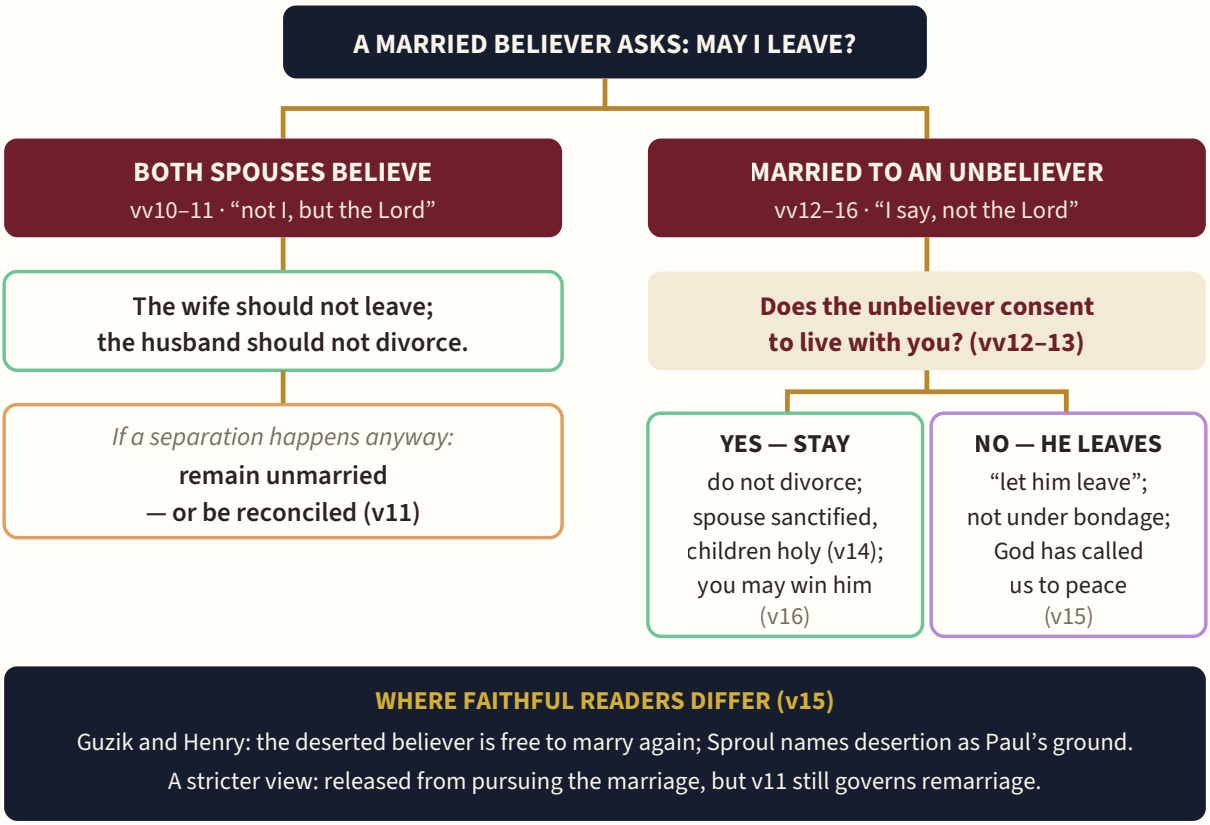
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 7:15

"Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is ◷ not under bondage in such cases, but △ God has called us to peace."

FIGURE · MAY A BELIEVER LEAVE? (VV10–16)



Follow the branches: two believers stay or reconcile; a believer married to an unbeliever stays if the spouse consents — and is not bound if the unbeliever leaves.

FIGURE · HOW PAUL LABELS HIS WORDS

VERSE	WHAT PAUL SAYS	WHAT KIND OF WORD IT IS
v6	*"by way of concession, not of command"*	a permission (the pause for prayer), not a requirement
v10	*"not I, but the Lord"*	Jesus' own teaching on divorce (Mark 10; Matthew 19)
v12	*"I say, not the Lord"*	an apostle's word where Jesus left no recorded saying
v25	*"I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion"*	counsel from one made trustworthy by mercy
v40	*"I think that I also have the Spirit of God"*	Spirit-given judgment — a quiet claim to inspiration

Guzik and Henry: all five are inspired — they differ in kind (command, counsel, concession), not in authority.

Read down the middle column: Paul tells the reader exactly what kind of word he is giving at each step, from the Lord's command to an apostle's Spirit-led counsel.

Is verse 1 Paul's view or the Corinthians'? Guzik reads "it is good for a man not to touch a woman" as their slogan — "This was probably a statement made by the Corinthian Christians, which they asked Paul to agree with" — which Paul accepts only with the big "But" of verse 2. Henry reads it as Paul's own counsel, limited to "that juncture of time at least," and warns against the ancients who ran into "an extreme … in favour of celibacy and virginity." Either way, verses 2–5 overturn the idea that abstaining inside marriage is holier. "Touch" is a polite way of speaking of sexual relations.

Marriage is mutual (vv2–6). The duty (*opheilē*) is a debt, and the husband's is written first. Neither spouse has sole authority over his own body. "Deprive" (v5) is the verb of "defraud" in 6:8; Guzik includes withheld affection and romance, not only frequency — and insists that mutual duty never licenses coercion or abuse. The only pause has three fences: by agreement, for a time, for prayer. "By way of concession" (v6) most likely refers to that pause, not to marriage itself.

Both are gifts (vv7–9). Paul wishes all could be as he is, but "each man has his own gift from God" — *charisma*, the word of chapter 12. Neither state is first or second class. On "burn" (v9), Guzik follows Calvin: "It is one thing to burn, another to feel heat." Henry: "This is God's remedy for lust." Sproul, preaching Mark 10, calls Christians who cohabit outside marriage guilty of "a gross and heinous sin against God."

Divorce between believers (vv10–11). Paul repeats Jesus ("not I, but the Lord"; Mark 10:9; Matt 19:9). If a separation happens, two doors only: remain unmarried or be reconciled. Guzik: "They may live as separate, but not single." Sproul: "Marriage was intended to be forever," and God's condescension to sin "does not go so far as no-fault divorce or divorce on the grounds of incompatibility."

A believer married to an unbeliever (vv12–16). "I say, not the Lord" is not a lower inspiration; Jesus left no saying on this case (Guzik: "Jesus' inspired apostle will!"). The believer must not initiate divorce. Henry explains why the question arose: Ezra 10 had required Israel to put away idolatrous wives.

- **"Sanctified" (v14)** does not mean saved — verse 16 still asks whether the spouse will be saved. The marriage is not defiling. On "now they are holy," Henry reads covenant standing ("a holy, not a common and unclean seed"); Guzik, God's special mercy until the age of accountability. Paedobaptists use the verse for infant baptism (Ligonier indexes Sproul's infant-baptism lectures under this chapter); Baptists read the same holiness without baptism.
- **"Not under bondage" (v15) — where Christians differ.** Guzik: the deserted believer is "free to remarry." Henry: "the deserted person must be free to marry again," otherwise "marriage would be a state of servitude indeed." Sproul names "the desertion of the unbeliever" as Paul's added ground for divorce. A stricter evangelical view holds that the believer is released from pursuing the marriage but that v11 still governs remarriage. All agree the believer must not seek the separation, and "God has called us to peace."
- **v16** can be read as hope (stay — you may win your spouse; Henry: "Endeavour to save a soul") or as realism (you cannot guarantee it, so do not cling to a departing spouse). After v15 the second fits the flow; v14 already gave the reason for hope.

The hub: remain where God called you (vv17–24). Said three times (vv17, 20, 24). Conversion does not require changing your outward station to please God. Guzik: "walk for the Lord in the place you are right now" — and do not try to undo the past by leaving a second wife to return to a first. Circumcision is Paul's example: "Married is nothing and unmarried is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters." A slave need not despair — he is "the Lord's freedman" — but should take freedom if he can. Henry: "Our comfort and happiness depend on what we are to Christ, not what we are in the world." Sproul's doctrine of vocation: every believer has a calling, lived "coram Deo." Spurgeon on v23: "Do not pin your faith to anybody's sleeve." None of this means staying in a sinful occupation.

"The present distress" (v26). Two readings: (1) a specific crisis then pressing on Corinth — Guzik: "some kind of local persecution or problem"; Henry: Christians "were grievously persecuted"; (2) the ongoing pressure of the age between Christ's comings. Either way it is counsel, not law: "if you marry, you have not sinned" (v28).

The time is shortened (vv29–31). *Systellō* — furled sails (Trapp in Guzik), a body wrapped for burial (Acts 5:6). Guzik answers those who say Paul expected the end too soon: Jesus told every generation to be ready. Hold marriage, grief, joy, possessions and the world "as though" — not neglecting them, but not gripping them. Spurgeon preached it as "A Drama in Five Acts." Henry: "It is not so much a world as the appearance of one."

Undistracted devotion (vv32–35). The married man's divided concern is not sin; Guzik: "There is something wrong if a married man does not care for how he may please his wife." Paul throws no noose (*brochos*). Henry: "Celibacy is not in itself a state of greater purity and sanctity than marriage." Spurgeon: "Many men and women rush into marriage."

"His virgin" (vv36–38) — three readings. (1) A father and his unmarried daughter — the NASB's italic "daughter," *gamizō* "give in marriage" (v38); Guzik's view. (2) A man and his fiancée — the ESV and NIV. (3) A man's own virginity — Henry's preference ("the man's virgin being meant of his virginity"). The point does not change: marrying "does well," not marrying "will do better" in that setting, and neither is sin.

Widows and Paul's authority (vv39–40). Death ends the bond; a widow is free to marry "only in the Lord" (Guzik: "only free to remarry another Christian"; Henry: "second marriages are not unlawful"). Paul's "I think that I also

have the Spirit of God" is a quiet claim to inspiration. Sproul's *Hard Sayings* lecture asks of this chapter's qualifiers, "Are there two levels of authority?" — and its title, "The Authority of Apostolic Teaching," is his answer.

Word study (Greek):

- **touch — *haptomai* (G680):** to touch, take hold; here a euphemism for sexual relations (v1).
- **immoralities — *porneia* (G4202):** sexual immorality of every kind (v2; compare 6:18).
- **duty — *opheilē* (G3782):** a debt owed (v3); marital love as something owed, not a favor.
- **have authority over — *exousiazō* (G1850):** to hold rights over (v4).
- **deprive — *apostereō* (G650):** to defraud, rob (v5; the verb of "defraud" in 6:8).
- **agreement — *symphōnos* (G4859):** mutual consent, "sounding together" (v5).
- **lack of self-control — *akrasia* (G192):** powerlessness over desire (v5); its opposite, **have self-control — *enkrateuomai* (G1467)** (v9; 9:25).
- **gift — *charisma* (G5486):** a grace-gift, the word of chapter 12 (v7).
- **burn — *pyroō* (G4448):** to be set on fire, inflamed (v9).
- **leave / separate — *chōrizō* (G5563):** to separate, depart (vv10, 11, 15; Mark 10:9).
- **divorce / send away — *aphiēmi* (G863):** to release, dismiss (vv11–13).
- **be reconciled — *katallassō* (G2644):** changed from enmity to friendship (v11; 2 Cor 5:18–20).
- **sanctified — *hagiazō* (G37):** set apart, made holy; perfect tense (v14).
- **under bondage — *douloō* (G1402):** to be enslaved (v15; Rom 6:18).
- **peace — *eirēnē* (G1515):** the calling of God over a broken home (v15).
- **call / calling — *kaleō* (G2564), *klēsis* (G2821):** God's summons to Himself; nine times in vv15–24.
- **freedman — *apeleutheros* (G558):** a slave who has been set free; only here (v22).
- **bought — *agorazō* (G59); price — *timē* (G5092):** the slave-market purchase (v23; 6:20; Rev 5:9).
- **distress — *anankē* (G318):** constraint, hardship (vv26, 37; Luke 21:23; 1 Cor 9:16).
- **bound — *deō* (G1210):** tied, bound in marriage (vv27, 39).
- **shortened — *systellō* (G4958):** drawn together, furled, wrapped up (v29; Acts 5:6).
- **form — *schēma* (G4976):** the outward shape or fashion of things (v31; Phil 2:8); **passing away — *paragō* (G3855).**
- **free from concern — *amerimnos* (G275); be concerned — *merimnaō* (G3309):** anxious care (vv32–34; Matt 6:25).
- **restraint — *brochos* (G1029):** a noose, lasso; only here (v35).
- **undistracted — *aperispastōs* (G563):** without being dragged about; only here (v35).
- **virgin — *parthenos* (G3933):** an unmarried person (vv25, 28, 34, 36–38); **give in marriage — *gamizō* (G1061)** (v38).
- **happier — *makarios* (G3107):** more blessed (v40).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **Paul writes the husband's debt first** — "I owe you," not "you owe me" (v3).
2. **Withholding love is a kind of fraud** — the verb of 6:8; three fences on any pause (v5).

3. **Both states are grace-gifts** — *charisma*; no one is gifted for immorality (v7).
4. **Marriage does not cure lust** — it is a remedy for burning, not a license to rush (v9).
5. **Separate is not single** — remain unmarried or be reconciled (v11).
6. **The believer sanctifies the home, not the reverse** (v14).
7. **"Called" is the chapter's key word** — nine times in vv15–24.
8. **Bought men are free men** — no man is master of a conscience Christ bought (v23).
9. **The sails are being furled** — hold the world "as though" (vv29–31).
10. **Paul labels every word he gives** — concession, command, apostolic word, opinion, the Spirit (vv6–40).

Cross-references: Gen 2:18, 24; Deut 24:1–4; Ezra 10:3; Ps 39:5–6; Mal 2:14–16; Matt 5:31–32; 6:25–34; 19:3–12; 22:30; 24:44; Mark 10:2–12; Luke 10:40; 21:23; Acts 5:6; 26:10; Rom 6:18; 7:2–3; 12:18; 1 Cor 6:8, 12–20; 9:5, 16, 25; 12:4; 2 Cor 5:18–20; 6:14; Gal 3:28; Eph 5:21–33; Phil 2:8; Col 3:11, 18–19; 1 Thess 4:3–8; 1 Tim 4:1–5; Heb 13:4; 1 Pet 3:1–7; 1 John 2:17; Rev 5:9.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 7:35

"This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure ☆undistracted devotion to the Lord."

FIGURE · A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS (VV29–31)

"THE TIME HAS BEEN SHORTENED" (v29) — sails furled as the ship nears harbor

ACT I HAVE WIVES	ACT II WEEP	ACT III REJOICE	ACT IV BUY	ACT V USE THE WORLD
as though they had none	*as though they did not weep*	*as though they did not rejoice*	*as though they did not possess*	*as though they did not make full use*
not set the heart too much on it	grief is brief; hope remains	enjoy, but hold it loosely	possess without being possessed	use it, do not abuse it

Spurgeon preached these lines as "A Drama in Five Acts" (1862); Henry's counsel in the cream boxes.

"for the form of this world is passing away" (v31) — σχῆμα, the outward shape, the stage set

Five ordinary parts of life, each held "as though" — not despised, but held loosely, because the stage set of this world is already being struck.

Command to obey — for the married men (me first). "The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife" (v3). Paul wrote the husband's duty first. I don't own my body; my wife does — and she shares that claim with joy, not as a weapon. "Stop depriving one another" (v5) covers more than the bedroom: Guzik is right that withheld tenderness, attention and romance are a kind of defrauding too. Today I'll give my wife something I've been holding back — time, a kind word, my full attention.

Warning to heed — the gap the enemy waits for. "So that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (v5). A marriage with distance in it is a marriage with an open door. For the men I walk with who fight sexual sin: isolation inside a marriage is not holiness, and resentment in the bedroom is not purity. Bring it into the light, talk with your wife, and get help together.

For the single men in recovery — your singleness is a gift, not a waiting room. "Each man has his own gift from God" (v7). Singleness is not a penalty for your past. It is *charisma* — the same word as the gifts of chapter 12. And if desire burns, Paul's answer is not shame and not secret sin; it is honest, God-honoring marriage in His time (v9), and until then the self-control the Spirit gives (Gal 5:23). Don't rush a marriage to fix a lust problem; marriage does not cure lust. Walk with Christ and your brothers first.

For the men carrying a divorce. Some of the men I serve have a broken marriage behind them — some caused, some suffered. Chapter 7 is not a club. "Be reconciled" (v11) is a real door where it is still open; and where an unbelieving spouse has walked away, "God has called us to peace" (v15). Whatever my past, the next step is the same: honesty before God, counsel from mature believers, and no new decisions made in a hurry or in secret.

Promise to trust — God meets you where you are. "Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called" (v20). Called while a slave? "Do not worry about it" (v21). That word reaches into a cell. Brother, if you came to Christ behind the wire, you did not miss your calling — you are "the Lord's freedman" (v22) today, before the gate ever opens. Serve Him on the tier. And if you're just out, you don't need a new life in place by Friday to please God; walk with Him in the halfway house, the entry-level job, the bus ride.

Command to obey — don't trade one master for another. "You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men" (v23). A man out of the bottle or out of prison can quickly hand his life to a new master — a person, a crowd, a habit, even a ministry leader who expects too much. Christ paid for me with His blood; I follow men only as far as they follow Him.

Example to follow — hold this world loosely. "The time has been shortened" (v29) — the sails are coming in. I can love my wife, grieve my losses, enjoy what God gives, own a truck and a house, and still keep my hands open, "for the form of this world is passing away" (v31).

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. In my marriage (or my last one), was I living "I owe you" or "you owe me"? What would it look like to pay what I owe this week? (7:3–5; Eph 5:25) *The husband's debt is written first, and it includes affection, not only frequency.*
2. If I am single, do I treat it as a waiting room or as a gift? What could I do for the Lord now that I could not do with a family? (7:7, 32–35) *Charisma — the same word as the gifts of chapter 12.*
3. Who in this room carries a divorce? What does Paul offer that is neither a club nor a shrug? (7:10–16; Mark 10:9) *Two doors where it is still open: remain, or be reconciled; and where an unbeliever left, "God has called us to peace."*
4. What station am I waiting to change before I really serve God — getting out, getting married, getting a better job? (7:17, 20, 24) *"As God has called each, in this manner let him walk" — said three times.*
5. Who or what has become my master since I got free — a person, a crowd, a habit, a leader? (7:22–23; 6:20) *Spurgeon: "Do not pin your faith to anybody's sleeve."*
6. Which of the five "as though" scenes holds my heart too tightly — a person, a grief, a joy, a possession, the world itself? (7:29–31; 1 John 2:17) *Henry: possess what you must shortly leave without being possessed by it.*

Worship. God made marriage in Eden; He gives singleness as a grace, not a sentence; He calls men to Himself in cells and on job sites; and He bought us with His Son's blood so that no one else would own us.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You bought me with a price. Make me a husband who gives rather than takes, and make the single brothers I serve content and pure in the gift You have given them. Bring peace where marriages have broken, and wisdom for every hard decision. Meet each man where You called him — in a cell, a halfway house, a home — and teach us all to live with undistracted devotion to You, because this world is passing away and You are not. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see 1-Corinthians-7-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.

SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 8

Knowledge Puffs Up, Love Builds Up — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Being right is not enough. What I know about my freedom has to answer to love for the brother beside me, because Christ died for him — and if my freedom trips him, I'll gladly give it up.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 8 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

2 If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know;

3 but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

4 Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.

5 For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords,

6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

7 However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8 But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat.

9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

10 For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?

11 For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.

12 And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "Knowledge makes arrogant" — Sin / warning
- **v1** "love edifies" — Command / instruction
- **v2** "he has not yet known as he ought to know" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "if anyone loves God" — Command / instruction
- **v3** "he is known by Him" — Promise / blessing

- **v4** “there is no such thing as an idol in the world” — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** “there is no God but one” — God — His character & actions
- **v5** “so-called gods” — Time / place / contrast
- **v6** “one God, the Father” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “from whom are all things” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “one Lord, Jesus Christ” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “by whom are all things” — God — His character & actions
- **v7** “not all men have this knowledge” — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** “being accustomed to the idol until now” — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** “is defiled” — Sin / warning
- **v8** “food will not commend us to God” — Time / place / contrast
- **v9** “take care” — Command / instruction
- **v9** “a stumbling block to the weak” — Sin / warning
- **v10** “dining in an idol’s temple” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “be strengthened” — Sin / warning
- **v11** “is ruined” — Sin / warning
- **v11** “the brother for whose sake Christ died” — God — His character & actions
- **v12** “you sin against Christ” — Sin / warning
- **v13** “I will never eat meat again” — Command / instruction
- **v1** “knowledge” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v7** “conscience” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v7** “weak” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v11** “brother” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v12** “brethren” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

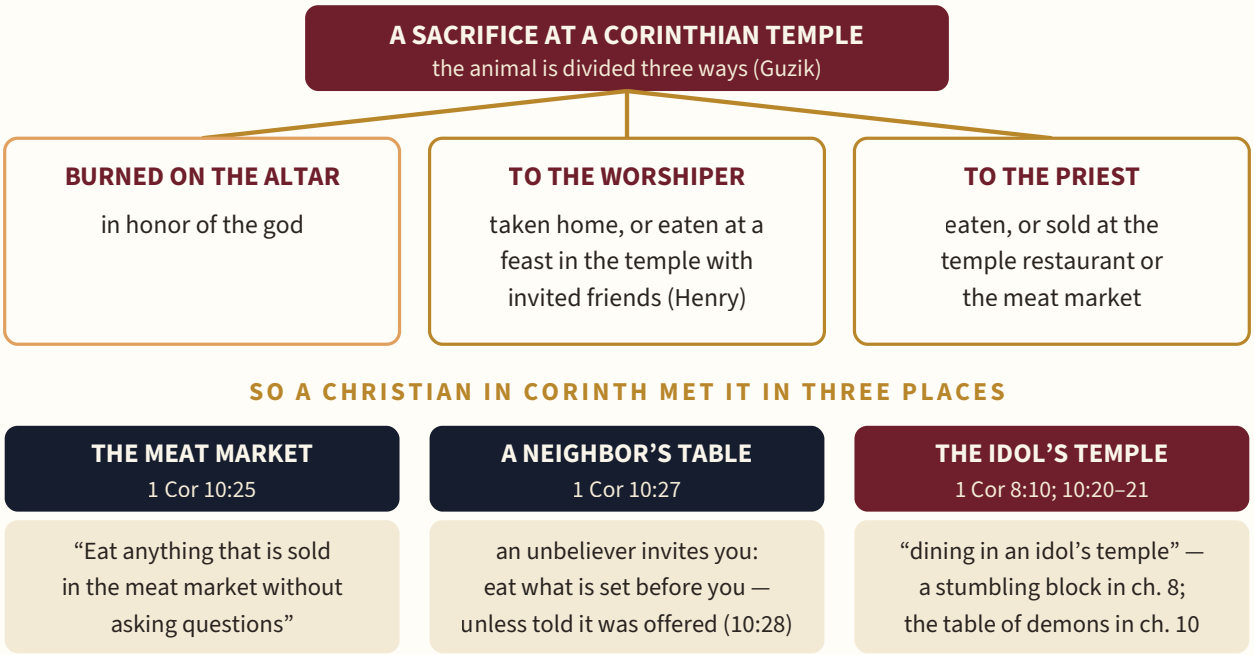
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 8:9

"But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak."

FIGURE · WHERE THE SACRIFICED MEAT WENT



Chapter 8 answers with love for the weaker brother; chapter 10 finishes the case.

Follow the meat from the altar to the street: the Corinthians' question met them at the market, at a neighbor's table and in the temple itself.

Setting. "Now concerning things sacrificed to idols" (v1) opens the next question from the Corinthians' letter (compare 7:1, 25), and Paul's answer runs through chapters 8, 9 and 10. Corinth was full of temples. A sacrificed animal was split between the altar, the worshiper and the priest, and the priest's share was eaten in the temple dining rooms or sold in the meat market. A Corinthian Christian met the question at the butcher's, at a neighbor's table, and at the temple restaurant where business and family events were held.

Who: "we" who "all have knowledge" (v1) — the "strong," who know an idol is nothing; "some" who are "accustomed to the idol until now" (v7) — the "weak," whose conscience is troubled; God the Father; the Lord Jesus Christ; the brother "for whose sake Christ died" (v11); Paul, speaking in the first person in v13.

Structure:

- vv1–3 — **knowledge and love:** "Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies" (v1). The one who supposes he knows has not yet known as he ought; "if anyone loves God, he is known by Him" (v3).
- vv4–6 — **one God, one Lord:** "there is no such thing as an idol in the world," and "there is no God but one" (v4). Many so-called gods and lords (v5) — "yet for us there is but one God, the Father … and one Lord, Jesus Christ" (v6).
- vv7–8 — **not everyone knows:** old habits of idol worship make some eat with a weak conscience, which is defiled (v7). "Food will not commend us to God" (v8).
- vv9–13 — **the brother:** take care that "this liberty of yours" does not become a stumbling block (v9). Seeing you dining in an idol's temple, the weak man is "strengthened" to eat (v10); he is ruined, "the brother for whose sake Christ died" (v11); to wound his conscience is to "sin against Christ" (v12). Paul's resolve: "I will never eat meat again" (v13).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "know / knows / known" ×6 — vv1, 2 (×3: knows, known, know), 3, 4; plus "knowledge" ×5 — vv1 (×2), 7, 10, 11. Eleven "know" words in thirteen verses — the Corinthians' favorite subject.
- "idol(s) / idol's" ×7 — vv1, 4 (×2), 7 (×2), 10 (×2).
- "sacrificed" ×4 — vv1, 4, 7, 10 (each time "things sacrificed to idols" or "sacrificed to an idol").
- "weak" ×5 — vv7, 9, 10, 11, 12.
- "eat" ×5 — vv7, 8 (×2), 10, 13; "food" ×3 — vv7, 8, 13; "meat" ×1 — v13; "eating" v4, "dining" v10.
- "brother / brethren" ×4 — vv11, 12, 13 (×2).
- "God" ×4 — vv3, 4, 6, 8; "gods" ×2 — v5; "lords" v5 ⟷ "one Lord" v6.
- "conscience" ×3 — vv7, 10, 12.
- "Christ" ×3 — vv6, 11, 12.
- "one" ×3 — vv4, 6 (×2); "all things" ×2 — v6.
- "stumble / stumbling block" ×3 — vv9, 13 (×2).

Contrasts: knowledge makes arrogant ⟷ love edifies (v1); knowing ⟷ being known (vv2–3); many gods and many lords ⟷ one God and one Lord (vv5–6); those with knowledge ⟷ those without it (v7); eating ⟷ not eating — neither better nor worse (v8); my liberty ⟷ my brother's ruin (vv9–11); sinning against the brethren ⟷ sinning against Christ (v12).

A wordplay to notice: the "strengthened" of v10 (KJV "emboldened") is the same Greek verb as "edifies" in v1. Love builds a brother *up*; careless knowledge "builds" him up — toward sin.

The chain in vv10–12: a brother sees → his weak conscience is "strengthened" → he eats against conscience → he is ruined → the one who caused it sins against the brethren → and against Christ.

Shape of the chapter: head (vv1–6) to heart (vv7–13), hinged on two "therefores" (vv4, 13). Paul affirms what the strong know, then turns their eyes from their knowledge to their brother, and ends with himself: "I will never eat meat again."

Chapter theme (my words): Being right is not enough. What I know about my freedom has to answer to love for the brother beside me, because Christ died for him — and if my freedom trips him, I'll gladly give it up.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 8:6

"yet for us there is but △one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and △one Lord, Jesus Christ, △by whom are all things, and we exist through Him."

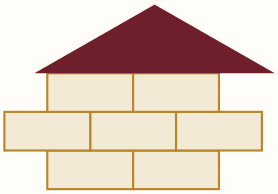
FIGURE · A BUBBLE AND A BUILDING

KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP
physioō · G5448 · to inflate



swells the one who has it (v1)
"supposes that he knows" (v2)
grows bigger, not stronger

LOVE BUILDS UP
oikodomeō · G3618 · to build a house



a building
builds up the brother (v1)
"loves God … known by Him" (v3)
grows stronger, not just bigger

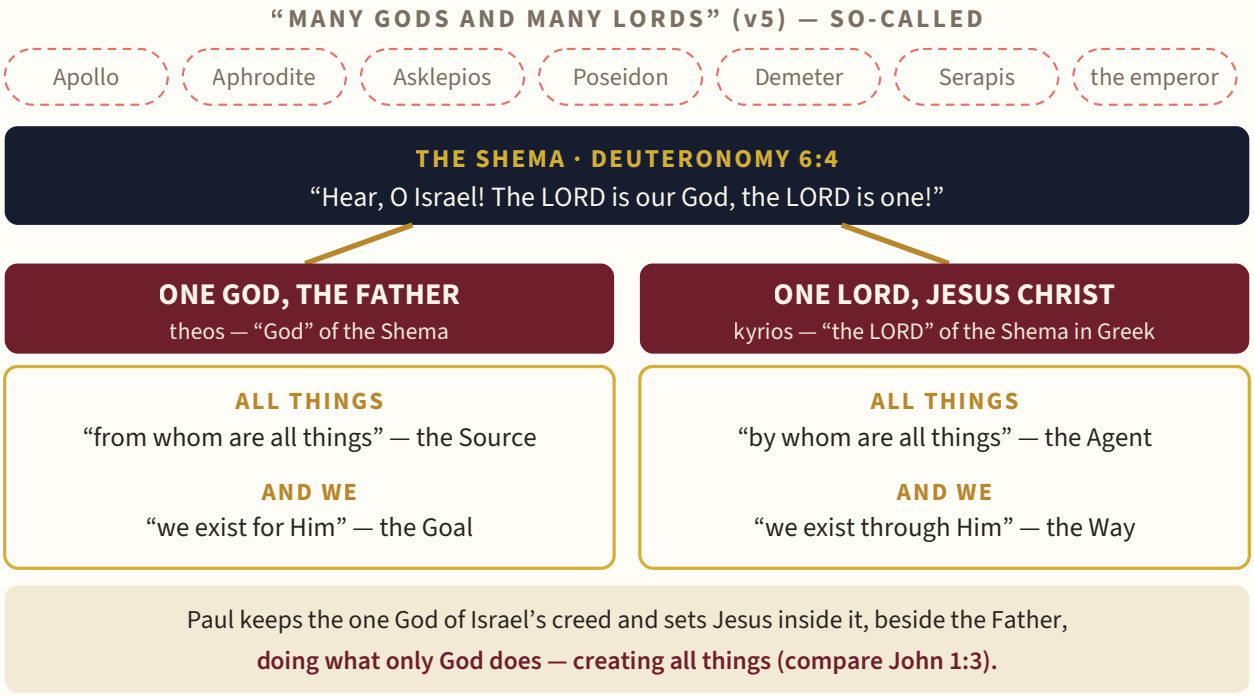
THE IRONY OF VERSE 10 — THE SAME VERB

The weak brother's conscience will be "strengthened" (KJV "emboldened") — *oikodomēthēsetai*, "built up" — to eat what ruins him.

Guzik: their misuse of liberty "was building others up towards sin."

Both knowledge and love make something grow — one inflates, one builds — and in verse 10 careless knowledge "builds" a brother straight into sin.

FIGURE · ONE GOD, ONE LORD



Against the crowded heavens of Corinth, Paul confesses Israel's one God and places the Lord Jesus Christ within that confession as the One through whom all things exist.

Context — the meat market and the temple restaurant. Guzik explains that sacrificed meat "was usually divided into three portions" — the god's, the worshiper's and the priest's — and the priest might sell his at "the temple restaurant or meat market." Henry adds that the heathen held their feasts in the temple and invited friends. The Corinthians' questions were practical: may a Christian buy it, eat it as a guest, or eat in the temple itself? Paul answers in three movements: the principle of love over knowledge (ch. 8), his own example of laying down rights (ch. 9), and the warning against idolatry with rules for market and table (ch. 10).

Knowledge and love (vv1–3). Paul probably echoes the Corinthians' own slogan — "we all have knowledge" — and agrees, then turns it: knowledge, by itself, inflates. Guzik: "it is the difference between a bubble and a building. Some Christians grow, others just swell!" Henry: "there is no evidence of ignorance more common than a conceit of knowledge." Sproul guards the other side: this verse is no excuse for shallow faith — a theology that puffs up shows "a very superficial understanding of the things of God," so "you need to do more work in theology." What matters most is that God knows me — and the mark of that is love for Him (v3; Gal 4:9). Spurgeon: when God sees "the first gleam of grace, He beholds it with joy."

One God, one Lord (vv4–6). Here the strong are right. There is no real god behind the statue, and there is only one God (Deut 6:4). Guzik: "If meat is offered to Zeus, there is no real Zeus." Scripture can call others "gods" in a lesser sense (the judges of Ps 82 and John 10:34; Satan as "the god of this age," 2 Cor 4:4) without granting them deity. Verse 6 is one of the high points of Paul's Christology: the Father is the source and goal of all things, the Lord Jesus Christ the agent through whom all things exist. Morris (in Guzik) explains that *kyrios* rendered the divine name in the Greek Old Testament; Sproul calls its highest use "the imperial usage." Paul has taken Israel's confession of the one God and set Jesus inside it. Henry is careful: the Father is named not to exclude the Son — "the Son is God too, but is not another God."

What is a "weak" conscience (v7)? Some converts had spent their whole lives treating the idol as real. When they eat the meat, it still feels like worship, and their conscience is "defiled." Guzik's clarification: a weak conscience is not one that doesn't work — "in fact, it overworks" — it is "wrongly informed." And "weak" refers to knowledge, not to spiritual maturity or self-control. Henry calls it "some confused veneration" for the idol: they "were not perfectly cured of the old leaven." Yet Paul never tells the weak man simply to override his conscience. Sproul: "it is wrong to consciously do what we consider to be a sin" — whatever is not from faith is sin (Rom 14:23).

A textual note on v7. NASB's "being accustomed to the idol" follows the oldest manuscripts (*synētheia*, custom); KJV's "with conscience of the idol" follows a later reading (*syneidēsei*). The sense is close: long habit had trained these consciences.

Food is not the measure (v8). Eating does not make us better, and abstaining does not make us worse. Guzik applies this to modern liberty questions — movies, drinking, music, television — and warns against treating any stance as proof of greater spirituality. Henry: "It matters little what we eat." Guzik reads the Jerusalem Council's food instruction (Acts 15:29) as "a temporary arrangement" for the gospel among the Jews of that day.

Was eating in the temple itself allowed? Chapter 8 argues on the strong man's own ground: even if you had the right, you would wound your brother. Henry says plainly that Paul "plainly condemns such liberty in ch. 10" — there the temple meal is "the table of demons" (10:20–21). So chapter 8 is not Paul's permission to dine in the idol's temple; it is his first argument against it.

Liberty that wounds (vv9–12). "This liberty of yours" — *exousia*, "right," the very word chapter 9 will turn on. A weak brother sees a knowledgeable believer reclining in the idol's temple, takes courage, eats against conscience, and is "ruined." The irony is sharp: the strong thought their knowledge would build the weak up — and it does "build" him, right into sin (Guzik: "building others up towards sin"). Then the stakes rise: he is the brother "for whose sake Christ died." To wound him is to "sin against Christ" (v12; compare Acts 9:4). Henry: "Injuries done to Christians are injuries to Christ."

The weak brother or the legalist? (v13) — the question where the teachers guard both edges. Paul's vow is not a tool for legalists. Guzik: Paul "would never allow this principle to be a way for a legalist to make demands and bind a Christian walking in liberty" — he withstood Peter in Galatians 2. Sproul's 2010 lecture said the same: defer to the weak, in private if need be, but when a weaker brother makes his scruple a law for the church, the gospel is at stake. The weak brother of chapter 8 is a man who could be drawn into sin, not a man who merely disapproves. Spurgeon puts the heart of it: "Let us treat men as we would treat our sons."

Pointing forward to chapter 9. Verse 13 is the hinge. Paul has just asked the strong to give up a right for a weaker brother's sake — and his next words are "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?" (9:1). Chapter 9 shows him living what he asked: "we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ" (9:12).

Word study (Greek):

- **things sacrificed to idols — *eidōlothytos* (G1494):** idol-sacrificed meat; a Jewish word of scorn (vv1, 4, 7, 10).
- **knowledge — *gnōsis* (G1108):** knowing, understanding — the Corinthians' favorite word (vv1 ×2, 7, 10, 11).
- **makes arrogant — *physioō* (G5448):** to puff up, inflate like a bellows; six of its seven NT uses are in 1 Corinthians (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4).
- **love — *agapē* (G26):** self-giving love that seeks another's good (v1); the verb *agapaō* (G25) in v3.

- **edifies — *oikodomeō* (G3618):** to build a house; to build up (v1). The same verb is "strengthened / emboldened" in v10.
- **know / known — *ginōskō* (G1097):** to know by experience and relationship; v3 "is known" is perfect passive — known and staying known.
- **idol — *eidōlon* (G1497):** an image, a phantom — a shape with nothing behind it (vv4, 7).
- **one — *heis* (G1520):** the "one" of the Shema (Deut 6:4) — three times in vv4–6.
- **Lord — *kyrios* (G2962):** master; in the Greek Old Testament, the divine name (vv5–6).
- **accustomed — *synētheia* (G4914):** custom, habit (v7, oldest manuscripts).
- **conscience — *syneidēsis* (G4893):** "knowing-with" — the inner witness (vv7, 10, 12; eight times in chs. 8–10).
- **weak — *asthenēs* (G772):** without strength, feeble (vv7, 9, 10); the verb *astheneō* (G770) in vv11–12.
- **defiled — *molynō* (G3435):** stained, soiled (v7; Rev 3:4).
- **commend — *paristēmi* (G3936):** to present, bring near (v8) — food does not bring us closer to God.
- **liberty / right — *exousia* (G1849):** authority, right (v9) — the key word of chapter 9.
- **stumbling block — *proskomma* (G4348):** something to trip over (v9).
- **dining — *katakeimai* (G2621):** to recline at table, the banquet posture (v10).
- **idol's temple — *eidōleion* (G1493):** an idol's shrine with its dining hall (v10; only here in the NT).
- **ruined / perish — *apollymi* (G622):** to destroy, be lost (v11) — the "perish" of John 3:16.
- **wounding — *typtō* (G5180):** to strike, beat (v12).
- **cause to stumble — *skandalizō* (G4624):** to spring the trap, entice into sin (v13 ×2).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **Paul starts with love, not food** — "the goal of the Christian life is not knowledge, but love" (Guzik).
2. **A bubble and a building** — knowledge inflates, love builds; "Some Christians grow, others just swell!"
3. **Being known beats knowing** — "he is known by Him" (v3; Gal 4:9).
4. **The answer to puffed-up theology is better theology,** not less (Sproul).
5. **Jesus is placed inside the Shema** — one God, the Father; one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.
6. **A weak conscience overworks** — wrongly informed, but never to be overridden (Rom 14:23).
7. **Your plate is not your rank** — food will not commend us to God (v8).
8. **Careless knowledge "builds" a brother into sin** — the same verb in vv1 and 10.
9. **The weak brother has a price tag** — "for whose sake Christ died" (v11).
10. **Protect the weak; don't obey the legislator** (Guzik, Sproul; Gal 2).

Cross-references: Exod 21:6; Deut 6:4; Ps 82:6; 115:4–8; Matt 18:6; Mark 15:19; John 1:3; 3:16; 10:34–35; Acts 9:4; 15:28–29; 17:23; Rom 11:36; 14:1–15:3; 1 Cor 1:5; 4:6, 18; 9:1–23; 10:19–33; 13:2–4; 2 Cor 4:4; Gal 2:3–14; 4:9; 5:13; Phil 2:10–11; Col 1:16; 1 Tim 2:5; 4:4; Heb 1:2.

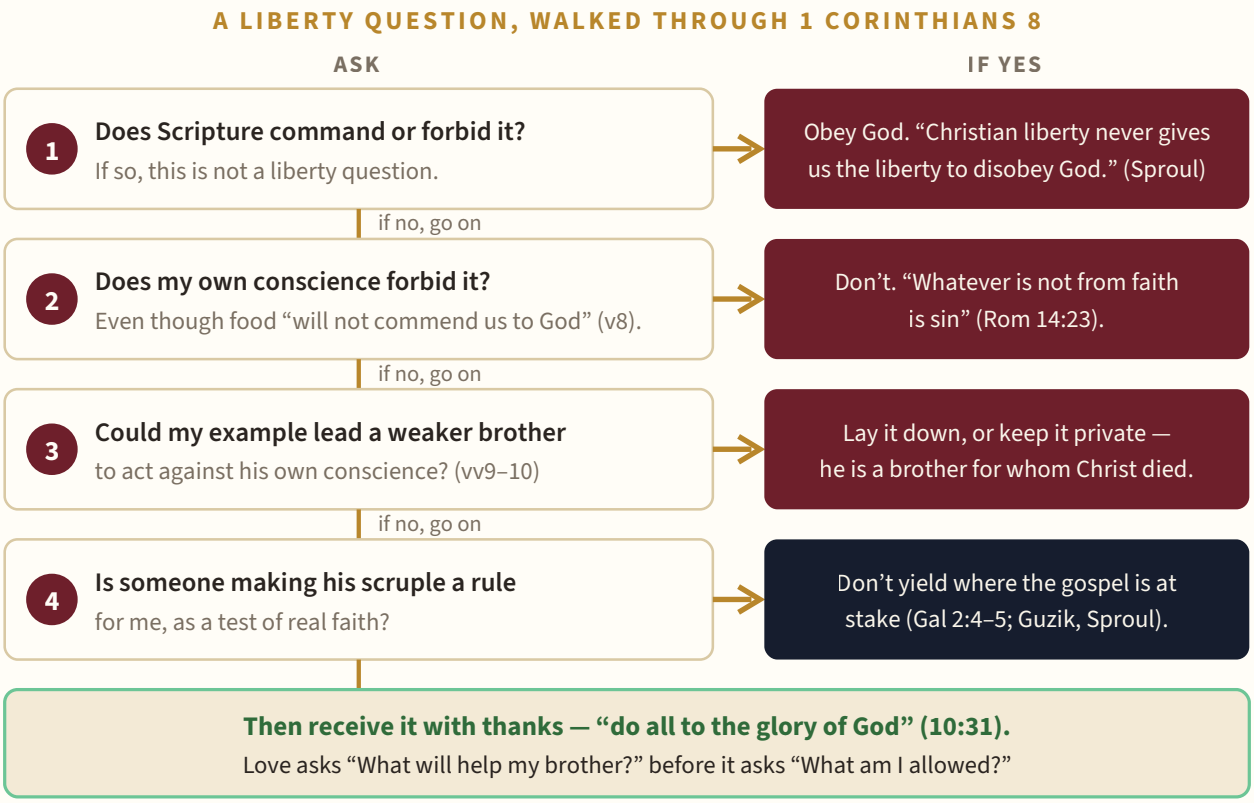
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 8:13

"Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble."

FIGURE · LIBERTY, CONSCIENCE AND LOVE



Read down the left side and stop at the first "yes": Scripture first, then my own conscience, then my brother's — and guard the gospel against anyone who turns a scruple into a law.

Warning to heed — knowledge without love just swells. "Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies" (v1). I write Bible studies; I know a lot of facts about Scripture. That is exactly why this verse is for me. If what I know makes me impatient, superior or harsh with the brother who knows less, I have only swelled, not grown. Sproul is right that the cure isn't to study less — it's to know God better, because the more I really know Him, the more I love Him. The test is not what I know but whether I love — and whether I am "known by Him" (v3).

Promise to trust — one God, one Lord. Whatever "many gods and many lords" compete for a man — the bottle, the screen, money, a gang, a person — "for us there is but one God, the Father … and one Lord, Jesus Christ" (v6). Every idol a man has served is, in the end, nothing. The One who made him is the One who died for him. I exist *for* the Father and *through* the Son; that is where my life comes from and where it is going.

For the men I walk with — my freedom and my brother's sobriety. This chapter could have been written for recovery. A Christian may have liberty to drink a glass of wine; Scripture does not forbid it, and Spurgeon said the same. But if I order a drink at dinner across the table from a brother ninety days sober, I may be the man of v10 — the one whose example gives a weaker brother courage to do what will ruin him. The same goes for the movie I put on, the jokes I laugh at, the places I take a man fresh out of prison. "Take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak" (v9). My right is real; his soul is worth more. Spurgeon's picture stays with me: a father can stand at the cliff edge, but his boys will follow him there.

Sin to confess — wounding a brother is wounding Christ. "You sin against Christ" (v12). Lord, forgive me for the times I used my freedom without looking at who was watching, and for any brother I made it harder for.

Example to follow — Paul's line in the sand. "I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble" (v13). Paul did not make his freedom everyone's rule, and he did not let legalists boss him — but for a brother who could fall, he gave it up gladly. In practice: I can keep my house dry when a man in early recovery visits; I can choose the coffee shop over the bar; I can ask, "What would help you most?" rather than "What am I allowed?"

For the men in recovery — about your own conscience. If your conscience says "not for me," listen to it. A conscience can be weak, but overriding it is still sin (Rom 14:23), and for an addict "just this once" is often the first step back to the pit. And remember: Christ died for *you* (v11). Your sobriety matters to Him enough that He asks your stronger brothers to change how they live for your sake.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Where has what I know about the Bible made me impatient, superior or harsh with a brother who knows less? (8:1–2; 13:2) *A bubble or a building — does my knowledge swell me or build him?*
2. What would change in my week if I believed I am "known by Him" — not just that I know about Him? (8:3; Gal 4:9) *Being known by God, not my grip on Him, is the ground of my life.*
3. Which "so-called gods" still compete for the men at this table — the bottle, the screen, money, a person, a gang? (8:4–7; Ps 115:4) *An idol is nothing, but the pull of an old habit is real (v7).*
4. Is there a freedom I enjoy that could lead a brother in recovery to act against his conscience? What would love do? (8:9–11; Rom 14:15) *My right is real; his soul is worth more.*
5. How do I tell the difference between a weak brother I must protect and a legalist I must not obey? (8:13; Gal 2:4–5) *The weak can be drawn into sin; the legalist only disapproves.*
6. What is one specific thing I could lay down this month "so that I will not cause my brother to stumble"? (8:13; 9:12) *Paul made it personal: "I will never eat meat again."*

Worship. There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things — and that same Lord died for the weakest brother at my table. The God of the whole universe knows me by name. Every idol is nothing; He is everything.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You are the one Lord, by whom are all things and through whom I live. Keep my knowledge humble and my love active. Show me where my freedom has become someone else's stumbling block, and make me glad to lay it down. Give me courage, too, not to bow to rules You never made. Guard every brother I serve who is fighting for his sobriety, and let me be a builder of his faith, never the reason he falls. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 9

Free from All, Slave to All — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Freedom in Christ is not the right to do what I want; it is the freedom to lay down what I'm entitled to so others can hear the gospel. That takes a servant's heart and an athlete's discipline.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 9 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?
Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 My defense to those who examine me is this:

4 Do we not have a right to eat and drink?

5 Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

6 Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

7 Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?

8 I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?

9 For it is written in the Law of Moses,
"YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He?

10 Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops.

11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

12 If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

13 Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?

14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

15 But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one.

16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.

17 For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.

18 What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.

20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law;

21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.

22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.

23 I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?” — God — His character & actions
- **v2** “the seal of my apostleship” — Promise / blessing
- **v9** “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING” — Command / instruction
- **v10** “plow in hope” — Promise / blessing
- **v12** “we did not use this right” — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** “cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ” — Sin / warning
- **v14** “the Lord directed” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “get their living from the gospel” — Command / instruction
- **v16** “woe is me if I do not preach the gospel” — Sin / warning
- **v17** “a stewardship entrusted to me” — God — His character & actions
- **v18** “without charge” — Promise / blessing
- **v19** “I have made myself a slave to all” — Command / instruction
- **v21** “under the law of Christ” — Time / place / contrast
- **v22** “all things to all men” — Time / place / contrast
- **v22** “save some” — Promise / blessing
- **v24** “only one receives the prize” — Time / place / contrast
- **v24** “Run in such a way that you may win” — Command / instruction
- **v25** “exercises self-control in all things” — Command / instruction
- **v25** “a perishable wreath” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “an imperishable” — Promise / blessing
- **v27** “I discipline my body and make it my slave” — Command / instruction
- **v27** “disqualified” — Sin / warning
- **v1** “free” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v4** “right” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v12** “gospel” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v19** “win” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 9:12

"If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ."

FIGURE · WHERE CHAPTER 9 SITS



Chapter 9 is the hinge of Paul's answer about idol food: the liberty of 8:9 is the same "right" Paul proves and then refuses in chapter 9.

Setting. Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8) to the church he planted in Corinth, a wealthy port city that hosted the Isthmian Games every two years. Chapter 9 sits in the middle of his answer about food offered to idols (chs. 8–10). In chapter 8 he asked the "strong" to give up a right for a weaker brother's sake (8:9, 13); chapter 9 is Paul showing them he does exactly that himself — while answering some at Corinth who doubted he was a real apostle.

Who: Paul; Barnabas (v6); "the rest of the apostles," "the brothers of the Lord," and Cephas (v5); the Corinthians ("my work in the Lord," v1); "those who examine me" (v3); Jews; those under the Law; those without law; the weak (vv20–22); runners and boxers (vv24–26).

Structure:

- vv1–2 — **credentials:** Am I not free? an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? You are the seal of my apostleship.
- vv3–6 — **the rights:** to eat and drink, to take along a believing wife, to refrain from working.

- vv7–14 — **the case for support:** soldier, vineyard, flock (v7); the Law of Moses — "You shall not muzzle the ox" (vv8–10, Deut 25:4); spiritual seed, material harvest (v11); others share the right (v12a); the temple and the altar (v13); "the Lord directed" (v14). In the middle: "Nevertheless, we did not use this right … so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ" (v12b).
- vv15–18 — **the refusal and the reward:** I have used none of these things; preaching is compulsion — "woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (v16); my reward is to offer the gospel without charge (v18).
- vv19–23 — **free, but a slave to all:** to Jews as a Jew, to those under the Law as under the Law, to those without law as without law (yet under the law of Christ), to the weak weak — "all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some" (v22).
- vv24–27 — **the athlete:** run to win; self-control in all things; a perishable wreath vs. an imperishable; not without aim, not beating the air; "I discipline my body and make it my slave," so that I will not be disqualified (v27).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "gospel" ×9 — vv12, 14 (×2), 16 (×2), 18 (×3), 23.
- "right" ×6 — vv4, 5, 6, 12 (×2), 18 (Greek *exousia*; KJV "power").
- "win" ×6 — vv19, 20 (×2), 21, 22, 24 (the first five *kerdainō*, "gain"; v24 a different verb).
- "law / Law" ×11 — vv8, 9, 20 (×4), 21 (×5).
- "all" ×9 — vv12, 19 (×2), 22 (×3), 23, 24, 25; "all things" ×4 — vv12, 22, 23, 25.
- "so that" ×9 — vv12, 15, 19, 20 (×2), 21, 22, 23, 27 — Paul's purpose clauses.
- "Lord" ×5 — vv1 (×2), 2, 5, 14.
- "apostle / apostleship / apostles" ×4 — vv1, 2 (×2), 5.
- "run" ×4 — vv24 (×3), 26.
- "preach / proclaim / preached" ×5 — vv14, 16 (×2), 18, 27.
- "eat" ×3 — vv4, 7, 13; "weak" ×3 — v22; "Jew / Jews" ×3 — v20.
- "free" ×2 — vv1, 19 (the chapter's bookends); "slave" ×2 — vv19, 27; "reward" ×2 — vv17, 18; "boast" ×2 — vv15, 16; "hope" ×2 — v10.
- Question marks ×19 — seventeen in vv1–13, then vv18 and 24. He argues like a man on trial.

Contrasts: a right ⟷ refusing to use it (vv12, 15). Spiritual things sown ⟷ material things reaped (v11). Voluntarily ⟷ against my will (v17). Free from all ⟷ a slave to all (v19). Under the Law ⟷ without law ⟷ under the law of Christ (vv20–21). All run ⟷ only one receives the prize (v24). A perishable wreath ⟷ an imperishable (v25). Preaching to others ⟷ being disqualified myself (v27).

Lists: soldier / vinedresser / shepherd (v7); eat and drink / a believing wife / refrain from working (vv4–6); Jews / under the Law / without law / weak (vv20–22).

Shape of the chapter: a trial (1–6), a case proved (7–14), a right refused (15–18), a freedom spent (19–23), a race run (24–27). It opens with "Am I not free?" and turns on "Nevertheless."

Chapter theme (my words): Paul had every right a minister can have, proved it from life, Law and the Lord's own word — and laid it all down so nothing would hinder the gospel. Freedom in Christ is spent on others, and it takes an athlete's discipline to keep spending it.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16

"For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for ⚠ I am under compulsion; for ⚠ woe is me if I do not preach the gospel."

FIGURE · FREE FROM ALL, SLAVE TO ALL

FREE FROM ALL MEN → A SLAVE TO ALL (v19)

one goal repeated five times: "so that I might win"

TO THE JEWS	UNDER THE LAW	WITHOUT LAW	THE WEAK
I BECAME as a Jew	I BECAME as under the Law	I BECAME as without law	I BECAME weak
FOR EXAMPLE Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3)	FOR EXAMPLE a purification vow (Acts 21:23–26)	FOR EXAMPLE no Levitical customs among Gentiles	FOR EXAMPLE "I will never eat meat again" (8:13)
to win them	*to win them*	*to win them*	*to win them*

WHAT FLEXED: CUSTOMS · DIET · MANNER · APPROACH

WHAT NEVER MOVED

"not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ" (v21) · "Christ crucified" (1:23)

Paul's conduct bent toward every group he wanted to reach; the gold bar is what never bent — the law of Christ and the message of the cross.

FIGURE · THE ATHLETE AND THE CHRISTIAN

1 COR 9:24–27	AT THE ISTHMIAN GAMES	IN THE CHRISTIAN RACE
HOW MANY WIN	only one receives the prize (v24)	"Run … that you may win" — Henry: "You may all run so as to obtain"
THE TRAINING	self-control in all things; ten months of strict training	give up even good things — like idol meat (8:13)
THE WREATH	perishable — a crown of leaves that withers (v25)	imperishable — "the unfading crown of glory" (1 Pet 5:4)
THE AIM	a runner off course, a boxer beating the air (v26)	every stride and every blow aimed at the finish
THE BODY	trained into shape for a day's glory	"I discipline my body and make it my slave" (v27)
THE VERDICT	the umpire rejects: adokimos, "disqualified"	the herald who must keep the rules he announced (v27)

Read across each row: Paul borrows every part of the Isthmian contest — the odds, the training, the wreath, the aim, the body, the verdict — and raises the stakes.

Why chapter 9 is here. All four of our teachers tie it to chapter 8. Guzik: the Corinthians claimed a "right" based on "knowledge" to eat in idol temples, so Paul shows them a man with far bigger rights who let them go. The word Paul keeps using — *exousia*, "right" — is the very word of 8:9, "this liberty of yours." Henry calls Paul "a remarkable example of that self-denial" he had just commended.

Was Paul really an apostle (vv1–2)? Some at Corinth doubted it. Sproul explains why the question was serious: the others had been among the Twelve and eyewitnesses; Paul was neither. But "to be qualified to be an Apostle, one must have been called directly by Christ," and Saul received that call on the Damascus road. Guzik adds that seeing Jesus alone does not make an apostle — Paul was commissioned (Acts 26:12–18) — and that the church itself was the proof: "The proof is in the pudding."

Is Paul allegorizing the ox (vv8–10)? No. Guzik, quoting Calvin, rejects turning "the whole of Scripture into an amusing game." Deuteronomy 25:4 was a real, humane law for a real animal, but the principle behind it — the worker shares in what his work produces — reaches further, and Paul applies it "for our sake." Wiersbe (in Guzik): "Since oxen cannot read, this verse was not written for them." Paul quotes the same verse beside Jesus' "the laborer is worthy of his wages" in 1 Timothy 5:18.

Should ministers be paid? Paul says yes — "the Lord directed" it (v14; Luke 10:7). Henry: a minister "may waive his right, as Paul did, without being a sinner; but those transgress an appointment of Christ who deny or withhold it."

Guzik: take it or decline it, whichever serves the gospel — but if you take it, "work hard to earn that money." Paul refused it at Corinth, not everywhere (he received gifts from Philippi, Phil 4:15–16).

Compulsion and reward (vv15–18). Preaching was not Paul's gift to God; it was his duty — *anankē*, necessity laid on him. A steward (*oikonomia*) gets no bonus for doing his job. So the only "reward" left was to preach without charge. Spurgeon: "He who preaches best feels that he preaches worst." Henry: "Leave the heart out of our duties, and God abhors them." Sproul helps here: "call" in the New Testament can mean the gospel call to all, the effectual call to salvation, or a vocational call to "a particular task, or a particular ministry." Paul's compulsion is the third kind, laid on him with unusual force.

"All things to all men" — compromise or love (vv19–23)? Not compromise of the message. Guzik (with Gordon Fee): this "has to do with how one lives or behaves among those whom he wishes to evangelize," not adapting the gospel. Spurgeon: "there was never a man more stern for principle than Paul." Henry: "by all means" means "all lawful means"; "He would not sin against God to save the soul of his neighbour." Sproul draws the hard line: Paul circumcised Timothy as a matter of indifference (Acts 16:3), but when the Judaizers made it necessary, he resisted them "with the full force of his Apostleship" (Gal 2:3–5). The weak brother may limit my liberty; he may not make laws for the church. Paul was never "without law" — he was "under the law of Christ" (v21).

The athlete (vv24–27). Corinth hosted the Isthmian Games; Guzik says athletes had to train ten months before they were allowed in. The point for Corinth: athletes give up *good* things to win, so a Christian can give up idol meat. "I discipline my body" (*hypōpiazō*) is a boxer's word — a black eye. Guzik is careful: the body is not evil (6:19–20), and the flagellants who whipped themselves misread this verse. Henry: "The body must be made to serve the mind, not suffered to lord over it."

What does "disqualified" mean (v27)? — where our teachers differ. Guzik: "probably doesn't refer to the loss of salvation … but the loss of reward," as a losing athlete kept his citizenship. Henry reads it more soberly: "A preacher of salvation may yet miss it. He may show others the way to heaven, and never get thither himself" — and holy fear is the guard against it. Sproul names this verse as one some Protestants use to argue salvation can be lost, and answers that God finishes what He begins, and that those who depart from the faith were never really believers. Spurgeon: "Paul was not afraid of being cast away by God at the last." The same word, *adokimos*, appears in 2 Cor 13:5 ("test yourselves … unless indeed you fail the test"). I want my men to see both readings — loss of reward, or the warning that a profession without perseverance proves false — and to land where all four agree: Paul took the danger seriously enough to train.

Word study (Greek):

- **free — *eleutheros* (G1658):** not a slave; vv1 and 19 frame the chapter.
- **seal — *sphragis* (G4973):** the stamp that proves a document genuine; the Corinthians are Paul's (v2).
- **defense — *apologia* (G627):** a legal reply; **examine — *anakrinō* (G350):** to cross-examine at a hearing (v3).
- **right — *exousia* (G1849):** authority, right — six times (vv4, 5, 6, 12×2, 18); the "liberty" of 8:9.
- **muzzle — *phimoō* (G5392):** to muzzle or silence (SBLGNT reads the synonym *kēmoō* in v9; 1 Tim 5:18 has *phimoō*).
- **hindrance — *enkopē* (G1464):** a cutting-in, a trench across the road; only here (v12).
- **endure — *stegō* (G4722):** to bear up under; the same verb as love that "bears all things" (13:7).
- **directed — *diatassō* (G1299):** to give an order; the Lord commanded it (v14).
- **boast — *kauchēma* (G2745):** ground of glorying (vv15, 16).

- **compulsion — *anankē* (G318):** necessity laid on a man (v16).
- **stewardship — *oikonomia* (G3622):** a household manager's trust (v17).
- **without charge — *adapanos* (G77):** costless; only here (v18).
- **made myself a slave — *douloō* (G1402):** voluntary slavery (v19).
- **win — *kerdainō* (G2770):** a merchant's "gain" — five times in vv19–22.
- **under the law of Christ — *ennomos* (G1772):** within the law, bound to Christ (v21).
- **fellow partaker — *synkoinōnos* (G4791):** a co-sharer in the gospel (v23).
- **prize — *brabeion* (G1017):** the umpire's award (v24; Phil 3:14).
- **compete — *agōnizomai* (G75):** to strain in a contest (v25).
- **self-control — *enkrateuomai* (G1467):** mastery of self "in all things"; only 7:9 and 9:25.
- **wreath — *stephanos* (G4735):** the victor's crown of leaves; **perishable — *phthartos* (G5349); imperishable — *aphthartos* (G862).**
- **without aim — *adēlōs* (G84):** uncertainly; only here (v26); **box — *pykteuō* (G4438):** only here.
- **discipline — *hypōpiazō* (G5299):** to strike under the eye (v27; Luke 18:5).
- **make my slave — *doulagōgeō* (G1396):** to lead about as a slave; only here.
- **disqualified — *adokimos* (G96):** rejected after testing (Rom 1:28; 2 Cor 13:5–7; Titus 1:16).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **Chapter 9 is chapter 8 lived out** — the "right" Paul refuses is the Corinthians' "liberty" of 8:9.
2. **Nineteen questions, then one "nevertheless"** (v12).
3. **Proving a right is not the same as using it** — Henry: the man who shows "a generous disregard to his own" pleads best for others.
4. **Don't cut a trench across the gospel's road** — *enkopē*, "hindrance," only here.
5. **A steward gets no bonus for doing his job** — preaching was compulsion; preaching free was the gift.
6. **Flex the conduct, never the message** (Guzik, with Fee).
7. **The weak brother may limit me, but he may not legislate for the church** (Sproul).
8. **"Win" is a merchant's word** — and the profit is people.
9. **Train, don't just try** — self-control in all things.
10. **The herald must run the race he announces** (v27).

Cross-references: Num 18:8–24; Deut 25:4; Matt 10:10; Mark 10:45; Luke 9:5; 10:7–8; Acts 9:1–19; 16:3; 18:1–3; 20:33–35; 21:23–26; 26:12–18; Rom 4:11; 1 Cor 1:22–23; 4:12; 6:19–20; 8:9–13; 10:12, 23–33; 11:1; 13:7; 15:8; 2 Cor 11:7–9; 13:5; Gal 2:3–5; 5:23; Phil 3:12–14; 4:15–16; 2 Thess 3:7–9; 1 Tim 5:17–18; 2 Tim 2:5; 4:7–8; Heb 12:1–2; 1 Pet 1:4; 5:4; 1 John 2:19.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 9:27

"but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified."

FIGURE · SIX REASONS AND ONE NEVERTHELESS



The right is proved six ways — and laid down in one word.

Read down the left column — Paul builds his case for support six ways — then see the single word that sets it all aside for the gospel.

Command to obey — lay down a right for someone else. Paul had every right to a salary, a wife on the road, a meal on the church's tab — and he set them all aside "so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ" (v12). What am I clinging to as "my right" that is getting in the way of somebody hearing the gospel from me? My time, my comfort, my opinions, even my freedom in gray areas? This week I'll name one and lay it down.

Example to follow — free, but a servant. "Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all" (v19). That is Jesus' own pattern: He "did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). In the men's ministry, it means meeting a man where he is — in recovery, in prison, just out — sitting at his table, learning his language, without ever changing the message to get there. Adjust my approach; never adjust the gospel.

Sin to confess — keeping score on what I'm owed. I confess the times I've served and then quietly kept a ledger: the thank-you I didn't get, the recognition someone else got, the help I gave that nobody repaid. Paul said his reward was to give the gospel away free (v18). I don't have to collect.

Promise to trust — an imperishable wreath. The Isthmian wreath wilted in a week. The crown Christ gives does not fade (v25; 1 Pet 5:4). When the work feels unseen and unpaid, I remember that Paul chose unpaid on purpose, and that the Chief Shepherd keeps the books.

For the men I walk with — train, don't just try. "Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things" (v25). Nobody wins a race by deciding on race day. Recovery, purity and sobriety are won in the daily, boring disciplines: the morning in the Word, the phone call to a brother, the plan for the hard hour, the boundaries set before the temptation shows up. Paul didn't say "I try harder"; he said "I discipline my body and make it my slave" — the body serves; it doesn't rule. And I don't do it to pay for sin; Jesus paid that in full.

Warning to heed — preaching to others is not the same as running myself. "So that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified" (v27). That one is for me as a teacher and editor of studies like this one. It's possible to help others run and stop running myself. Lord, keep me in the race I teach about.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. What "right" am I holding onto — time, money, comfort, a gray-area freedom — that may be cutting a trench across someone else's road to Christ? (9:12; 8:9, 13) *Paul proved his right six ways and laid it down in one word: "nevertheless."*
2. Do I support the men and women who feed me spiritually? What would it look like to stop "muzzling the ox" in my church? (9:7–14; 1 Tim 5:18) *Henry: those who withhold support "transgress an appointment of Christ."*
3. Is there anything in my life I do for Christ that I could not stop doing if I tried — a "woe is me" calling? (9:16–18) *A steward does not ask for a bonus; his joy is in giving what was not required.*
4. Who is the man I am least like at this table or on the yard — and what would it cost me to "become as" him without changing the gospel? (9:19–23; 1:23) *Conduct flexes; the law of Christ and "Christ crucified" do not.*
5. What daily, boring discipline is my recovery or my walk actually riding on right now — and where am I just "beating the air"? (9:24–26; Gal 5:23) *Nobody wins a race by deciding on race day.*
6. Paul feared being disqualified after preaching to others. Where am I helping other men run while I have stopped running myself? (9:27; 2 Cor 13:5) *The herald must keep the rules he announces.*

Worship. Jesus had every right in heaven and laid it down — He became a servant to all, He became weak with the weak, He was counted among the lawless, so that He might save some. Everything Paul did in this chapter he learned at the cross. The One who ran the whole course without a misstep now holds out a crown that will never wither.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You laid down every right for me. Make me willing to lay down mine for others. Keep the gospel I share unhindered by my preferences, my pride or my wallet. Give me — and the men I serve — the self-control of a trained runner, so that we run to win and finish the race, and don't let me preach to others and stop running myself. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 10

From the Wilderness to the Lord's Table — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Israel had every blessing I have and most of them fell, so I take heed — and God is faithful in every temptation, so I take heart. I cannot sit at the Lord's table and the idol's; I use my freedom for my brother, and I do the ordinary things of my day to the glory of God.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 10 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea;

2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 and all ate the same spiritual food;

4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.

7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY."

8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.

9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.

10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say.

16 Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

18 Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?

19 What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?

20 No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to ⚠ demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become 🔁 sharers in ⚠ demons.

21 ⚠ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of ⚠ demons.

22 Or do we ⚠ provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?

23 All things are lawful, but ⏱ not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but ⏱ not all things edify.

24 📄 Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

25 Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for 🔁 conscience' sake;

26 FOR △ THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS.

27 If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for 🔁 conscience' sake.

28 But if anyone says to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," 📄 do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for 🔁 conscience' sake;

29 I mean not your own 🔁 conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's 🔁 conscience?

30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?

31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, 📄 do all to the glory of God.

32 📄 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;

33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, ☆ so that they may be saved.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "all under the cloud" — Key repeated word
- **v1** "all passed through the sea" — Key repeated word
- **v2** "all were baptized into Moses" — Key repeated word
- **v3** "all ate the same spiritual food" — Key repeated word
- **v4** "all drank the same spiritual drink" — Key repeated word
- **v4** "the rock was Christ" — God — His character & actions
- **v5** "Nevertheless" — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** "God was not well-pleased" — Sin / warning
- **v5** "laid low in the wilderness" — Sin / warning
- **v6** "crave evil things" — Sin / warning
- **v7** "Do not be idolaters" — Command / instruction
- **v8** "Nor let us act immorally" — Command / instruction
- **v9** "Nor let us try the Lord" — Command / instruction
- **v10** "Nor grumble" — Command / instruction
- **v10** "destroyed by the destroyer" — Sin / warning
- **v11** "written for our instruction" — Command / instruction
- **v11** "the ends of the ages have come" — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** "let him who thinks he stands take heed" — Command / instruction
- **v12** "that he does not fall" — Sin / warning
- **v13** "God is faithful" — God — His character & actions
- **v13** "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able" — Promise / blessing
- **v13** "will provide the way of escape also" — Promise / blessing
- **v14** "flee from idolatry" — Command / instruction
- **v16** "a sharing in the blood of Christ" — God — His character & actions
- **v16** "a sharing in the body of Christ" — God — His character & actions
- **v17** "we who are many are one body" — Promise / blessing
- **v21** "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons" — Sin / warning
- **v22** "provoke the Lord to jealousy" — Sin / warning
- **v23** "not all things are profitable" — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** "not all things edify" — Time / place / contrast
- **v24** "Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor" — Command / instruction
- **v26** "THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS" — God — His character & actions
- **v28** "do not eat it" — Command / instruction
- **v31** "do all to the glory of God" — Command / instruction
- **v32** "Give no offense" — Command / instruction
- **v33** "so that they may be saved" — Promise / blessing
- **v33** "that they may be saved" — Promise / blessing
- **v25** "conscience" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v18** "sharers" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** "demons" — Sin / warning (every occurrence)

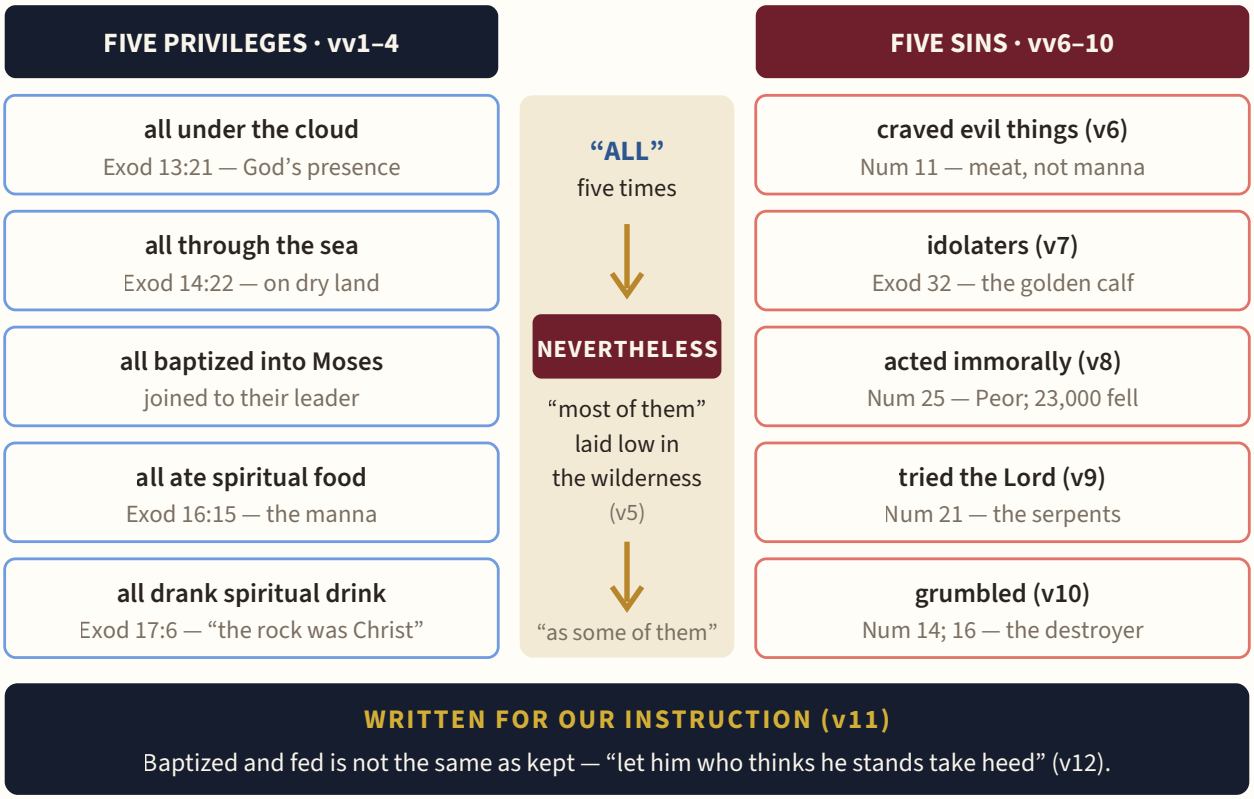
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 10:11

"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

FIGURE · ALL OF THEM — NEVERTHELESS



Read across: five blessings every Israelite shared, the one word that turns the story, and five sins Paul names from Exodus and Numbers — each "written for our instruction."

Setting. Chapter 10 finishes the argument of chapters 8–10 on "things sacrificed to idols" (8:1). Paul has just said he disciplines himself "so that … I myself will not be disqualified" (9:27); now he shows a whole generation that was. Corinth was a Roman colony full of temples; meat, guild dinners and family feasts ran through them.

Structure:

- vv1–5 — **all of them — nevertheless:** all under the cloud, all through the sea, all baptized into Moses, all ate spiritual food, all drank spiritual drink — "and the rock was Christ." Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; they were laid low in the wilderness.

- vv6–13 — **written for our instruction:** examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things (v6); do not be idolaters (v7, quoting Exodus 32:6), nor act immorally (v8), nor try the Lord (v9), nor grumble (v10). Written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come (v11). Take heed (v12). God is faithful; the way of escape (v13).
- vv14–22 — **one table:** flee from idolatry (v14). The cup and the bread are a sharing in Christ's blood and body; one bread, one body (vv16–17). Israel's eaters are sharers in the altar (v18). The idol is nothing, but pagan sacrifice goes to demons (vv19–20). You cannot … you cannot (v21). Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? (v22).
- vv23–30 — **lawful, but:** all things are lawful, but not all profitable, not all edify (v23); seek your neighbor's good (v24). Eat anything from the meat market (vv25–26, Psalm 24:1) or at an unbeliever's table (v27) — unless someone says, "This is meat sacrificed to idols" (vv28–29). Thankfulness should not be slandered (v30).
- vv31–33 — **to the glory of God:** whatever you do (v31); give no offense to Jews, Greeks or the church (v32); not my profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved (v33). (11:1 finishes the sentence: "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.")

Repeated words, with counts:

- "all" ×14 — five times in vv1–4 (v1 ×2, 2, 3, 4), then v17, v23 ×4 ("All things … not all things"), v26, v31, v33 ×2.
- "some of them" ×4 — vv7, 8, 9, 10.
- "example(s)" ×2 — vv6, 11.
- "idol / idols / idolaters / idolatry" ×5 — vv7, 14, 19 ×2, 28; "sacrifice(s) / sacrificed" ×5 — vv18, 19, 20 ×2, 28.
- "conscience" ×5 — vv25, 27, 28, 29 ×2.
- "demons" ×4 — vv20 ×2, 21 ×2.
- "sharing / sharers" ×4 — vv16 ×2, 18, 20 (Greek *koinōnia / koinōnos*); "partake" ×3 — vv17, 21, 30 (*metechō*).
- "cup" ×3 — vv16, 21 ×2; "bread" ×3 — vv16, 17 ×2; "one" in v17 ×3 (one bread … one body … the one bread); "table" ×2 — v21.
- "eat" ×6 — vv7, 18, 25, 27, 28, 31 (+ "ate" v3); "drink" ×4 — vv4, 7, 21, 31 (+ "drank" v4).
- "spiritual" ×3 — vv3, 4 ×2.
- "Lord" ×5 — vv9, 21 ×2, 22, 26; "God" ×5 — vv5, 13, 20, 31, 32; "Christ" ×3 — vv4, 16 ×2.
- "temptation / tempted" ×3 — v13; "lawful" ×2 — v23; "profit / profitable" ×3 — vv23, 33 ×2.
- Commands: do not be idolaters (v7), nor … nor … nor (vv8–10), take heed (v12), flee (v14), judge (v15), let no one seek his own good (v24), eat (vv25, 27), do not eat (v28), do all to the glory of God (v31), give no offense (v32).

Contrasts: all ⟷ most of them (vv1–5). Thinks he stands ⟷ fall (v12). Temptation ⟷ the way of escape (v13). The cup of the Lord ⟷ the cup of demons; the table of the Lord ⟷ the table of demons (v21). Lawful ⟷ profitable / edifying (v23). His own good ⟷ his neighbor's (v24). Your own conscience ⟷ the other man's (v29). My own profit ⟷ the profit of the many (v33).

Shape of the chapter: a history (1–5), a warning and a promise (6–13), a command and its reason (14–22), a set of rulings (23–30), and one rule over everything (31–33). It begins in the wilderness and ends at the dinner table.

Chapter theme (my words): Privilege does not keep anyone; God does, and He is faithful. So I flee the idol's table, I hold my freedom in love, and I do everything — even eating and drinking — for His glory and my neighbor's salvation.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 10:16

"Is not the cup of blessing which we bless △a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break △a sharing in the body of Christ?"

FIGURE · THREE TABLES

EVERY SACRED TABLE IS A SHARING · 1 CORINTHIANS 10:16–21

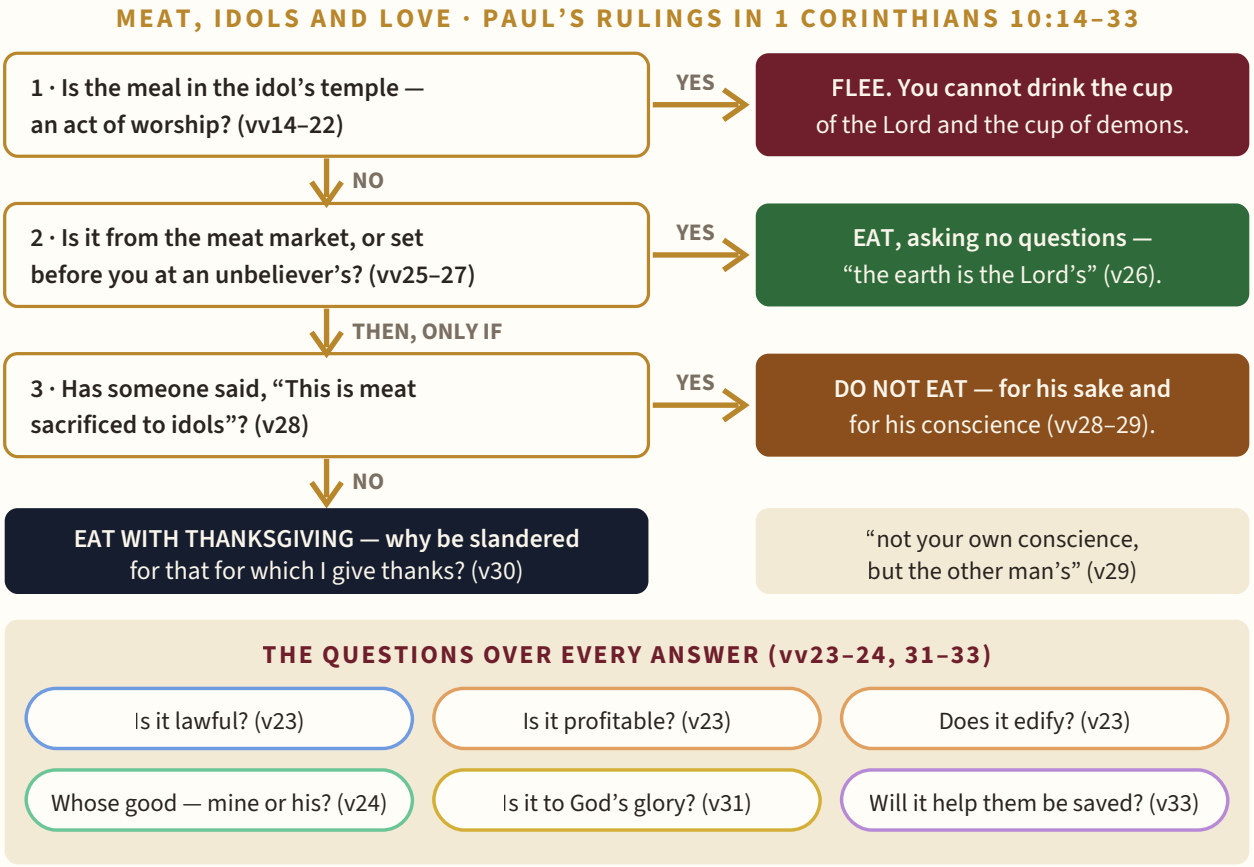
THE LORD'S TABLE vv16–17	ISRAEL'S ALTAR v18 · Lev 7:15	THE TABLE OF DEMONS vv19–21
the cup of blessing the bread we break a sharing (koinōnia) in Christ's blood and body one bread → one body	those who eat the sacrifices are sharers (koinōnoi) in the altar — joined to its God	the idol is nothing (v19) but the sacrifice goes to demons (v20; Deut 32:17) — eaters become sharers in demons

"You cannot … you cannot" (v21)
Not "you should not": the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons exclude each other.

"Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?" (v22)
The Song of Moses again (Deut 32:21) — and "We are not stronger than He, are we?"

The same word family (koinōnia, koinōnos) runs across all three tables: whatever table you eat at in worship, you share in the one it belongs to.

FIGURE · PAUL'S RULINGS ON IDOL MEAT



Follow the questions down: the temple is always no, the market and the friend's table are yes, and someone else's conscience can turn yes into not now — with love and God's glory over every answer.

Who are "our fathers," and why does Paul start with them? Paul hands a mostly Gentile church Israel's story as its own family history. Henry: "Judaism was Christianity under a veil, wrapt up in types and dark hints." Guzik sees in the cloud and sea and the manna and water "ancient versions of the two Christian sacraments" — baptism and communion — which is exactly why the story fits Corinth. They trusted their baptism and their place at the Lord's table to keep them safe at the idol's feast.

"The rock was Christ" (v4). Guzik and Henry both mention the rabbinic legend of a rock (or well) that followed Israel; neither thinks Paul is endorsing a rolling boulder. Guzik: "Jesus Christ was present with Israel in the wilderness." Henry says the rock was Christ "in type and figure." Paul's past tense — the rock *was* Christ — points to the preexistent Son, the "Rock" of the Song of Moses (Deut 32:4), supplying His people in the desert.

Did those who fell ever truly belong to God? Paul doesn't stop to settle it, and teachers differ in how they say it. Spurgeon: "They were not all God's people. They were so nominally, and visibly; but they were not all really so." He also says a true Christian "cannot possibly suffer a final fall, but he is very much disposed to a foul fall." Sproul warns from Romans 11, "Just as apostasy polluted Israel, it can pollute you." Readers in the Arminian tradition take verse 12 as a real possibility of a believer falling away. All agree on Paul's point: outward privilege guarantees nothing, and the one who thinks he stands must take heed.

Twenty-three thousand (v8). Numbers 25:9 counts 24,000 in the plague at Peor. Guzik lays out the options (Exodus 32:28; Numbers 25:9; 23,000 in one day out of a larger total) and quotes Hodge on such "apparitions of inaccuracy." Henry reads Paul's number as those slain by the plague in one day, "besides those who fell by the hand of public justice." Paul says "in one day"; Moses gives the plague's total.

"Nor let us try the Lord" — or Christ? (v9). NASB95 reads "Lord" with Westcott-Hort and the 1904 Nestle text; the SBLGNT, the Majority text and the KJV read "Christ." Either way, the One Israel tested in the desert is the One Paul has just called the Rock — and Jesus used the same verb (*ekpeirazō*) when He refused to test God in His own wilderness (Matt 4:7).

The promise of verse 13. Four comforts in one verse: temptation is *common to man*; *God is faithful*; He *will not allow* more than I can bear; He *provides the way of escape* with the temptation. Guzik: God "has promised to supervise all temptation," and the way of escape "isn't necessarily an easy way" — it leads "to the place where we may be able to bear it." Spurgeon: "there is no sin in being tempted." Henry: "There is no valley so dark but he can find a way through it." And the first way out is named in verse 14: run.

What is the Lord's Supper, according to vv16–17? Every teacher here calls it a real communion with Christ, not a bare reminder and not a re-sacrifice. Henry: "an instrument of communion with God," where we "profess ourselves his guests and covenant people"; he even calls it a feast on Christ's sacrifice. Guzik, answering the Roman Catholic use of this passage for the Mass: "The emphasis and the similarity regard the meal, not the sacrifice." Spurgeon: "Union lies at the basis of communion," and "Superstition has produced a sacrament where Jesus intended a fellowship." Christians differ on *how* Christ is present; Paul's argument needs only that the sharing is real.

If an idol is nothing, why flee? (vv19–22). Paul holds both: the idol is nothing (8:4), yet "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons" (v20; Deut 32:17). Guzik: "demonic spirits take advantage of idol worship." Sproul: idolatry is "the most fundamental, foundational sin in our fallen corrupt nature." Henry: "God cannot endure a rival in matter of worship."

Temple, market, dinner — why different answers? (vv23–30). The temple feast is worship, and the answer is no (vv14–22). Market meat and a friend's dinner are ordinary food, and the answer is yes, without asking questions — Guzik: "The cow belonged to the Lord when it was on the hoof." But if someone points out the idol, the meal now says something, and love says no (vv28–29). Sproul guards both sides: "you do not parade your freedom in the face of your weaker brother," yet the weaker brother may not legislate for everyone. Henry: "Another man's conscience is no measure to our conduct."

Word study (Greek):

- **spiritual — *pneumatikos* (G4152):** supernatural in source, pointing beyond itself; three times in vv3–4.
- **rock — *petra* (G4073):** the rock struck at Horeb and Kadesh; "the rock was Christ."
- **followed — *akoloutheō* (G190):** went along with them — the continual supply of the desert.
- **baptized — *baptizō* (G907):** "into Moses" — joined to a leader and his covenant (compare Rom 6:3).
- **well-pleased — *eudokeō* (G2106):** the word of Matt 3:17; with most of Israel God was not.
- **laid low — *katastrōnnymi* (G2693):** strewn down, laid flat; only here in the NT.
- **example — *typos* (G5179):** the mark of a blow, a pattern; v11 has the adverb *typikōs*, only here.
- **one who craves — *epithymētēs* (G1938):** a craver, a coveter; only here in the NT.
- **idolater — *eidōlolatrēs* (G1496):** a servant of an image; Exodus 32:6 quoted.

- **play — *paizō* (G3815):** to play, sport — the revelry around the calf; only here in the NT.
- **act immorally — *porneuō* (G4203):** sexual immorality, as at Baal of Peor (Num 25).
- **try — *ekpeirazō* (G1598):** to test out, put God to the proof (Matt 4:7; Luke 4:12; 10:25).
- **grumble — *gongyzō* (G1111):** a low, discontented muttering — an accusation that God has failed.
- **destroyer — *olothreutēs* (G3644):** only here; compare the destroyer of the Passover (Exod 12:23).
- **instruction — *nouthesia* (G3559):** a "putting in mind," warning instruction (also Eph 6:4; Titus 3:10).
- **temptation — *peirasmos* (G3986):** test, trial, temptation — context decides.
- **common to man — *anthrōpinos* (G442):** human, what belongs to people as people.
- **faithful — *pistos* (G4103):** trustworthy; the promise rests on God's character (compare 1:9).
- **way of escape — *ekbasis* (G1545):** an exit, a way out — with the article, *the* way out.
- **endure — *hypopherō* (G5297):** to carry from underneath, to bear up under (2 Tim 3:11; 1 Pet 2:19).
- **flee — *pheugō* (G5343):** run away — present tense, keep running (6:18).
- **sharing — *koinōnia* (G2842):** participation, a common share; KJV "communion."
- **blessing — *eulogia* (G2129):** "the cup of blessing," the cup of thanksgiving.
- **bread — *artos* (G740):** a loaf — one loaf, one body.
- **sharers — *koinōnos* (G2844):** partners — in the altar (v18), in demons (v20).
- **partake — *metechō* (G3348):** to have a share in (vv17, 21, 30).
- **demon — *daimonion* (G1140):** four times in vv20–21; Deut 32:17.
- **provoke to jealousy — *parazēloō* (G3863):** from the Song of Moses (Deut 32:21); four NT uses.
- **be profitable — *sympherō* (G4851):** to bring together, to benefit; "the profit of the many" (v33).
- **edify — *oikodomeō* (G3618):** to build a house; "love edifies" (8:1).
- **meat market — *makellon* (G3111):** a Latin loanword (*macellum*); only here.
- **conscience — *syneidēsis* (G4893):** co-knowledge; five times in vv25–29.
- **glory — *doxa* (G1391):** weight, honor — the aim of "whatever you do."
- **without offense — *aproskopos* (G677):** not causing anyone to stumble (Acts 24:16; Phil 1:10).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **"Our fathers."** Israel's story is the church's family history (v1).
2. **The rock was Christ** — not "is a picture of," but "was" (v4).
3. **Privilege is not protection.** "All" five times, then "nevertheless" (vv1–5).
4. **Sin starts as a craving** (v6). Henry: check it "in their first rise."
5. **The confident are the vulnerable** (v12). Spurgeon: "The man who thinks he is strong, is off his guard."
6. **God is faithful in every temptation** — common, limited, never without the way out (v13).
7. **The way out is often the door** — "flee" follows at once (v14).
8. **Every sacred table is a sharing** — the Lord's, Israel's altar, the demons' (vv16–20).
9. **Lawful is the first question, not the last** — profitable, edifying, whose good? (vv23–24).
10. **Glory is the frame of everything** — and the salvation of the many (vv31–33).

Cross-references: Exod 12:23; 13:21; 14:22; 16:15; 17:6; 20:3; 32:6, 28; Lev 7:15; Num 11:4, 33–34; 14:29–30; 16:41–49; 20:11; 21:5–6; 25:1–9; Deut 4:28; 32:4, 17, 21; Ps 24:1; 78:18–31; 106:19–20; Prov 16:18; Isa 42:8; Hos 2; Matt 3:17; 4:7; Luke 4:12; 22:20; John 6:35; Acts 24:16; Rom 1:23; 6:3–4; 10:19; 11:11–22; 14:13–23; 15:1–4; 1 Cor 1:9; 6:12, 18; 8:1–13; 9:19–27; 11:1, 23–26; 12:13; 2 Cor 6:16; Gal 1:10; 3:27; 5:11–13; Eph 6:4; Phil 1:10; Col 3:5, 17; 1 Tim 4:4; Heb 3:17; 4:15; 13:7; Jas 1:13–15; 2 Pet 2:9; 1 John 5:21.

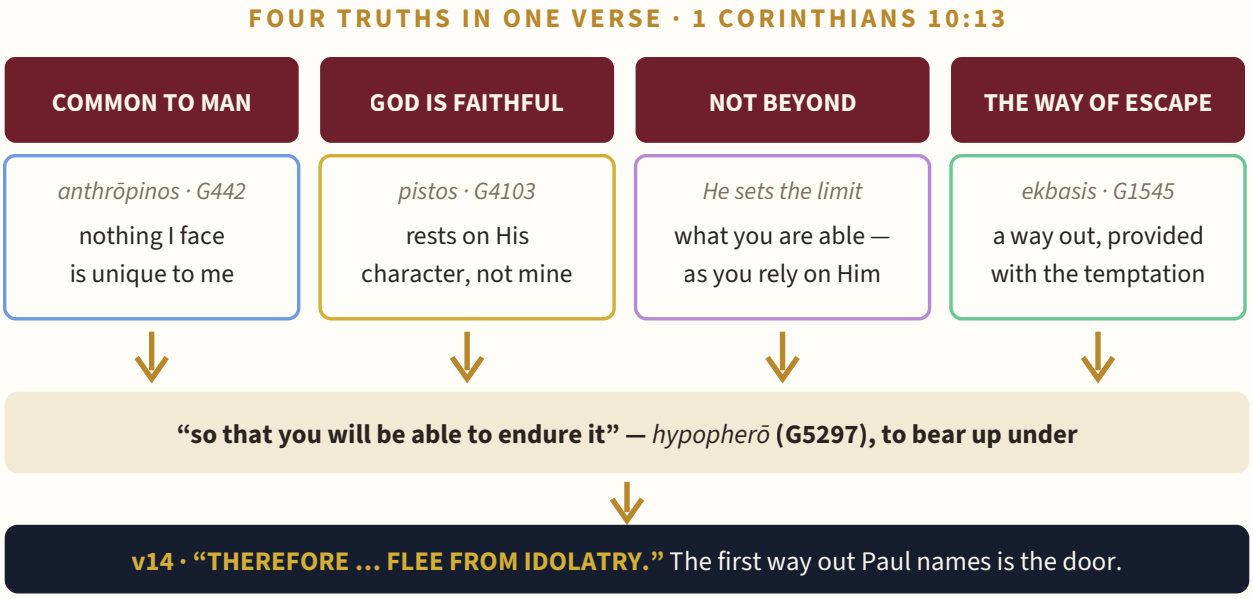
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

FIGURE · THE WAY OF ESCAPE



Verse 13 rests four comforts on God's faithfulness; the way out leads not around temptation but to the strength to bear it — and verse 14 names the first door.

Warning to heed — "let him who thinks he stands take heed." I know what it is to be sure I could handle something — a place, a person, a screen, a bottle — and to find out I couldn't. The men around our table know it too. Israel had the cloud, the sea, the manna and the Rock, and their graves still lined the desert. My baptism, my years in church, my ministry don't keep me; God does, and He keeps me *through* my taking heed. This week I will name the place where I'm most confident I could never fall, and I will put a guard there.

Promise to trust — "God is faithful." When temptation comes I tend to believe two lies: that nobody has ever faced what I'm facing, and that I can't help giving in. Verse 13 kills both. It's "common to man." God has measured it. And He sent the way out *with* it. My job is to look for the door before I need it and to walk through it when it opens — and very often the door is simply to leave (v14).

Command to obey — "flee from idolatry." Paul didn't tell the strong Corinthians to prove their strength by staying close. He said run. I have to ask what my "temple feast" is — the habit or place I keep near because "it's nothing." The idol is nothing; the worship is not. I can't drink the Lord's cup on Thursday night and the demons' cup the rest of the week. The next time I take the bread and the cup, I want to remember whose table I belong to.

Sin to confess — using my freedom for myself. "All things are lawful" is true, and I have hidden behind it. I confess the times I asked only "Is this allowed?" and never "Does it build up — and whom?" For the men I serve who are fresh out of addiction, my freedom with a drink, a movie or a joke can be their stumbling block. I would rather lay my liberty down than parade it in front of a brother.

Example to follow — Paul, who followed Christ. "Not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved." That is how Jesus lived — He "did not please Himself" (Rom 15:3). Tomorrow I will pick one ordinary thing — a meal, a commute, a shift at work — and do it on purpose for the glory of God. And I will name one man whose salvation is worth my inconvenience.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. What privileges am I counting on — my baptism, my church, my years in the faith — in place of present obedience? (10:1–5; Heb 3:17) *All five blessings, and "nevertheless." Privilege is not protection.*
2. Which of the five — craving, idolatry, immorality, testing God, grumbling — is closest to my door this month? (10:6–10; Jas 1:14) *Sin starts as desire before it becomes an act.*
3. Where am I most sure I could never fall? (10:12; Prov 16:18) *Henry: we are most likely to fall when we are most confident of our own strength.*
4. Name a temptation I thought I could handle. What was the way of escape — and did I take it? (10:13–14) *Common, limited, never without a way out — and the first way out is often the door (v. 14).*
5. What is my "temple feast" — the place, habit or screen I keep close because "it's nothing"? (10:14, 19–21; 1 John 5:21) *The idol is nothing; the worship is not. You cannot sit at both tables.*
6. What freedom will I lay down this week for someone else's good — and what ordinary thing will I do to the glory of God? (10:23–24, 31–33) *Lawful is the first question, not the last. "Whatever you do."*

Worship. The Rock who followed Israel through the desert is the Christ who sets His table for me. He was struck so that water would flow; His body was given and His blood poured out so that I could share in Him. The earth is the Lord's and all it contains — the market, the meal, the work of my hands — and all of it can be done to His glory.

Prayer. Faithful God, thank You that no temptation reaches me that You have not measured, and that You always make the way out. Keep me from trusting my privileges and from thinking I stand. Give me the courage to flee every idol and the joy of Your table. Teach me to use my freedom for my brother's good, to give no needless offense, and to do whatever I do — eating, drinking, working, resting — to Your glory, so that others may be saved. In the name of Jesus, the Rock. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see 1-Corinthians-10-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.

SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 11

Headship, the Table, and the Body — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

When the church gathers, two things are on display: the order God built into creation and the love Christ poured out at the cross. I honor the Head I am under, and I wait for my brother at the table that proclaims the Lord's death until He comes.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 11 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

4 Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.

5 But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.

6 For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.

7 For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

8 For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man;

9 for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

10 Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

11 However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

12 For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.

13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,

15 but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

16 But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.

17 But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse.

18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.

19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

20 Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper,

21 for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk.

22 What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.

30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

33 So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "Be imitators of me" — Command / instruction
- **v2** "hold firmly to the traditions" — Command / instruction
- **v3** "Christ is the head of every man" — God — His character & actions
- **v3** "God is the head of Christ" — God — His character & actions
- **v7** "the image and glory of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v10** "because of the angels" — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** "However, in the Lord" — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** "all things originate from God" — God — His character & actions
- **v16** "contentious" — Sin / warning
- **v17** "not for the better but for the worse" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "divisions exist among you" — Sin / warning
- **v20** "it is not to eat the Lord's Supper" — Sin / warning
- **v21** "one is hungry and another is drunk" — Sin / warning
- **v22** "despise the church of God" — Sin / warning
- **v22** "shame those who have nothing" — Sin / warning
- **v23** "I received from the Lord" — God — His character & actions
- **v23** "in the night in which He was betrayed" — Time / place / contrast
- **v24** "This is My body, which is for you" — God — His character & actions
- **v24** "do this in remembrance of Me" — Command / instruction
- **v25** "the new covenant in My blood" — Promise / blessing
- **v26** "as often as" — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** "you proclaim the Lord's death" — Command / instruction
- **v26** "until He comes" — Promise / blessing
- **v27** "in an unworthy manner" — Sin / warning
- **v28** "a man must examine himself" — Command / instruction
- **v29** "if he does not judge the body rightly" — Sin / warning
- **v31** "if we judged ourselves rightly" — Command / instruction
- **v32** "disciplined by the Lord" — God — His character & actions
- **v32** "not be condemned along with the world" — Promise / blessing
- **v33** "wait for one another" — Command / instruction
- **v3** "head" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v2** "praise" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v17** "come together" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

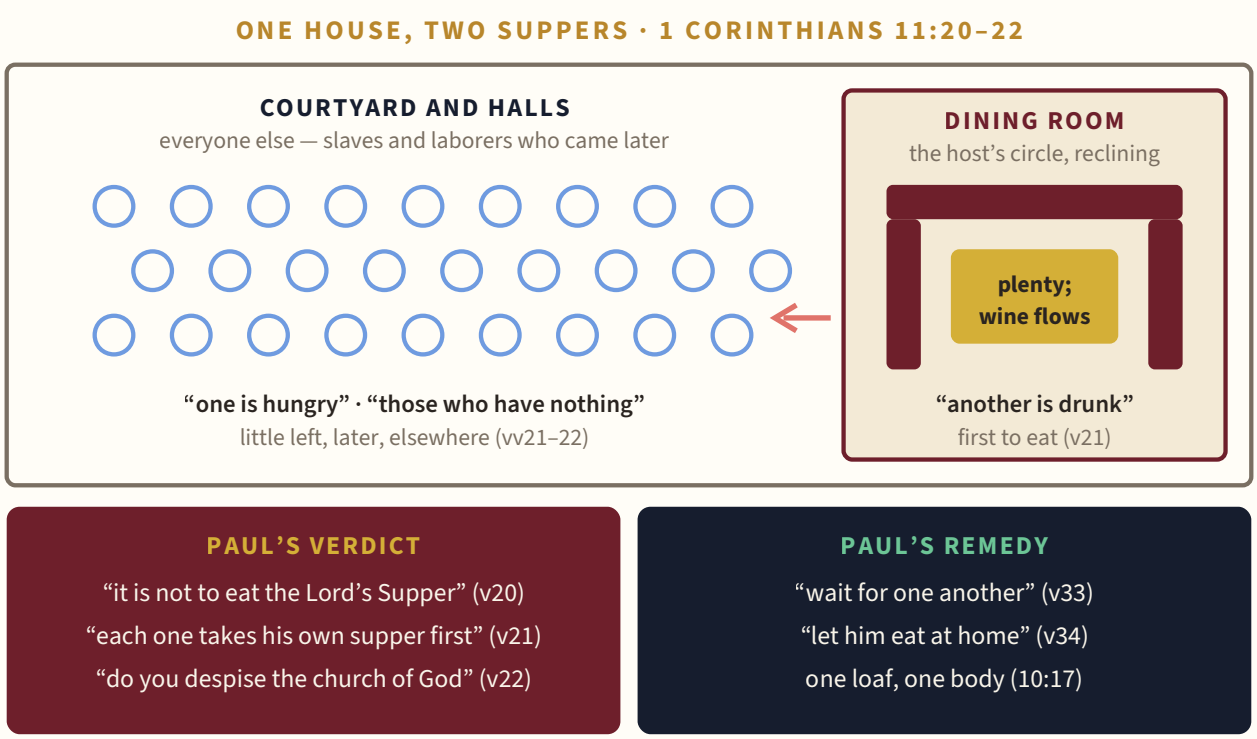
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3

"But I want you to understand that △Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the ⇄head of a woman, and △God is the head of Christ."

FIGURE · ONE HOUSE, TWO SUPPERS



The love feast met in a host's home; carry Roman ranked dining into it and the host's circle eats first and well while the rest go hungry — exactly the scene of verses 21–22.

Setting. Paul has just finished the long answer on liberty and idol food (8:1–11:1), ending with "do all to the glory of God" (10:31) and "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (11:1). At 11:2 he turns to the gathered church, a block that runs through chapter 14. The church at Corinth met in homes, and the Lord's Supper was taken inside a shared meal.

Structure:

- v1 — **the example:** imitate me as I imitate Christ (most likely the close of ch. 10 — Henry, Guzik).
- vv2–6 — **praise and the principle:** "I praise you" for holding the traditions (v2); three heads — Christ/every man, man/woman, God/Christ (v3); a covered man and an uncovered woman each disgrace their head while praying or prophesying (vv4–6).

- vv7–12 — **creation order and interdependence:** man the image and glory of God, woman the glory of man; woman from man and for man (vv7–9); a symbol of authority "because of the angels" (v10); "However, in the Lord" neither is independent — and all things originate from God (vv11–12).
- vv13–16 — **three appeals:** judge for yourselves (v13), nature itself (vv14–15), the practice of the churches of God (v16).
- vv17–22 — **the divided supper:** "I do not praise you" (v17); divisions and factions (vv18–19); "it is not to eat the Lord's Supper" (v20); one hungry, another drunk (v21); five questions and "I will not praise you" (v22).
- vv23–26 — **the institution:** received from the Lord; the night He was betrayed; bread, body, "do this in remembrance of Me"; cup, new covenant, remembrance; proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
- vv27–32 — **examination and discipline:** unworthy manner, guilty of the body and blood (v27); examine and eat (v28); judge the body rightly (v29); weak, sick, a number sleep (v30); judge ourselves (v31); disciplined, not condemned with the world (v32).
- vv33–34 — **the remedy:** wait for one another; eat at home if hungry; the rest when I come.

Repeated words, with counts:

- "head" ×14 — vv3 (×3), 4 (×2), 5 (×3), 6 (×3), 7, 10, 13 (Greek *kephalē*).
- "woman / woman's" ×17 — vv3, 5 (×2), 6 (×2), 7, 8 (×2), 9 (×2), 10, 11 (×2), 12 (×2), 13, 15.
- "man / man's" ×15 — vv3 (×2), 4, 7 (×2), 8 (×2), 9 (×2), 11 (×2), 12 (×2), 14, 28.
- "eat / eats / eating" ×10 — vv20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29 (×2), 33, 34; "drink / drinks" ×7 — vv22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 (×2).
- "Lord / Lord's" ×8 — vv11, 20, 23 (×2), 26, 27 (×2), 32.
- "judge / judged / judgment" ×7 — vv13, 29 (×2), 31 (×2), 32, 34 (six of them in vv29–34).
- "God" ×6 — vv3, 7, 12, 13, 16, 22.
- "cover / covered / uncovered / covering" ×6 — vv5, 6 (×2), 7, 13, 15.
- "hair" ×5 — vv6 (×2), 14, 15 (×2); "cup" ×5 — vv25 (×2), 26, 27, 28.
- "praise" ×4 — vv2, 17, 22 (×2); "come together" ×4 — vv17, 18, 33, 34 (+ "meet together" v20).
- "bread" ×4 — vv23, 26, 27, 28; "originate / birth" ×4 — vv8, 12 (×3).
- "disgraces / disgraceful" ×3 — vv4, 5, 6; "glory" ×3 — vv7 (×2), 15; "body" ×3 — vv24, 27, 29; "Christ" ×3 — vv1, 3 (×2); "church / churches" ×3 — vv16, 18, 22.
- "remembrance" ×2 — vv24, 25; "blood" ×2 — vv25, 27; "hungry" ×2 — vv21, 34; "independent" ×2 — v11.

Contrasts: I praise you (v2) ⟷ I do not praise you (vv17, 22). Covered man ⟷ uncovered woman (vv4–5). Woman from man ⟷ man through woman (v12). Long hair a dishonor ⟷ a glory (vv14–15). For the better ⟷ for the worse (v17). The Lord's Supper ⟷ his own supper (vv20–21). Hungry ⟷ drunk (v21). Judge ourselves ⟷ be judged (v31). Disciplined by the Lord ⟷ condemned along with the world (v32).

Shape of the chapter: an example (1), an order in worship (2–16) and a love at the table (17–34). The first half moves principle → creation → nature → the churches; the second moves rebuke → institution → examination → remedy. Both halves are about what happens "when you come together."

Chapter theme (my words): The gathered church should display the order God built into creation and the love Christ showed at the cross. A church can hold the right teaching and still eat the Lord's Supper in a way that is not the Lord's — and the cure is to remember Him, examine myself, and wait for my brother.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 11:32

"But when we are judged, we are △ disciplined by the Lord so that we will ☆ not be condemned along with the world."

FIGURE · THREE HEADS AND A GUARDRAIL

THREE HEADS IN ONE VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3

CHRIST	*is the head of* →	**EVERY MAN**	no man is his own head; **every man answers to Christ**
THE MAN	*is the head of* →	**A WOMAN**	a role in home and church — **under authority, not inferior**
GOD	*is the head of* →	**CHRIST**	the model for the other two: **equal in nature, ordered in role**

The Son is "equally God," yet "totally under the authority of God the Father" (Guzik).

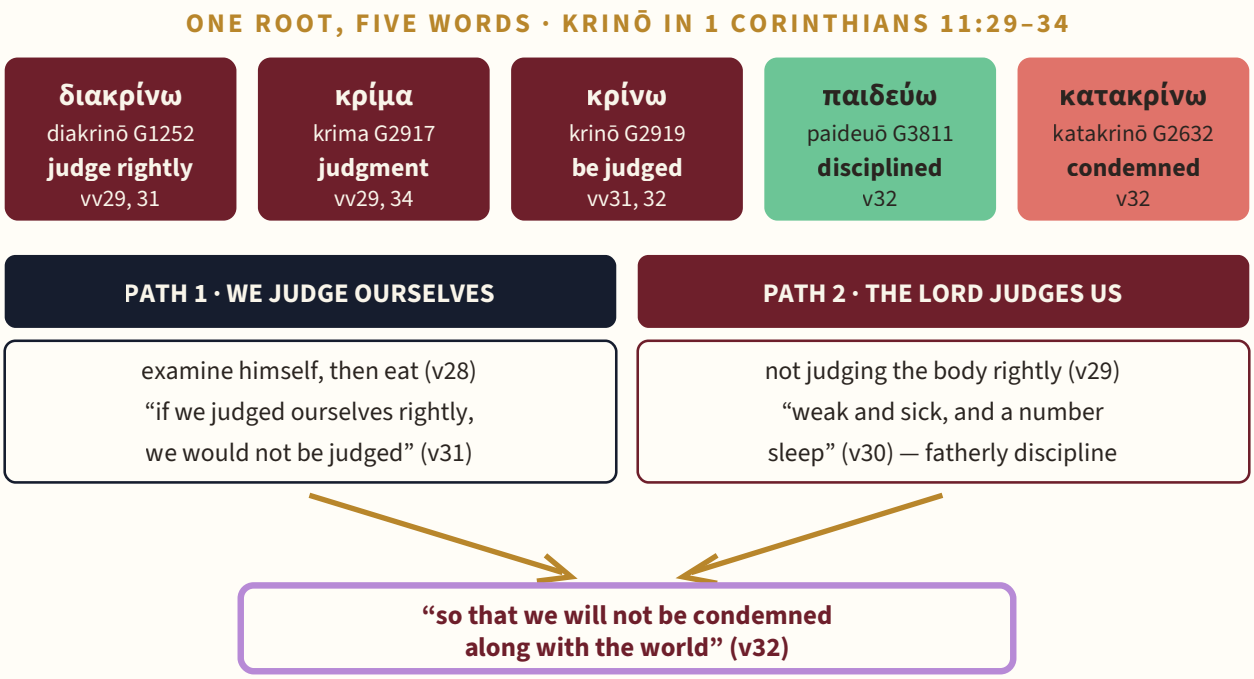
THE GUARDRAIL · 1 CORINTHIANS 11:11–12

"in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman"

woman from man (Gen 2:22) · every man born through woman · "all things originate from God"

Read the three rows of verse 3 against the bottom band: the God–Christ relationship defines what headship means, and verses 11–12 keep it from becoming domination.

FIGURE · ONE ROOT, FIVE WORDS



Both paths end outside condemnation. Discipline is a Father's, not a Judge's sentence (Heb 12:6).

Guzik: "not a judge condemning a criminal; it is a father correcting disobedient children."

Paul plays on the krinō family: judge yourself rightly, or be judged by the Lord as a son — either way, the believer is not condemned with the world.

Is verse 1 the end of chapter 10 or the start of 11? Henry thinks it "seems to have been a more proper close to the last"; Guzik says it "most likely" connects with chapter 10 but that Paul is a good example either way. The limit is in the verse: "follow me as much as you see me following Jesus" (Guzik); "We should follow no leader further than he follows Christ" (Henry).

Was the praise of verse 2 sincere? Here our teachers differ. Guzik reads it as sarcasm — the Corinthians did not in fact remember Paul in all things. Henry reads it as genuine and wise: "When we reprove what is amiss in any, it is very prudent and fit to commend what is good in them." Either way, the praise sets up the contrast of verses 17 and 22.

What does "head" mean (v3)? Some say only "source." Guzik: the word can mean that, but "in Biblical thinking a source has inherent authority," and the God–Christ pairing shows that headship carries authority without inferiority: "being under authority does not equal inferiority." Henry reads it as the woman's subjection, though not "with such dominion as Christ has." I want my men to see that the first head in the verse is Christ over *every man* — no man is his own head.

The covering — principle, custom, or both? This is the chapter's hardest question, and good men differ. Guzik: Paul's three reasons (the order of headship, creation, the angels) are not culture-dependent, yet "The principles are eternal, but the out-working of the principles may differ according to culture." Henry: in that age and country the token "was a veil," and customs differ — in his England bare-headedness meant subjection. Sproul: because Paul grounds it in creation, "it's a mistake to just dismiss this as a contemporary custom" — but he says, "Now, I'm

in a minority in that point," and "I certainly do not know the final answer to the question," and he refuses to legislate consciences. All three keep the principle; they differ on the sign.

Women praying and prophesying (vv4–5). The text assumes it. Henry: Paul does "not in this place prohibit the thing, but reprehend the manner of doing it." How this fits 14:34–35 is a question for chapter 14; Henry himself lists more than one reading there.

"Because of the angels" (v10). Guzik and Henry take the holy angels as present in worship and noting its order (compare 4:9; Eph 3:10) — Guzik: "our struggle is bigger than ourselves." Henry also reports the view that evil angels are meant. The text does not explain further, and we should hold the details loosely.

The guardrail (vv11–12). Guzik: "Men and women need each other, so there is no place for a 'lording over' of the men over the women," and men's failure to lead like Jesus "is inexcusable." Henry: "not one a slave and the other a tyrant," and God wills "that the man abuse not his power."

Nature and long hair (vv14–15). Not a hair-length law: Paul kept a vow in Corinth (Acts 18:18; Guzik). Nature teaches a God-planted difference between men and women; long hair is "nature's veil" (Guzik), a woman's "natural covering" (Henry).

Why was it "not the Lord's Supper" (v20)? Because the rich ate their own supper first and the poor went hungry. Henry: "It was coming to the Lord's table, and not coming." Guzik: ancient culture "was extremely class conscious," and that custom came into the church. Spurgeon: "the richer ones feasted to the full."

Why must there be factions (v19)? Guzik: "God allows factions so that, over time, those who really belong to God would be made evident." Henry: God permits them so that the approved "may be set to view." Spurgeon notes Paul's restraint — "I partly believe it."

How is Christ present at the table (vv24–26)? Guzik lays out the four historic views and lands between symbol and substance: "not mere symbols, but … powerful pictures." Sproul: "There is a reality involved in the celebration of the Lord's Supper that goes beyond a memorial." Henry and Spurgeon reject transubstantiation (it is still called bread, v26). All four call the Supper remembrance and proclamation.

What is "an unworthy manner" (v27)? An adverb — the manner, not the man. Guzik: "if anyone needs to remember the work of Jesus on the cross, it is the one who has sinned!" Henry: the Spirit never wrote this "to deter serious Christians from their duty." The Tabletalk study in Sproul's series: "Only sinners need the grace of Christ; therefore, only sinners can participate in the Lord's Supper."

What is "the body" in verse 29? It may be the Lord's body signified by the bread, or the church — Paul's own definition one chapter earlier: "we who are many are one body" (10:17). Guzik reads it as easily of the church family; Spurgeon: "He sees the bread, but not the body." The context (vv21–22, 33) makes the church at least part of what they failed to discern.

Sickness and death (vv30–32). Real temporal discipline, not damnation. Guzik: "a father correcting disobedient children," and "presumptuous" to read every early death this way. Henry: "punished now that they might not perish for ever." Spurgeon: "Paul did not mean to say that these persons were lost."

Word study (Greek):

- **imitators — *mimētēs* (G3402):** one who copies a pattern; "just as I also am of Christ" sets the limit.
- **praise — *epaineō* (G1867):** to commend; given (v2), withheld (v17), refused (v22).
- **traditions — *paradosis* (G3862):** what is handed on; apostolic here and in 2 Thess 2:15.

- **delivered / betrayed — *paradidōmi* (G3860):** to hand over; twice in v23 — Paul delivered, Jesus was betrayed.
- **received — *paralambanō* (G3880):** to receive a tradition (v23; 15:3).
- **head — *kephalē* (G2776):** fourteen times in vv3–13; authority and responsibility, modeled on God and Christ.
- **disgraces / shame — *kataischynō* (G2617):** to put to shame (vv4, 5, 22).
- **uncovered — *akatakalyptos* (G177):** only vv5, 13 in the NT.
- **image — *eikōn* (G1504):** the word of Gen 1:26–27 in the Septuagint.
- **glory — *doxa* (G1391):** splendor that reflects another (vv7, 15).
- **authority — *exousia* (G1849):** right, authority; NASB supplies "a symbol of" (v10).
- **angels — *angelos* (G32):** heaven watches the church at worship (v10).
- **independent / without — *chōris* (G5565):** apart from; twice in v11 — neither is apart from the other.
- **nature — *physis* (G5449):** the way things are made (v14; Rom 1:26).
- **has long hair — *komaō* (G2863):** only vv14–15 in the NT.
- **contentious — *philoneikos* (G5380):** fond of strife; only here. Its noun *philoneikia* (G5379) only at Luke 22:24, the dispute at the Last Supper.
- **practice / custom — *synētheia* (G4914):** settled custom (v16; John 18:39).
- **come together — *synerchomai* (G4905):** to assemble; five times in vv17–34.
- **divisions — *schisma* (G4978):** a tear (1:10; 12:25).
- **factions — *hairesis* (G139):** a chosen party (Acts 5:17; Gal 5:20).
- **approved — *dokimos* (G1384):** tested and genuine; root of "examine" (v28).
- **Lord's — *kyriakos* (G2960):** belonging to the Lord; only here and Rev 1:10.
- **supper — *deipnon* (G1173):** the main meal; His supper or "his own supper" (vv20–21).
- **despise — *kataphroneō* (G2706):** to look down on (v22; Matt 18:10).
- **given thanks — *eucharisteō* (G2168):** the root of "Eucharist."
- **remembrance — *anamnēsis* (G364):** an active calling-to-mind; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24, 25; Heb 10:3.
- **covenant — *diathēkē* (G1242):** the new covenant of Jer 31:31, sealed in blood.
- **proclaim — *katangellō* (G2605):** to announce publicly, the preaching verb of Acts.
- **in an unworthy manner — *anaxiōs* (G371):** an adverb — how, not who.
- **guilty — *enochos* (G1777):** answerable, liable (Matt 5:21–22).
- **examine — *dokimazō* (G1381):** to test for approval — then eat.
- **judge rightly — *diakrinō* (G1252):** to discern (vv29, 31); **judgment — *krima* (G2917):** a verdict (vv29, 34).
- **sleep — *koimaō* (G2837):** believers' death (Acts 7:60; 1 Thess 4:13).
- **disciplined — *paideuō* (G3811):** child-training (Heb 12:6); **condemned — *katakrinō* (G2632):** the sentence the believer escapes.
- **wait for — *ekdechomai* (G1551):** to wait for, receive (James 5:7).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **Verse 3 comes before verse 4** — principle before practice; keep the order and the chapter stops being about hats.
2. **Under authority is not inferior** — the Son is fully God and fully submitted (Guzik).

3. **Women prayed and prophesied** — Paul corrects the manner, not the act (Henry).
4. **The guardrail is in the text** — *chōris* twice; "not one a slave and the other a tyrant" (Henry).
5. **Principle or custom — honest disagreement** — Sproul leans to the sign, Guzik and Henry to the principle in local dress; none throws the principle away.
6. **Praise is the chapter's hinge** — given, withheld, refused.
7. **The contentious man was at the Last Supper too** — *philoneikia*, Luke 22:24.
8. **Delivered and betrayed are one verb** — *paradidōmi*, twice in v23.
9. **"Unworthy" is an adverb** — the table is for sinners who trust Christ.
10. **The remedy is one verb** — wait for one another.

Cross-references: Gen 1:26–27; 2:18, 21–24; 24:65; Exod 12:14; 24:8; Deut 22:5; Prov 3:12; Jer 31:31–34; Matt 5:21–24; 18:10; 26:26–29; Mark 7:8; 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–24; John 5:19; 10:30; 18:39; Acts 5:1–11, 17; 7:60; 18:18; Rom 1:26–27; 16:10; 1 Cor 1:10; 4:9, 16; 5:7; 8:9; 10:16–17, 31; 12:25; 14:34–35; 15:3; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 3:28; 5:20; Eph 1:22; 3:10; 5:1, 23, 25; 2 Thess 2:15; 1 Thess 4:13–15; 1 Tim 2:13; Heb 10:3, 25; 12:6; James 2:6, 10; 5:7; 1 Pet 3:7; Rev 1:10; 19:9.

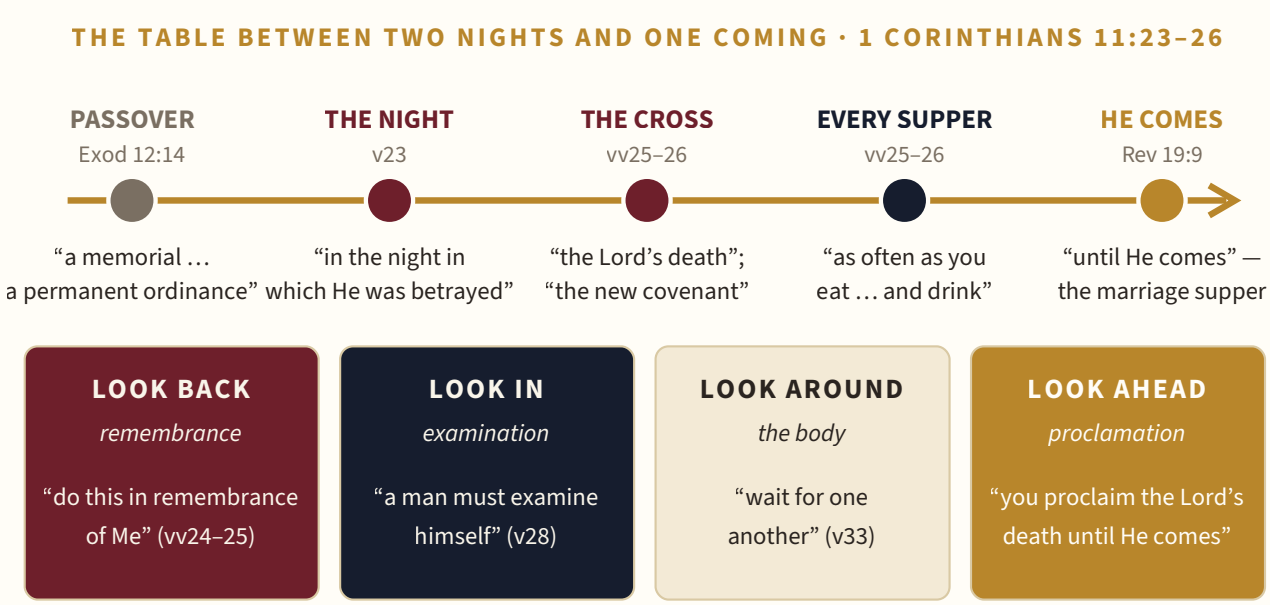
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 11:28

"But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup."

FIGURE · THE TABLE LOOKS FOUR WAYS



Every Supper stands on the line between the cross and the coming — and preaches both.

Guzik: "we preach a sermon to God Himself, to the Devil and all his allies, and to the world who watches."

The Supper stands on the timeline between Passover-and-the-cross and the coming of Christ, and it asks every guest to look back, in, around and ahead.

Command to obey — honor the Head I am under. Before I ask what anyone owes me, verse 3 tells me who I answer to: Christ is the head of every man, me included. Guzik says men's failure to lead the way Jesus leads is "inexcusable," and I have to own my part of that. Headship, for me, means giving myself up the way Christ did (Eph 5:25) — not stamping my foot. This week I will ask my wife (or the person closest to me) one question: "Where have I led you badly?" — and listen without defending myself.

Sin to confess — the contentious spirit. Paul closes the first half with a man who loves the fight (v16), and the only other place that word family shows up is the disciples arguing about who was greatest at the Last Supper. I confess I have come to church, to the table, even to this study, wanting to win more than wanting to worship. Henry: Paul "does not silence the contentious by mere authority." He shows them how odd they look.

Sin to confess — ranking people at the table. Some men at our table came straight from work, some from a halfway house, some from a cell block. The Corinthians ate first and let the latecomers go hungry, and Paul said it

was not the Lord's Supper at all. Henry: the poor man's soul is "as dear to Christ" and "cost him as much." I confess the quiet ways I decide who matters in the room.

Promise to trust — a Father's discipline, not a Judge's sentence. Many of the men I serve hear "eats and drinks judgment" and stay away from the table for years. Paul's point is the opposite: the Lord disciplines us "so that we will not be condemned along with the world" (v32). If God is correcting me, He is treating me as a son (Heb 12:6). And "The least grain of true faith in Christ qualifies you" (Spurgeon).

Example to follow — the Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed. On the worst night of His life, with Judas at the table and the disciples about to run, Jesus gave thanks and gave Himself. Before the next Supper I will examine myself honestly — Psalm 139:23–24 style — name what I need to confess, and then eat, because examination is meant to bring me to the table, not keep me from it.

Command to obey — wait for one another. The whole correction lands in one verb. I will be the man who holds his plate for his brother: who notices who is missing, who saves a seat, who doesn't leave until the last man has been welcomed.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul praises the Corinthians in v. 2 and refuses to in v. 22. What changed between the two — and which would he say of us? (11:2, 17, 22) *They kept the teaching but broke the love — orthodoxy at the table with contempt beside it.*
2. How does "God is the head of Christ" shape what headship can mean for me at home and at church? (11:3; Eph 5:25) *Equal in nature, ordered in role — and the head gives himself, as Christ did.*
3. Whom have I been treating as optional — and what do vv. 11–12 say about that? (11:11–12; Gal 3:28) *In the Lord no one is independent; all things originate from God.*
4. Who comes late to our table, and who eats first? Where do I quietly rank people? (11:21–22; 10:17) *To shame those who have nothing is to despise the church of God.*
5. When I take the bread and cup, what am I preaching, and to whom? (11:26; Rev 19:9) *The Lord's death until He comes — to God, the devil, and the watching world (Guzik).*
6. What is the difference between eating "in an unworthy manner" and being an unworthy man — and what keeps me from the table? (11:27–28; Heb 12:6) *Examine, then eat; the least grain of true faith qualifies (Spurgeon).*

Worship. He was handed over, and He handed Himself to us. On the night of betrayal He gave thanks. His body is "for you"; His blood is a new covenant no mere man could make. Every time we eat the bread and drink the cup we preach His death — and we preach that He is coming back, to a marriage supper where no one will be left hungry in the courtyard.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You are my Head. Forgive me for leading badly, for loving the argument, and for ranking the people You died for. Thank You that You received sinners at Your table on the night You were betrayed, and that You still do. Search me before I eat, and then feed me. When You discipline me, help me hear a Father and not a Judge. Make me a man who waits for his brother, until You come. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 12

One Spirit, One Body, Many Members — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The Spirit who made me confess "Jesus is Lord" has given me a gift for somebody else and placed me in Christ's body just as He desired. I don't get to quit the body because I feel small, and I don't get to dismiss a brother because he looks weak.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 12 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

2 You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.

3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.

6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

16 And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

18 But now △ God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, △ just as He desired.

19 If they were all one ⟲ member, where would the body be?

20 But now there are many ⟲ members, but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "⚠ I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "⚠ I have no need of you."

22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the ⟲ members of the body which ◷ seem to be weaker are necessary;

23 and those ⟲ members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable ⟲ members become much more presentable,

24 whereas our more presentable ⟲ members have no need of it. But △ God has so composed the body, ☆ giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked,

25 so that there may be ⚠ no division in the body, but that the ⟲ members may have ▤ the same care for one another.

26 And if one ⟲ member suffers, ◷ all the members suffer with it; if one ⟲ member is honored, ☆ all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ☆ you are Christ's body, and individually ⟲ members of it.

28 And △ God has appointed in the church, ◷ first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?

30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

31 But ▤ earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you ☆ a still more excellent way.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "I do not want you to be unaware" — Command / instruction
- **v2** "the mute idols" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "Jesus is accursed" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "Jesus is Lord" — God — His character & actions
- **v3** "except by the Holy Spirit" — God — His character & actions
- **v6** "the same God who works all things in all persons" — God — His character & actions
- **v7** "to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit" — Promise / blessing
- **v7** "for the common good" — Command / instruction
- **v11** "just as He wills" — God — His character & actions
- **v12** "so also is Christ" — God — His character & actions
- **v13** "we were all baptized into one body" — Promise / blessing
- **v13** "whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free" — Time / place / contrast
- **v13** "made to drink of one Spirit" — Promise / blessing
- **v15** "I am not a part of the body" — Sin / warning
- **v16** "I am not a part of the body" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "God has placed the members" — God — His character & actions
- **v18** "just as He desired" — God — His character & actions
- **v22** "seem to be weaker are necessary" — Time / place / contrast
- **v24** "God has so composed the body" — God — His character & actions
- **v24** "giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked" — Promise / blessing
- **v25** "no division in the body" — Sin / warning
- **v25** "the same care for one another" — Command / instruction
- **v26** "all the members suffer with it" — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** "all the members rejoice with it" — Promise / blessing
- **v27** "you are Christ's body" — Promise / blessing
- **v28** "God has appointed in the church" — God — His character & actions
- **v28** "first apostles, second prophets, third teachers" — Time / place / contrast
- **v31** "earnestly desire the greater gifts" — Command / instruction
- **v31** "a still more excellent way" — Promise / blessing
- **v21** "I have no need of you" — Sin / warning (every occurrence)
- **v4** "same" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v12** "members" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v14** "member" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12

"For even as ↻ the body is one and yet has ↻ many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, △ so also is Christ."

Setting. "Now concerning spiritual gifts" (v1) — Paul answers another question the Corinthians wrote to him (see 7:1; 8:1). Chapter 11 dealt with the gathered church (head coverings; the Lord's Supper, where the poor were shamed, 11:22). Chapters 12–14 belong together: the body (12), love (13), tongues and prophecy in the meeting (14). This church was "not lacking in any gift" (1:7), but it was full of "jealousy and strife" (3:3).

Structure:

- vv1–3 — **the test:** I do not want you to be unaware. You were pagans, led astray to the mute idols. No one speaking by the Spirit of God says "Jesus is accursed"; no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.
- vv4–11 — **the gifts:** varieties of gifts / ministries / effects — the same Spirit / Lord / God (vv4–6). To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (v7). Nine gifts, each "to one … to another" (vv8–10). One and the same Spirit works all these, distributing to each one individually just as He wills (v11).
- vv12–20 — **the body:** one body, many members — "so also is Christ" (v12). By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and all made to drink of one Spirit (v13). The foot and the ear say "I am not a part of the body" — it is not for this reason any the less a part (vv15–16). A body all eye? (v17). God has placed the members just as He desired (v18). Many members, one body (v20).
- vv21–26 — **the honor:** the eye and the head say "I have no need of you" (v21). The members that seem weaker are necessary; the less honorable receive more abundant honor (vv22–23). God has so composed the body, giving more honor to the member which lacked, so that there may be no division and the members may have the same care for one another (vv24–25). One suffers, all suffer; one is honored, all rejoice (v26).
- vv27–31 — **the order:** you are Christ's body (v27). God has appointed: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, healings, helps, administrations, tongues (v28). Seven questions, each expecting "No" (vv29–30). Earnestly desire the greater gifts — and a still more excellent way (v31).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "body" ×18 — vv12 (×3), 13, 14, 15 (×2), 16 (×2), 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27 — all between v12 and v27.
- "member / members" ×17 — vv12 (×2), 14, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 (×2), 24 (×2), 25, 26 (×4), 27.
- "all" ×16 — vv6 (×2), 11, 12, 13 (×2), 19, 26 (×2), 29 (×4), 30 (×3).
- "one" ×19 in all — the numeral (one Spirit, one body, one member) ×12: vv9, 11, 12 (×2), 13 (×3), 14, 19, 20, 26 (×2); plus "no one" (v3 ×2), "each one" (vv7, 11, 18), "one another" (v25).
- "Spirit" ×11 — vv3 (×2), 4, 7, 8 (×2), 9 (×2), 11, 13 (×2); plus "spirits" (v10) and "spiritual gifts" (v1).
- "another" ×9 — "to another" eight times in vv8–10 (v8, v9 ×2, v10 ×5), and "one another" (v25).
- "same" ×7 — vv4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 25 — six times in vv4–11.
- "God" ×5 — vv3, 6, 18, 24, 28 — and three of them are God placing, composing, appointing (vv18, 24, 28).

- "gift(s)" ×6 — vv1, 4, 9, 28, 30, 31; "tongues" ×4 — vv10 (×2), 28, 30 (always last or near last).
- "varieties" ×3 — vv4, 5, 6; "each one" ×3 — vv7, 11, 18.
- "honor / honorable / honored" ×4 — vv23 (×2), 24, 26; "presentable" ×3 — vv23 (×2), 24.
- "I am not a part of the body" ×2 (vv15, 16); "I have no need of you" ×2 (v21); "where would" ×3 (vv17 ×2, 19).
- The questions of vv29–30: "are they?" ×4, "do they?" ×3 — seven in all.

Contrasts: mute idols (v2) ⟷ the Spirit who speaks (v3). "Jesus is accursed" ⟷ "Jesus is Lord" (v3). Varieties ⟷ the same (vv4–6). Many ⟷ one (vv12, 14, 20). Foot ⟷ hand, ear ⟷ eye (vv15–16). "I am not a part" ⟷ "not … any the less a part" (vv15–16). Weaker ⟷ necessary (v22). Less honorable ⟷ more abundant honor (vv23–24). Division ⟷ the same care (v25). Suffers ⟷ rejoices (v26). Greater gifts ⟷ a still more excellent way (v31).

Shape of the chapter: the Giver (1–3), the gifts (4–11), the body (12–20), the honor (21–26), the order and the way (27–31). It opens with the Spirit's confession of Jesus and closes on the edge of chapter 13's love. "The same" holds the first half together; "member" and "body" hold the second.

Chapter theme (my words): The Spirit who makes a man say "Jesus is Lord" gives every believer a gift for the good of others and baptizes them all into one body, where God placed each member just as He desired. No member may quit, no member may dismiss another, and every gift must travel the more excellent way of love.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 12:13

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

FIGURE · THE GIFT LISTS SIDE BY SIDE

FIVE SAMPLES OF THE SPIRIT'S GIFTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

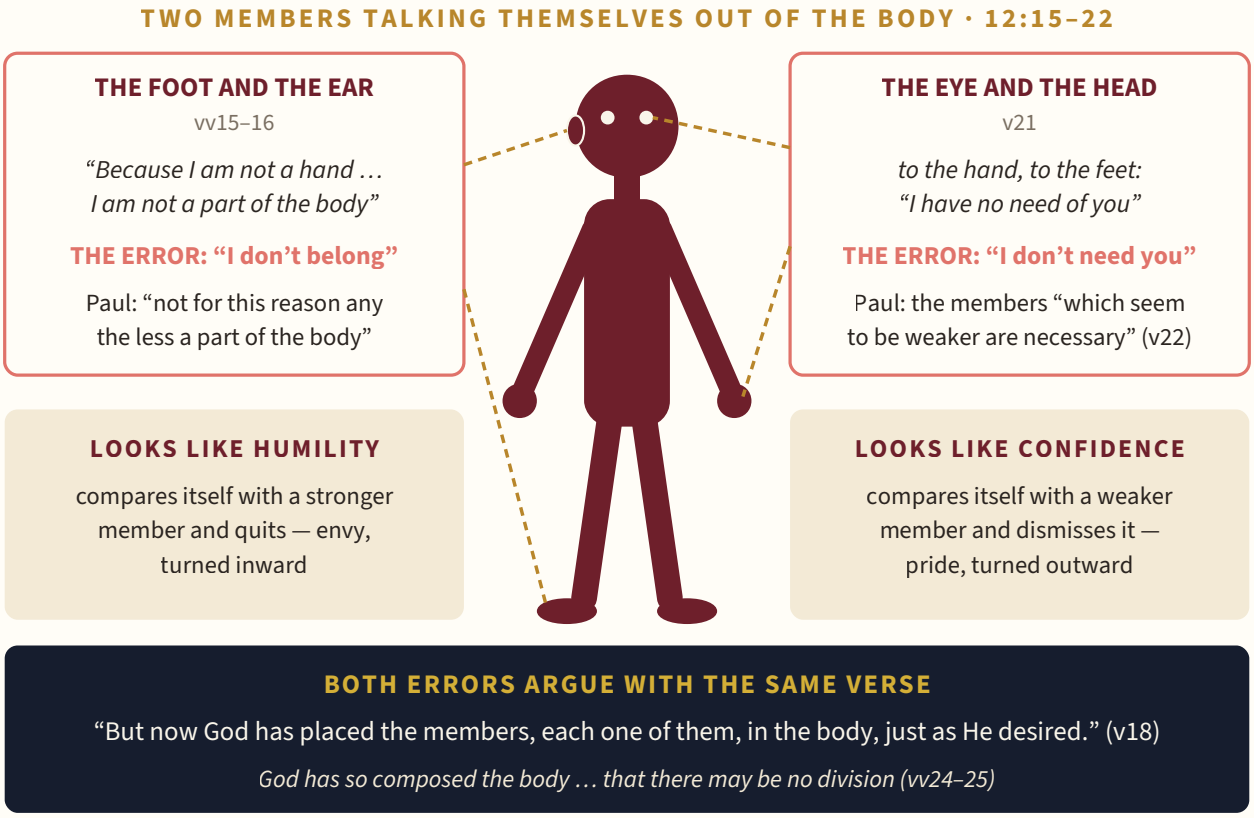
1 COR 12:8–10	1 COR 12:28	ROMANS 12:6–8	EPHESIANS 4:11	1 PET 4:10–11
word of wisdom	apostles	prophecy	apostles	speaking
word of knowledge	prophets	service	prophets	serving
faith	teachers	teaching	evangelists	
gifts of healing	miracles	exhortation	pastors and	
effecting of miracles	gifts of healings	giving	teachers	
prophecy	helps	leading		
distinguishing of spirits	administrations	mercy		
kinds of tongues	kinds of tongues			
interpretation of tongues				

No list is complete, and no two are alike — about twenty gifts in all.

Every believer appears somewhere: "to each one" (1 Cor 12:7) · "as each one has received" (1 Pet 4:10)

Put the New Testament gift lists next to each other and you see samples, not a catalog — and every believer somewhere in them.

FIGURE · THE FOOT, THE EYE AND THE VERSE THEY FORGET



The foot and the eye make opposite mistakes — one quits, one dismisses — but both are comparison, and both are answered by verse 18.

Why open a chapter on gifts with a test about Jesus (vv1–3)? Because Corinth judged spiritual things by intensity, and they had learned that in the idol temples. Paul's test is content: what does it say about Jesus? Guzik: judge things "by how they relate to Jesus Christ," because the Spirit's ministry is "to glorify and represent Jesus" (John 16:14). Sproul reminds us that *Iēsous ho kyrios* was the first creed and cost Christians their lives under Caesar. Henry: no one can call Christ Lord "with a believing subjection to him," unless the Spirit works that faith. Who would say "Jesus is accursed"? Paul doesn't say — the test doesn't depend on it.

Spirit, Lord, God (vv4–6). Three sentences, three Persons, one church. Gifts (*charismata*) from the Spirit, ministries (*diakoniai*) from the Lord Jesus, effects (*energēmata*) from God the Father. Guzik calls this the Trinity in "a typical, subtle New Testament flow." Variety in the church is not a defect; it is a reflection of God Himself.

Verse 7 is the hinge. Every believer has a manifestation of the Spirit — Sproul: "every Christian has been gifted by the Holy Spirit" — and every manifestation is "for the common good." Henry: "not given for show, but for service." Spurgeon reads it both ways: the gift profits the man and makes him "the means of profiting those who hear him."

Are the miraculous gifts for today? — where our teachers differ. Guzik argues at length that nothing in Scripture divides the gifts into categories and retires some of them, and that early writers (Clement, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian) testify to them after the apostles; he still insists tongues are not for all and not the evidence of the Spirit. Henry calls these gifts "extraordinary offices and powers, bestowed on ministers and Christians in the first ages." Sproul held apostleship was "only for the first century," said Paul did not put tongues "at the apex," and found no edification in his own experience of tongues, though "he does not outlaw their use." I want my men to

know these views exist among faithful teachers, and to hold on to what all four agree on: the Spirit gives as He wills, every gift is for others, and no gift proves a man is more spiritual.

Giftedness is not maturity (v11). The Spirit distributes "just as He wills." Guzik: "We should never assume that giftedness is connected to maturity." That's why the qualifications for leaders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are about character. Henry goes further: "there may be great gifts where there is not a dram of grace" (see Matthew 7:22).

What is the baptism of verse 13? Guzik reads it as Spirit baptism — every believer immersed into Christ and His body — not water baptism as an initiation rite. Henry says water baptism is the sign, but "it is baptism by the Spirit … that makes us true members of Christ's body." Sproul distinguishes Spirit baptism from regeneration as the Spirit's empowering, yet insists that "the pouring of the Spirit is to every Christian." Whatever else we say, verse 13 says "we were all" — no second-class believers.

"So also is Christ" (v12). Not "so also is the church." The body bears His name. That is how Paul met Him: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4). To wound a brother is to lay a hand on Christ.

Two errors, one root (vv15–21). The foot says "I don't belong"; the eye says "I don't need you." One looks like humility, the other like confidence, but both are comparison, and both argue with verse 18. Henry: "What foundation is here for repining in ourselves, or envying others?" Sproul: "Don't be jealous of other people's gifts, and don't try to elevate your gift over everybody else."

The honor of the weak (vv22–26). God "composed" (*synekerasen*) the body with a bias — more honor to the member that lacked — the same reversal as 1:27. Guzik: we notice a member when it hurts, and a part that lives only for itself is "cancer." Henry: "this mutual disregard is a schism begun." Spurgeon: "Condescension is often a sort of pride." And this answers chapter 11: the poor brother shamed at the Supper (11:22) is the member God composed the body to honor.

The order of verse 28 and the seven questions. God "appointed" — the same verb as "placed" in v18. Apostles, prophets and teachers come first (Henry: "Those of most value have the first place"); tongues come last, as in vv10 and 30. Each question in vv29–30 opens with *mē*, expecting "No." So tongues cannot be the required sign of the Spirit — Guzik, Sproul and Henry all say so.

"Earnestly desire" — command or rebuke (v31)? *Zēloute* can be either. Most read it as a command; Henry reports a reading that hears a charge — "You are envious at each other's gifts." Either way, the zeal is redirected, and the "still more excellent way" is love (13:1–13). Spurgeon: "Gifts are good, but grace is better."

Word study (Greek):

- **spiritual gifts — *pneumatikos* (G4152):** literally "spirituals"; "gifts" is supplied (v1).
- **unaware — *agnoeō* (G50):** to be ignorant; Paul's "I do not want you to be unaware" formula (Rom 11:25; 1 Thess 4:13).
- **mute — *aphōnos* (G880):** voiceless — the idols could not speak (v2; Ps 115:5).
- **accursed — *anathema* (G331):** devoted to destruction, under God's curse (Gal 1:8–9).
- **Lord — *kyrios* (G2962):** the Septuagint's word for the divine name; "Jesus is Lord" is the first creed.
- **varieties — *diairesis* (G1243):** distributions, allotments (vv4–6).
- **gifts — *charisma* (G5486):** grace-gift, from *charis* (Rom 6:23).
- **ministries — *diakonia* (G1248):** service — table-waiting and apostleship alike (Acts 6:2; 1:25).
- **effects — *energēma* (G1755):** workings, results God produces (vv6, 10).

- **works — *energeō* (G1754):** God works all things in all (v6); the Spirit works all these (v11).
- **manifestation — *phanerōsis* (G5321):** a making-visible; only here and 2 Cor 4:2.
- **common good — *sympherō* (G4851):** what profits, brings advantage (v7; 10:23).
- **word of wisdom / knowledge — *logos sophias* / *gnōsis* (G4678 / G1108):** a word spoken for others (v8).
- **faith — *pistis* (G4102):** here a special gift of faith, not saving faith (v9; 13:2).
- **healing — *iama* (G2386):** plural — healings, given case by case (vv9, 28, 30).
- **miracles — *dynamis* (G1411):** powers, mighty works (vv10, 28, 29).
- **prophecy — *prophēteia* (G4394):** speaking forth what God has revealed; ranked second (v28; 14:1).
- **distinguishing — *diakrisis* (G1253):** judging between spirits (v10; 1 John 4:1).
- **tongues / interpretation — *glōssa* / *hermēneia* (G1100 / G2058):** always paired, always last (vv10, 28, 30).
- **distributing — *diaireō* (G1244):** apportioning, dividing out (v11).
- **wills — *boulomai* (G1014):** the Spirit's deliberate purpose (v11; Heb 2:4).
- **baptized — *baptizō* (G907):** aorist passive — done to all of us, once (v13).
- **made to drink — *potizō* (G4222):** to give drink, to water (v13; 3:6).
- **member — *melos* (G3196):** a limb or organ; seventeen times (vv12–27).
- **body — *sōma* (G4983):** eighteen times; the body bears Christ's name (v12).
- **placed / appointed — *tithēmi* (G5087):** God set each member, God appointed the gifts (vv18, 28).
- **desired — *thelō* (G2309):** God's settled wish (v18).
- **weaker — *asthenēs* (G772):** weak, as in 1:27 and 8:7–12 (v22).
- **necessary — *anankaios* (G316):** indispensable (v22).
- **less honorable — *atimos* (G820):** without honor — in our estimate (v23).
- **composed — *synkerannymi* (G4786):** blended together; only here and Heb 4:2 (v24).
- **division — *schisma* (G4978):** a tear, a rent (v25; 1:10; 11:18).
- **care — *merimnaō* (G3309):** anxious care — forbidden for self (Matt 6:25), commanded for each other (v25).
- **suffer with / rejoice with — *sympaschō* / *synchairō* (G4841 / G4796):** both with *syn*; compare 13:6 (v26).
- **helps — *antilēmpsis* (G484):** taking hold to help; only here (v28).
- **administrations — *kybernēsis* (G2941):** steering, pilotage; only here (v28).
- **earnestly desire — *zēloō* (G2206):** be zealous — the verb of "not jealous" in 13:4 (v31).
- **greater — *meizōn* (G3173):** the gifts that build up (v31; 14:5).
- **still more excellent — *hyperbolē* (G5236):** "beyond measure"; a way, not a gift (v31).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The chapter begins with the Giver, not the gifts** — the test is "Jesus is Lord" (v3).
2. **"Jesus is Lord" is a creed that costs something** — Sproul: Christians would not call Caesar *kyrios*.
3. **Variety is Trinitarian** — same Spirit, same Lord, same God (vv4–6).
4. **Verse 7 disarms the proud and the discouraged** — to each one; for the common good.
5. **Giftedness is not maturity** — the Spirit gives as He wills (Guzik).
6. **"So also is Christ"** — the body bears His name (v12; Acts 9:4).

7. **Every believer was baptized by the Spirit** — "we were all" (v13); no second-class Christians.
8. **The foot and the eye make the same mistake** — comparison that argues with v18.
9. **God composed the body with a bias toward the weak** — more honor to the member that lacked (v24).
10. **The quiet gifts are in the list** — helps and administrations (v28); grace above gifts (v31).

Cross-references: Num 11:29; Deut 18:20–22; Ps 115:5–6; 139:14; Isa 55:8–9; Joel 2:28–29; Matt 6:25; 7:22; 10:3; Mark 2:21; 10:45; John 15:26; 16:14; 17:21; Acts 1:25; 2:16–18; 6:2; 9:4; 27:11; Rom 6:23; 10:9; 11:25; 12:4–8, 15; 1 Cor 1:7, 10, 27; 3:3; 8:1; 10:17, 23; 11:18–22; 13:1–7; 14:1, 5, 12, 26; Gal 1:8–9; 3:28; 6:2; Eph 2:12, 20; 4:3, 11–16; Phil 2:11; Col 1:18; 3:11; 1 Thess 4:13; 1 Tim 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; Heb 2:4; 4:2; 13:3; 1 Pet 4:10–11; 1 John 4:1–3.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 12:26

"And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

Truth to live in — "Jesus is Lord" is the Spirit's work in me. I did not talk myself into Christ. The day I first said "Jesus is Lord" and meant it, the Holy Spirit was doing that in me (v3). That matters for the men I sit with on Thursday nights: some of them grew up around religion that was loud and strange and empty. I want to teach them the test Paul gives — not "was it powerful?" but "did it make Jesus Lord?"

Command to obey — use the gift for the common good. To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit (v7). The question for me is not whether I am gifted; it's whether I am using it for somebody else. Sproul said it plainly: "If God has given you a gift, He expects you to use it." This week I will name the gift I believe God gave me and name one man it is for.

Sin to confess — the foot's quiet quitting and the eye's quiet contempt. I have been the foot. I've sat in church and in recovery rooms thinking, "I'm not like those men; I don't really belong here." That sounds humble, but it argues with God, who placed me "just as He desired" (v18). And I have been the eye. I have looked at a brother — the one who can't read well, the one fresh out, the one who keeps relapsing — and acted as if I had no need of him. Paul says the members that seem weaker are necessary (v22). I confess both.

Promise to trust — I was baptized into the body. I didn't join Christ's body by being impressive. By one Spirit I was baptized into it, with Jews and Greeks, slaves and free (v13) — and with ex-cons and preachers, addicts and accountants. The man I find hardest to love was placed beside me by the same Spirit.

Example to follow — the "helps." Spurgeon preached a whole sermon on that one word (v28). "Learn to stoop your back"; "you must go right down to the man." Some of the most important men in our ministry will never teach a lesson. They give rides to meetings, they sit in court with a brother, they make the coffee and stack the chairs. That is a gift God appointed in the church.

Practice for the week — feel what my brother feels. If one member suffers, all suffer; if one is honored, all rejoice (v26). Spurgeon was right that rejoicing with is harder than suffering with. When a brother gets his kids back or his first chip, I will celebrate him without measuring myself against him. When a brother gets bad news, I will show up, not just send a text.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Before I ask whether something "spiritual" is powerful, do I ask whether it makes Jesus Lord? Where has excitement fooled me? (12:1–3; John 16:14) *The Spirit's signature is the lordship of Christ, not intensity.*
2. What gift has the Spirit given me, and who received the "common good" of it this past week? (12:7, 11; 1 Pet 4:10) *Every believer has a manifestation of the Spirit; none is for private display.*
3. Have I been the foot — "because I am not ___, I don't really belong here"? What does verse 18 say to me? (12:13–18) *God placed you, each one, just as He desired. You were baptized into the body, not auditioned.*

4. Have I been the eye — “I have no need of you”? Who at this table, or in my church, have I quietly written off? (12:21–24; 1:27) *The members that seem weaker are necessary; God gives them more abundant honor.*
5. When a brother here is suffering — a relapse, a court date, a death — do I suffer with him, or send a text and move on? Can I rejoice when another man is honored? (12:26; Rom 12:15; Heb 13:3) *The body feels together; Spurgeon: suffering with is easier than rejoicing with.*
6. What would it look like for me to be one of the “helps” this week, and to pursue love above any gift? (12:28, 31; 13:1) *Helps: stoop your back, go right down to the man. The more excellent way is love.*

Worship. One Spirit, one Lord, one God — and He did not make one kind of believer. He made feet and hands, eyes and ears, and He mixed them into one body with a special honor for the parts the world overlooks. The body has Christ’s own name. Nothing I could earn would make me belong more than He already made me belong.

Prayer. Holy Spirit, thank You for making me say “Jesus is Lord” and mean it. Thank You for baptizing me into Christ’s body and placing me just where You desired. Forgive me for the times I quit because I felt small and for the times I dismissed a brother because he seemed weak. Show me the gift You gave me and the man it is for this week. Make me a help. Teach me to suffer with the brother who suffers and to rejoice with the brother who is honored. And lead us all in the still more excellent way of love. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 13

The More Excellent Way — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Without love, everything I do for God — every gift, every sacrifice — adds up to nothing. Love is not a feeling I wait for but fifteen things I do, first done to me in Christ, and it is the one thing I will still be doing when every gift is gone and I see Him face to face.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 13 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" — Sin / warning
- **v2** "I am nothing" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "it profits me nothing" — Sin / warning
- **v4** "is patient" — Command / instruction
- **v4** "is kind" — Command / instruction
- **v4** "is not jealous" — Sin / warning
- **v4** "does not brag" — Sin / warning
- **v4** "is not arrogant" — Sin / warning

- **v5** “does not act unbecomingly” — Sin / warning
- **v5** “does not seek its own” — Command / instruction
- **v5** “is not provoked” — Sin / warning
- **v5** “does not take into account a wrong suffered” — Command / instruction
- **v6** “does not rejoice in unrighteousness” — Sin / warning
- **v6** “rejoices with the truth” — Command / instruction
- **v7** “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” — Command / instruction
- **v8** “never fails” — Promise / blessing
- **v8** “they will be done away” — Time / place / contrast
- **v8** “they will cease” — Time / place / contrast
- **v8** “it will be done away” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “when the perfect comes” — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** “I did away with childish things” — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** “in a mirror dimly” — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** “face to face” — Promise / blessing
- **v12** “I will know fully just as I also have been fully known” — Promise / blessing
- **v13** “faith, hope, love, abide these three” — Promise / blessing
- **v13** “the greatest of these is love” — God — His character & actions
- **v1** “love” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v9** “in part” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 13:2

"If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."

Setting. Chapter 13 stands between two sentences about gifts: "But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way" (12:31) and "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts" (14:1). Paul is writing to a church that had every gift (1:7) and was known for its quarrels (1:11), jealousy (3:3), arrogance (4:18; 5:2), lawsuits (6:1–8) and a divided Lord's Supper (11:17–22). Chapter 13 is not a wedding poem; it is the cure for a church fight.

Structure:

- vv1–3 — **without love, nothing:** five "if I" clauses — tongues of men and angels; prophecy, all mysteries and all knowledge; all faith to remove mountains; all my possessions; my body to be burned — each with "but do not have love." Three verdicts: a noisy gong (v1), I am nothing (v2), it profits me nothing (v3).
- vv4–7 — **love described:** fifteen verbs. Two positives (patient, kind), eight refusals (not jealous … does not rejoice in unrighteousness), one positive joy (rejoices with the truth), then four "all things" (bears, believes, hopes, endures).
- vv8–12 — **love never fails:** prophecy and knowledge done away, tongues cease (v8); we know and prophesy in part (v9); when the perfect comes, the partial is done away (v10); two pictures — the child become a man (v11), the mirror become a face (v12).
- v13 — **the greatest:** faith, hope, love abide; the greatest of these is love.

Repeated words, with counts:

- "love" ×9 — vv1, 2, 3, 4 (×3), 8, 13 (×2) (Greek *agapē*; KJV "charity" ×9).
- "but do not have love" ×3 — vv1, 2, 3; "if I" ×5 — vv1, 2 (×2), 3 (×2).
- "I" ×14 — vv1 (×2), 2 (×3), 3 (×2), 11 (×4), 12 (×3); plus "my / me" ×3 in v3. Paul puts himself under the test first.
- "not / never" ×12 — vv1, 2, 3, 4 (×3), 5 (×4), 6, 8 ("never fails"). Most of the portrait is what love refuses.
- "all" ×8 — v2 (×3: all mysteries, all knowledge, all faith), v3 (all my possessions), v7 (×4: "all things").
- "in part / partial" ×4 — vv9 (×2), 10, 12 (Greek *ek merous* each time).
- "done away / did away" ×4 — vv8 (×2), 10, 11 (Greek *katargeō* each time).
- "child / childish" ×5 — all in v11.
- "know / known / knowledge" ×7 — know vv2, 9, 12 (×2: "I know," "I will know fully"); known v12; knowledge vv2, 8.
- "prophecy / prophesy" ×3 — vv2, 8, 9; "tongues" ×2 — vv1, 8.
- "now" ×3 — vv12 (×2), 13; "then" ×2 — v12; "face" ×2 — v12.

- “nothing” ×2 — vv2, 3.

Contrasts: gifts ⟷ love; something ⟷ nothing; love that never fails ⟷ gifts that are done away (v8); in part ⟷ the perfect (vv9–10); child ⟷ man (v11); a mirror dimly ⟷ face to face (v12); now ⟷ then (v12); I know in part ⟷ I will know fully, as I have been fully known (v12); unrighteousness ⟷ truth (v6); faith and hope ⟷ the greatest, love (v13).

Commands: none in the chapter itself — it describes rather than commands. The command comes in 14:1: “Pursue love.”

Shape of the chapter: a subtraction (1–3), a portrait (4–7), a timeline (8–12), a ranking (13). It moves from what I have, to what love does, to what lasts, to what is greatest.

Chapter theme (my words): No gift or sacrifice counts without love, because love is the life of God Himself; it is seen in fifteen plain behaviors, it outlasts every gift of this partial age, and it is the greatest thing there is.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12

"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known."

FIGURE · LOVE IN FIFTEEN VERBS

	LOVE … (NASB 1995)	GREEK VERB	WHERE CORINTH FELL SHORT
1	is patient	*makrothymei*	11:33 — "wait for one another"
2	is kind	*chrēsteuetai*	8:11–12 — the weak brother wounded
3	is not jealous	*ou zēloi*	3:3 — "jealousy and strife"
4	does not brag	*ou perpereuetai*	4:7 — boasting of what was given
5	is not arrogant	*ou physioutai*	4:18; 5:2; 8:1 — puffed up
6	does not act unbecomingly	*ouk aschēmonei*	11:21 — drunk at the Supper
7	does not seek its own	*ou zētei ta heautēs*	10:24 — seek the other's good
8	is not provoked	*ou paroxynetai*	1:11–12 — quarrels and parties
9	does not take into account a wrong	*ou logizetai*	6:7 — "why not rather be wronged?"
10	does not rejoice in unrighteousness	*ou chairei epi*	5:2, 6 — boasting over sin
11	rejoices with the truth	*synchairei*	12:26 — rejoice with the member
12	bears all things	*stegei*	
13	believes all things	*pisteuei*	
14	hopes all things	*elpizei*	
15	endures all things	*hypomenei*	

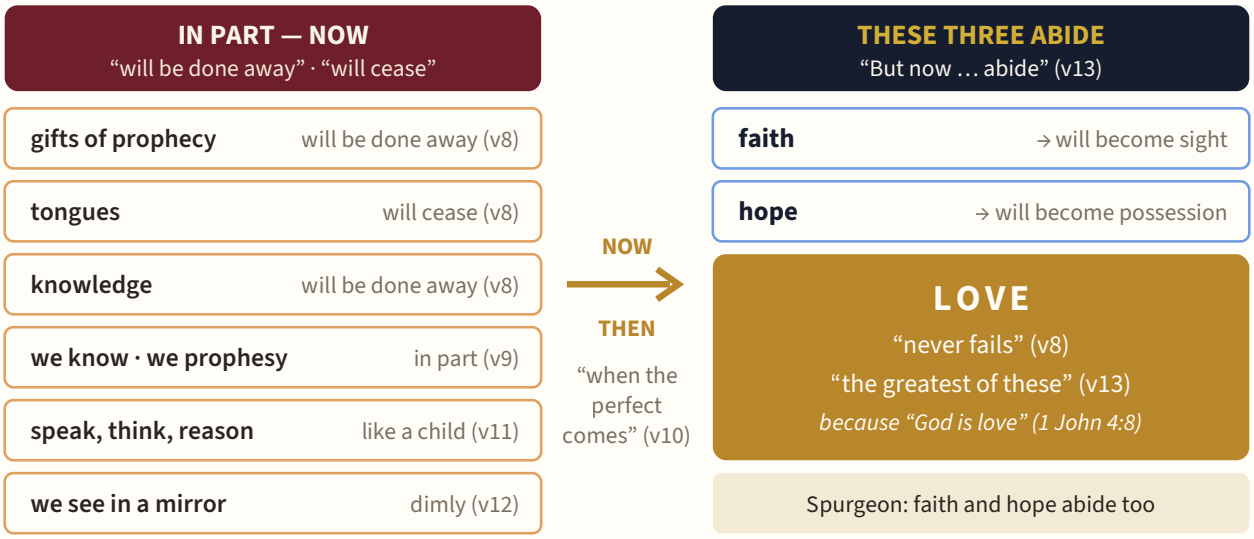
FOUR "ALL THINGS" (v7)
covers · trusts · expects · stays
9:12 — Paul: "we endure all things"
(the same verb *stegō*)

what love does · what love refuses

All fifteen are verbs — love is what it does.

Every description of love in vv. 4–7 is a verb, and almost every refusal names a failure Paul has already confronted in this letter.

FIGURE · WHAT ENDS AND WHAT ABIDES

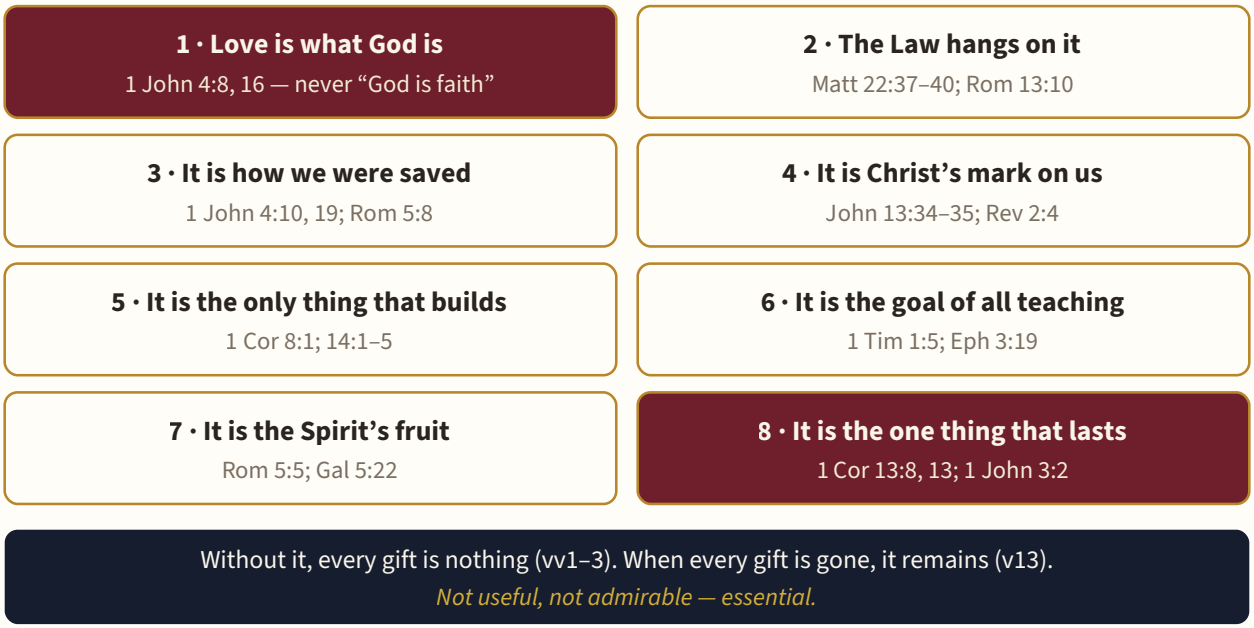


WHAT IS "THE PERFECT" (v10)? — WHERE THE TEACHERS LAND

Guzik: Christ's presence — His return or our going to Him; not the finished New Testament.
Henry: the perfect state above; yet the extraordinary gifts were "but for a time."
All agree: whatever ends and whenever, love does not — it outlasts every gift.

Everything in the left column belongs to the partial "now" and will be done away; of the three that abide, love is the greatest — and teachers who differ on "the perfect" agree on that.

FIGURE · WHY LOVE IS ESSENTIAL



Paul assumes in chapter 13 what the whole Bible argues: love is God's nature, the Law's summary, the gospel's shape, the church's mark, and the one thing that lasts.

Why tongues first? Corinth prized tongues most — Henry says "hereupon the Corinthians seemed chiefly to value themselves and despise their brethren." Their religious instincts were formed in pagan worship where being "led astray" (12:2) looked like the presence of a god, and a gift that was audible, public and unverifiable made a perfect badge. Paul had already listed tongues last and asked, "All do not speak with tongues, do they?" (12:28–30). A gift the Spirit does not give to everyone cannot be the badge of the Spirit. Guzik quotes Fee: "Possession of the charismata is not the sign of the Spirit; Christian love is."

Gifts minus love = nothing — not less. Paul imagines each gift at full strength (*all* mysteries, *all* knowledge, *all* faith, *all* my possessions) and subtracts love: the result is zero. And the verdict falls on the *person* — "I am nothing." Sproul: these things are not bad, but every one of them can be done without love, so none of them proves the heart — "A person can even be a martyr for the wrong reasons." Spurgeon's example is Judas, who "had, no doubt, faith in God's miracles, but yet he was not saved." Henry draws the line exactly: "Saving faith is ever in conjunction with charity, but the faith of miracles may be without it." Guzik guards the other side: "It isn't an issue of love versus the gifts."

Love is a verb (vv4–7). All fifteen descriptions are verbs; Guzik: "True love is always demonstrated by action." That matters for my men: love is not a mood I wait for but a set of things I do. Read the list against Corinth and every line is a rebuke (see the figure); read it against Christ and every line is a description; read it with my own name and it is my assignment.

The ledger word (v5). "Does not take into account a wrong suffered" is *logizomai*, the bookkeeper's verb — the same word for God "not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Cor 5:19) and for righteousness credited to Abraham (Rom 4:3). Guzik: love "does not store up the memory of any wrong it has received." Sproul:

"Longsuffering love does not keep a scorecard." The KJV's "thinketh no evil" (and Henry) take the verb the other way — love does not imagine evil motives. Both are true of love.

Bears and believes all things — not gullibility (v7). *Stegō* means to cover as a roof covers (1 Pet 4:8; Prov 10:12). Spurgeon: "Love stands in the presence of a fault, with a finger on her lip." But Henry: "Wisdom may dwell with love, and charity be cautious." Love believes the best until the facts forbid it; when it cannot believe, it still hopes ("Love never despairs"), and it stays. Sproul calls this the judgment of charity — giving others the best-case reading we naturally reserve for ourselves.

What is "the perfect" (v10), and do the gifts continue? Here our teachers differ, and I want my men to know it. Guzik rejects the view that the perfect is the completed New Testament; it is the presence of Christ — His return or our going to Him — and he holds the gifts continue until then; he also rejects the argument that the middle voice of "will cease" means tongues stopped on their own. Henry places the perfect in "the perfect state above," yet says the extraordinary gifts were given "but for a time, not during its whole continuance in this world" — a cessationist lean. Verse 12 points to the end: "face to face" and "know fully" are the language of seeing Christ (1 John 3:2). Whatever ends, and whenever, love does not — every teacher agrees on that.

The child and the mirror (vv11–12). Childish speech is right for a child and set aside by the man; Paul is not calling the gifts childish but saying they belong to this age. Corinth's bronze mirrors showed a true but blurred face; "dimly" is *en ainigmati*, "in a riddle," the word of Numbers 12:8. And the comfort is folded in: "I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." God's knowledge of me is already complete. Spurgeon: "We shall never be omniscient—we cannot be," but we will see Him.

Do faith and hope abide in heaven (v13)? Guzik and Henry say faith becomes sight and hope becomes possession, and love alone continues. Spurgeon dissents: Paul calls all three abiding, and the saints will still trust and still look forward. They agree on the point of the verse — love is greatest.

Why love is essential — eight reasons from the whole Bible.

1. **Love is what God is.** Every other virtue is something God does; love is something God is (1 John 4:8, 16). Scripture never says God is faith or God is hope. Before the world was, the Father loved the Son (John 17:24). Guzik: love "is an attribute of God." To lack it is to lack the family likeness.
2. **The whole Law hangs on it.** Both great commandments are love (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; Matt 22:37–40); "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom 13:10; Gal 5:14). A loveless gift is not merely unimpressive — it is lawless.
3. **It is how we were saved, and how we know we are.** "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John 4:10; Rom 5:8). Everything in vv4–7 was first done to us — God was patient (2 Pet 3:9), kind (Luke 6:35), kept no account of our wrongs (2 Cor 5:19). We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), and the one who says he loves God and hates his brother is a liar (1 John 4:20).
4. **It is Christ's mark on His church.** "By this all men will know that you are My disciples" (John 13:35) — not by gifts or doctrine. Corinth had every gift; Ephesus had sound doctrine and left its first love (Rev 2:4). Henry: "Blessed Jesus! how few of thy professed disciples are to be distinguished and marked out by this characteristic!"
5. **It is the only thing that builds.** "Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies" (8:1). Chapter 14 measures every gift by one test — does it build up the church? — and that test is love applied. Gifts are power; love is direction.
6. **It is the goal of all teaching.** "The goal of our instruction is love" (1 Tim 1:5); the love of Christ "surpasses knowledge" (Eph 3:19). The man who studies his way to all mysteries and not to love has stopped short of the destination.

7. **It is the Spirit's fruit, not my achievement.** The Spirit who gives the gifts (12:11) pours out God's love in our hearts (Rom 5:5), and love heads His fruit — followed by patience and kindness, the first two words of v4 (Gal 5:22). Manufactured love is the Corinthian imitation: performance.
8. **It is the one thing that lasts.** Prophecy, tongues and knowledge end; faith becomes sight; love walks through the door of eternity unchanged. Henry: "When faith and hope are at an end, true charity will burn for ever with the brightest flame."

Word study (Greek):

- **love — *agapē* (G26):** self-giving love of the will; nine times here; KJV "charity."
- **tongues — *glōssa* (G1100):** tongue, language; "of men and of angels" (v1).
- **noisy gong — *chalkos ēchōn* (G5475, G2278):** sounding bronze; resonance without content.
- **clanging cymbal — *kymbalon alalazon* (G2950, G214):** a struck bronze basin, only here; *alalazō* is loud wailing (Mark 5:38).
- **prophecy — *prophēteia* (G4394):** Spirit-given speech; "in part" (v9) and done away (v8).
- **mysteries — *mystērion* (G3466):** God's purposes once hidden, now revealed (2:7; 15:51).
- **knowledge — *gnōsis* (G1108):** the Corinthian boast (8:1); "done away" (v8).
- **nothing — *oudeis / outhen* (G3762):** "I am nothing" — the person, not the gift.
- **feed — *psōmizō* (G5595):** to dole out in morsels (Rom 12:20).
- **be burned / boast — *kaiō* (G2545) / *kauchaomai* (G2744):** NASB and KJV follow "burned"; many manuscripts and the SBLGNT read "that I may boast."
- **profits — *ōpheleō* (G5623):** to be of use, gain.
- **is patient — *makrothymeō* (G3114):** long-tempered with people; God's patience (2 Pet 3:9).
- **is kind — *chrēsteuomai* (G5541):** only here; active, useful goodness (Luke 6:35).
- **is jealous — *zēloō* (G2206):** the same verb as "earnestly desire" (12:31; 14:1) — zeal aimed wrong is envy.
- **brag — *perpereuomai* (G4068):** to parade oneself, only here.
- **is arrogant — *physioō* (G5448):** puffed up; six of its seven NT uses are in 1 Corinthians.
- **act unbecomingly — *aschēmoneō* (G807):** to act without proper form; only here and 7:36.
- **seek — *zēteō* (G2212):** "does not seek its own" — compare 10:24, 33.
- **is provoked — *paroxynō* (G3947):** to be sharpened, exasperated; Acts 17:16; our "paroxysm." (KJV adds "easily.")
- **take into account — *logizomai* (G3049):** to reckon, impute (Rom 4:3; 2 Cor 5:19); again in v11, "reason."
- **unrighteousness — *adikia* (G93):** wrongdoing; love takes no pleasure in it.
- **rejoices with — *synchairō* (G4796):** to rejoice together (12:26; Luke 15:6, 9).
- **truth — *alētheia* (G225):** love and truth are allies.
- **bears — *stegō* (G4722):** to roof over, cover, bear up (9:12; 1 Thess 3:1, 5).
- **believes — *pisteuō* (G4100):** extends trust; the charitable reading.
- **hopes — *elpizō* (G1679):** refuses to write anyone off.
- **endures — *hypomenō* (G5278):** to remain under; to hold one's ground.
- **fails — *piptō* (G4098):** to fall; love never falls.

- **done away — *katargeō* (G2673):** to make inoperative (vv8, 10, 11; 15:24, 26).
- **cease — *pauō* (G3973):** to stop, come to an end.
- **in part — *meros* (G3313):** *ek merous*, partial (vv9, 10, 12).
- **perfect — *teleios* (G5046):** complete, the goal reached.
- **child — *nēpios* (G3516):** an infant (3:1, "infants in Christ").
- **mirror — *esoptron* (G2072):** polished metal mirror (James 1:23).
- **dimly — *ainigma* (G135):** a riddle, only here (Num 12:8).
- **know fully — *epiginōskō* (G1921):** to know thoroughly; "just as I also have been fully known."
- **abide — *menō* (G3306):** to remain, dwell (John 15).
- **greatest — *meizōn* (G3187):** "greater," as in "the greater gifts" (12:31).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **This is a chapter for a church fight, not a wedding** — between 12:31 and 14:1.
2. **Love is subtracted, not compared** — gifts without love equal nothing, and "I am nothing."
3. **Not love versus gifts** (Guzik) — love is what the gifts are for.
4. **Agapē is a verb** — all fifteen descriptions are behaviors that can be commanded and obeyed.
5. **Every refusal names a Corinthian sin** — the portrait is a mirror held up to the letter.
6. **The ledger closes in both directions** — *logizomai*, as God does not count our trespasses (2 Cor 5:19).
7. **Longsuffering love does not keep a scorecard** (Sproul).
8. **Love stands with a finger on her lip** (Spurgeon) — it covers, and it never despairs.
9. **Gifts are for now; love is for ever** — "one language in heaven" (Henry).
10. **Love is greatest because God is love** — faith becomes sight, hope becomes possession, love goes on.

Cross-references: Gen 4:3–8; 37:11; Exod 33:11; Lev 19:18; Num 12:8; 20:2–13; Deut 6:5; Ps 36:9; Prov 10:12; 14:15; Matt 7:22–23; 17:20; 22:37–40; 27:18; Mark 5:38; 11:23; Luke 6:35; 15:6; John 3:16; 13:34–35; 15:4–13; 17:24; Acts 17:16; Rom 4:3; 5:5, 8; 12:10, 20; 13:8–10; 1 Cor 1:7, 11; 3:1–3; 4:6–7, 18–19; 5:2, 6; 6:7; 8:1; 9:12; 10:24; 11:21, 33; 12:26, 31; 14:1; 15:24–26; 16:14; 2 Cor 5:19; Gal 5:6, 14, 22; Eph 3:19; 5:2; Phil 2:3–4; Col 1:4–5; 3:14; 1 Thess 1:3; 5:8; 1 Tim 1:5; James 1:23; 1 Pet 1:21–22; 4:8; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 John 3:2; 4:7–12, 16, 19–20; Rev 2:4.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4

"Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,"

FIGURE · GIFTS MINUS LOVE

SUBTRACT LOVE FROM THE GREATEST GIFTS · 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1–3

"IF I …"	"BUT DO NOT HAVE"	THE VERDICT
speak with the tongues of men and of angels (v1)	– LOVE	**a noisy gong or** a clanging cymbal
have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries (v2)	– LOVE	**I am nothing** the person, not just the gift
know all knowledge; have all faith to remove mountains	– LOVE	
give all my possessions to feed the poor (v3)	– LOVE	**it profits me nothing** even the sacrifice gains nothing
surrender my body to be burned (v3)	– LOVE	

I **sound** empty (v1) · I **am** nothing (v2) · I **gain** nothing (v3) — gift × 0 = 0

Read each row left to right: Paul imagines every gift Corinth prized at full strength, takes away love, and the verdict grows from empty noise to "I am nothing" to "it profits me nothing."

Example to follow — Christ in the portrait. I read verses 4–7 with Jesus' name in place of "love," and every line is true: Jesus is patient, Jesus is kind, Jesus does not take into account a wrong suffered. Then I read it with my own name, and I usually don't make it past the first line. That is not where the gospel leaves me. Every one of those fifteen verbs was first done *to* me — He was patient with me, kind to me when I was ungrateful, and He closed the books on my wrongs. I love because He first loved me.

Sin to confess — gifts without love. I can teach on Thursday night, know the Greek, give my money and my time, and still be a noisy gong. I confess the times I have used what God gave me to be seen, to win an argument, or to feel above the man across the table. Paul doesn't say my gift shrinks without love; he says *I am nothing*. I would rather hear that from God now than at the end.

Command to obey — "Pursue love" (14:1). The chapter describes; the next verse commands. For the men I walk with — in recovery, in prison, in marriages hanging by a thread — love is not a feeling we wait for. It is patience with the man who relapsed again, kindness to the guard or the boss who is hard on us, refusing to brag about our

clean time, refusing to keep the ledger. This week I will name one person I have been keeping books on, and I will close the account before God and, if it is safe and wise, tell him.

Promise to trust — "then face to face." I see dimly now — my own heart, God's ways, the reasons for the pain. But I am already "fully known," and one day I will see Him face to face. So I will hold my opinions of other men loosely and my love for them tightly, because we are all looking in the same blurry mirror.

Truth to live in — love never fails. Everything I'm proud of in ministry is "in part" and will be done away. The only thing I am building that will still be standing face to face is love. That changes what I spend my Thursday nights on.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul takes the gifts Corinth bragged about and subtracts love. What would I list in verses 1–3 if Paul wrote them about me — and what is left if love is missing? (13:1–3; 12:31) *Not "my gift is diminished" but "I am nothing."*
2. Read verses 4–7 with your own name in place of "love." Where is the first line you cannot honestly say? (13:4–7) *Guzik's test: first Jesus' name (every line fits), then mine (the work begins).*
3. Whose wrong am I still carrying on the books? What would it take to close that account this week? (13:5; 2 Cor 5:19) *Logizomai — the same verb as God "not counting their trespasses."*
4. Do I believe the best about the men at this table — or save best-case thinking for my own motives? (13:7; 1 Pet 4:8) *Sproul: we reserve best-case analysis for ourselves; love extends it.*
5. Everything I am proud of in ministry is "in part." What am I building that will still be standing face to face? (13:8–12; 1 John 3:2) *Gifts are containers; love is the work itself.*
6. Why is love greater than faith and hope — and what does that say about what our church should be known for? (13:13; John 13:35; 1 John 4:8) *God is love; the world knows Christ's disciples by their love.*

Worship. God does not merely have love; He is love. Before there was a world to be patient with, the Father loved the Son. He was patient with me, kind to me, and kept no record of my wrongs because Christ carried them. Faith will become sight and hope will become possession, but His love — and ours for Him and for one another — will burn for ever.

Prayer. Father, You are love. Forgive me for every gift I have used without it — every word that was only noise. Pour Your love into my heart by Your Spirit, and make me patient and kind with the men You have given me. Help me close the books on the wrongs I keep, as You closed the books on mine in Christ. When I see dimly, keep me humble; and keep me, and these brothers, until we see You face to face and know as we are fully known. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see 1-Corinthians-13-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.

SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 14

Let All Things Be Done for Edification — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God gave His church gifts to build one another up, and love decides how every gift is used. When we gather, I bring what I have, I speak so my brother can understand and say Amen, and I let the God of peace set the order.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 14 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries.

3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.

4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

5 Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?

7 Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp?

8 For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?

9 So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

10 There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning.

11 If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me.

12 So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church.

13 Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.

15 What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

16 Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at

your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?

17 For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified.

18 I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;

19 however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.

21 In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME," says the Lord.

22 So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.

23 Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all;

25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

26 What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret;

28 but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.

29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.

30 But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent.

31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;

32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets;

33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

34 The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

35 If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.

36 Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?

37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

38 But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

39 Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.

40 But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "Pursue love" — Command / instruction
- **v1** "desire earnestly spiritual gifts" — Command / instruction
- **v2** "does not speak to men but to God" — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** "for edification and exhortation and consolation" — Promise / blessing
- **v4** "edifies himself" — Time / place / contrast
- **v8** "an indistinct sound" — Sin / warning
- **v9** "speaking into the air" — Sin / warning
- **v12** "seek to abound for the edification of the church" — Command / instruction
- **v13** "pray that he may interpret" — Command / instruction
- **v14** "my mind is unfruitful" — Sin / warning
- **v15** "I will pray with the mind also" — Command / instruction
- **v15** "I will sing with the mind also" — Command / instruction
- **v19** "five words with my mind" — Time / place / contrast
- **v19** "ten thousand words in a tongue" — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** "in evil be infants" — Command / instruction

- **v20** “in your thinking be mature” — Command / instruction
- **v21** “EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME” — Sin / warning
- **v22** “tongues are for a sign” — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** “will they not say that you are mad?” — Sin / warning
- **v25** “the secrets of his heart are disclosed” — Sin / warning
- **v25** “God is certainly among you” — God — His character & actions
- **v26** “Let all things be done for edification” — Command / instruction
- **v27** “each in turn” — Command / instruction
- **v29** “let the others pass judgment” — Command / instruction
- **v32** “the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets” — Time / place / contrast
- **v33** “God is not a God of confusion but of peace” — God — His character & actions
- **v37** “the Lord’s commandment” — God — His character & actions
- **v39** “desire earnestly to prophesy” — Command / instruction
- **v39** “do not forbid to speak in tongues” — Command / instruction
- **v40** “all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner” — Command / instruction
- **v3** “edification” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v4** “edifies” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v5** “edifying” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v17** “edified” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v28** “keep silent” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

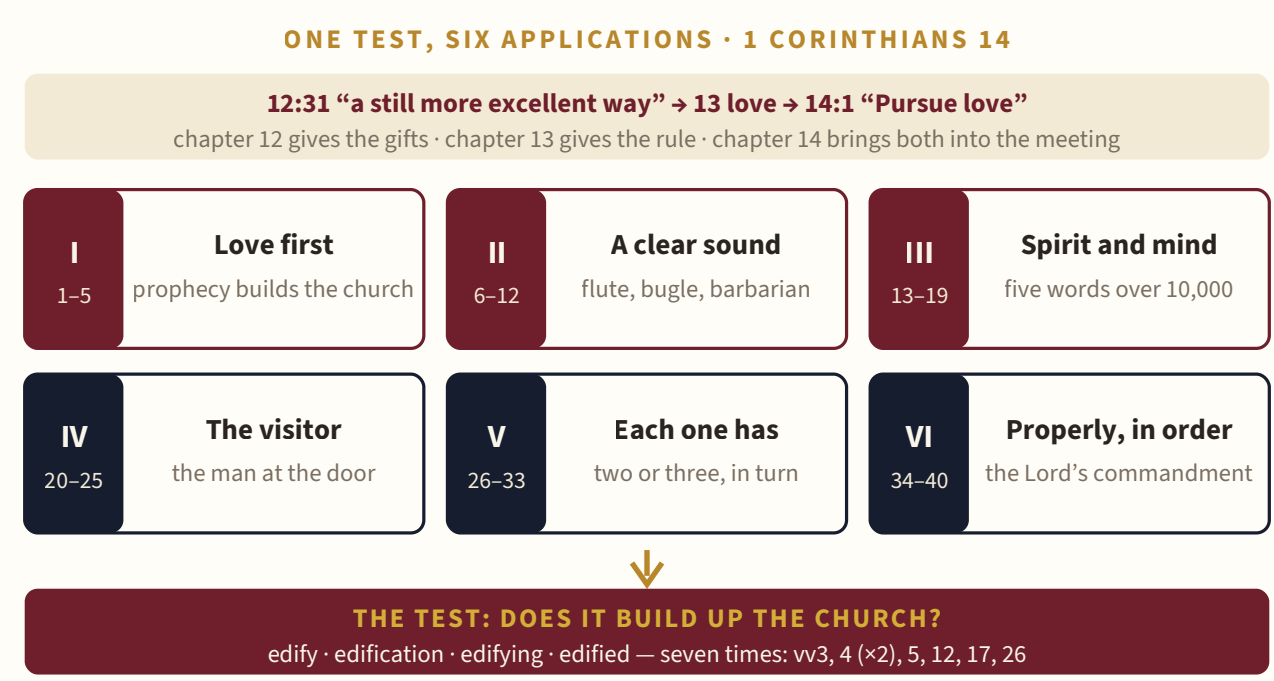
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 14:3

"But one who prophesies speaks to men ☆ for edification and exhortation and consolation."

FIGURE · ONE TEST, SIX APPLICATIONS



Follow the six movements in order and notice that every one of them answers the same question Paul asks seven times: does it build up the church?

Setting. 1 Corinthians 14 finishes the section on spiritual gifts that began at 12:1 ("Now concerning spiritual gifts"). Chapter 12 gave the body and its members; chapter 13 gave love as "a still more excellent way" (12:31); chapter 14 takes both into the Corinthian gathering, where uninterpreted tongues, prophets speaking over one another and disorder had turned worship into display. Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8).

Structure:

- vv1–5 — **love first, then the gift that builds:** pursue love, desire gifts, especially prophecy. The tongue-speaker speaks to God and edifies himself; the prophet speaks to men "for edification and exhortation and consolation" and edifies the church — unless the tongue is interpreted.
- vv6–12 — **a clear sound:** what will I profit you without revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching? Flute and harp, the bugle, an unknown language — sound without meaning; "you will be speaking into the air." So "seek to abound for the edification of the church."

- vv13–19 — **spirit and mind:** pray to interpret; "my mind is unfruitful"; "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also"; the ungifted cannot say the Amen; Paul speaks in tongues more than all, yet in church prefers five words with his mind to ten thousand in a tongue.
- vv20–25 — **the visitor:** be infants in evil, mature in thinking; Isaiah 28:11–12 quoted; tongues a sign to unbelievers, prophecy to believers; an outsider hearing all speak in tongues says "you are mad"; hearing prophecy, he is convicted, his secrets disclosed, and he worships: "God is certainly among you."
- vv26–33 — **each one has:** a psalm, teaching, revelation, tongue, interpretation — all for edification. Tongues: two or three, in turn, interpreted, else silent. Prophets: two or three, others judge, the first yields, all one by one. The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; God is a God of peace.
- vv34–40 — **in order:** the women to keep silent in the churches, ask husbands at home; did the word of God start with you? the Lord's commandment; desire to prophesy, do not forbid tongues; all things properly and in order.

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95, counted in the text):

- "tongue(s)" ×16 — vv2, 4, 5 (×2), 6, 9, 13, 14, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 39 (v9 is the physical tongue; v21 is Isaiah's "strange tongues").
- "speak / speaks / speaking / spoken" ×23 — vv2 (×3), 3, 4, 5, 6 (×2), 9 (×2), 11 (×2), 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 28, 29, 34, 35, 39.
- "prophesy / prophesies / prophecy / prophet(s)" ×14 — vv1, 3, 4, 5 (×2), 6, 22, 24, 29, 31, 32 (×2), 37, 39.
- "all" ×12 — vv5, 18, 23, 24 (×3), 26, 31 (×3), 33, 40.
- "church(es)" ×9 — vv4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33, 34, 35.
- "God" ×8 — vv2, 18, 25 (×2), 28, 33 (×2), 36.
- "edify / edification / edifying / edified" ×7 — vv3, 4 (×2), 5, 12, 17, 26.
- "spirit(s)" ×6 — vv2, 14, 15 (×2), 16, 32; "interpret(s) / interpretation / interpreter" ×5 — vv5, 13, 26, 27, 28; "pray / prays" ×5 — vv13, 14 (×2), 15 (×2).
- "mind" ×4 — vv14, 15 (×2), 19; "unbeliever(s)" ×4 — vv22 (×2), 23, 24; "ungifted" ×3 — vv16, 23, 24; "keep silent" ×3 — vv28, 30, 34; "revelation" ×3 — vv6, 26, 30; "brethren" ×3 — vv6, 26, 39; "What is the outcome then?" ×2 — vv15, 26.

Commands: pursue love; desire earnestly spiritual gifts (vv1, 39); seek to abound for edification (v12); pray to interpret (v13); do not be children in your thinking (v20); let all things be done for edification (v26); two or three, in turn, interpreted (vv27–29); keep silent (vv28, 30, 34); let him recognize the Lord's commandment (v37); do not forbid to speak in tongues (v39); all things properly and in order (v40).

Contrasts: to God / to men (vv2–3); edifies himself / edifies the church (v4); distinct / indistinct (vv7–8); spirit / mind (vv14–15); five words / ten thousand (v19); children / mature, infants in evil (v20); "you are mad" / "God is certainly among you" (vv23–25); confusion / peace (v33); do not forbid / properly and in order (vv39–40).

Shape of the chapter: one test applied six times — to the gifts, to sound, to prayer, to the visitor, to the order of the meeting, and to the authority of the apostle's word. It opens with love (v1), closes with order (v40), and turns on v26.

Chapter theme (my words): Love takes every gift into the room and asks, "Will this build my brother?" So the meeting must be understood, taken in turn, weighed by the Word, and shaped like the God of peace.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 14:15

"What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also."

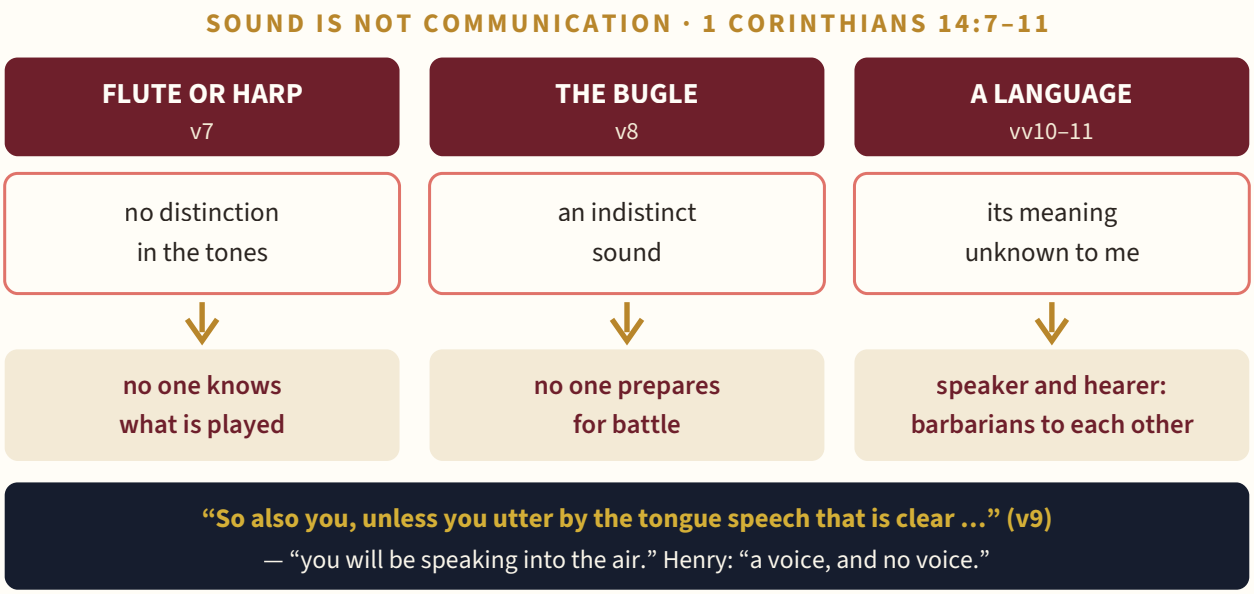
FIGURE · A TONGUE AND PROPHECY IN THE MEETING

1 COR 14:1–31	A TONGUE, UNINTERPRETED	PROPHECY
SPEAKS TO	God, not men (v2)	men (v3)
WHO UNDERSTANDS	no one — "mysteries" (v2)	the hearers: edification, exhortation, consolation (v3)
WHO IS BUILT UP	himself (v4)	the church (v4)
THE MIND	"my mind is unfruitful" (v14)	"that I may instruct others also" (v19)
THE OUTSIDER	"will they not say that you are mad?" (v23)	convicted, falls on his face: "God is certainly among you" (v25)
IN THE MEETING	only with an interpreter; else silent (vv5, 13, 27–28)	two or three, in turn; the others judge (vv29–31)

Not good against bad, but good against better — in the meeting (v19: "in the church").

Read across each row: Paul does not call one gift good and the other bad; he asks what each does for the people in the room.

FIGURE · THREE SOUNDS WITHOUT MEANING



Each of Paul's pictures fails the same way — the sound is made but nothing is communicated — and verse 9 applies all three to the church.

Why does chapter 14 begin with "Pursue love"? Because every rule in it is chapter 13 applied. Love "does not seek its own" (13:5), and a gift that builds only its owner is seeking its own. Guzik: the Corinthians "made a godly desire into an obsessive pursuit." Henry: gifts are to be desired "in subordination to grace and charity." Sproul, in *What Is Love?*, says Corinth had "the spectacular gifts of the Spirit, but there was no love there."

Why is prophecy "greater" (v5)? Not because it is holier but because it builds the church — the hearers understand it. Sproul: "he is comparing the good and the better, not the good and the bad." Notice the exception Paul writes in: "unless he interprets." An interpreted tongue builds the church too.

What were tongues — and do they continue? (contested). Our teachers differ, and each should be heard in his own terms. *Guzik* holds that tongues are addressed to God, not to men (v2), that they may sound like nonsense "because it was never intended for human ears," that they edify the speaker as a devotional prayer gift, and that they continue today under Paul's rules. *Sproul* sought the gift and prayed in tongues himself, but "found no great edification from it," saw interpretations and prophecies teach false doctrine and fail, and concluded that the modern practice "is not a supernatural event and is not the same as what was experienced in the early church" — while still delighting in his charismatic friends' love for prayer. *Henry* takes tongues as real foreign languages, given "for the conviction and conversion of infidels" and necessary to spread the gospel, and so out of place in an assembly of believers unless interpreted. Spurgeon's view of the gift was not found in the sources for this study. All of them agree Paul says "do not forbid" (v39) and "all things … properly and in an orderly manner" (v40).

Spirit and mind (vv14–19). In a tongue "my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful." Paul's answer is both: pray and sing with the spirit and with the mind also. Guzik thanks God for a way to relate to Him beyond intellect, while placing Paul's tongues in his private devotion. Henry: "Public worship should be performed so as to be understood." Sproul: "the way to the heart is through the mind." Every teacher agrees on the meeting: five words with the mind over ten thousand in a tongue.

Tongues "for a sign … to unbelievers" (vv21–22). Guzik calls this "one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament," since vv23–25 seem to say the reverse. Options he lists: tongues as a sign of judgment (Isaiah 28 — the Assyrian tongue that came on a people who would not listen), or J.B. Phillips' view that a scribe reversed the word order. His rule: read the hard by the plain — whatever v22 means, tongues do not draw the unbeliever to God. Henry: as the Corinthians used them, tongues were "rather a token of judgment from God than mercy," while the gift itself was meant to convince outsiders.

The visitor (vv23–25). Paul measures the meeting by the man at the door. Henry: an outsider hearing confusion would think them "a parcel of wild fanatics," but plain truth "has a marvellous aptness to awaken the conscience." Sproul warns the other way too: the motive to reach the lost is righteous, but we must not "tailor our strategy and our method to their tastes and their preferences." The outsider needs understandable truth, not entertainment.

"The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets" (v32). No gift is uncontrollable. Guzik: "The Holy Spirit does not take control like a demon does in demonic possession!" Henry: "The man inspired by the Spirit of God may still act the man." Henry also holds a minority reading of v30 — that the newly inspired prophet waits for the first to finish.

Judging prophecy (v29). "Let the others pass judgment." Guzik: judge by Scripture and by the agreement of the leaders present; never let prophecy eclipse the Word, and don't brand a sincere brother a false prophet. Sproul's experience is the warning: "The more interpretations of tongues-speaking and prophecies I heard, the more false doctrine and false prophecy I heard." Henry: the true prophets discern pretenders.

"The women are to keep silent in the churches" (vv34–35) — contested. The question is how this fits 11:5, where women pray and prophesy. *Guzik:* because Paul assumed that right, "keep silent" here probably means women are not to join in judging prophecy (which he reserves to the church's male leadership) and not to disrupt the meeting with questions; citing Redpath, *laleō* here is talk, questioning, chatter — "It has nothing to do with prophecy or prayer." *Henry:* the silence is broad — "they must not ask questions" in the church, and they must not "set up for teachers" (1 Tim 2:11–12); he notes 11:5 and that some allow speech on extraordinary occasions, since "praying, and uttering hymns inspired, were not teaching"; and he lays a matching duty on husbands to be able to answer at home. No treatment of these verses by Sproul or Spurgeon was found for this study. "As the Law also says" (v34) is not tied by Paul to a single verse, and readers differ on what he means. I hold my convictions on this humbly and let the text, read with 11:5, speak.

The Lord's commandment (vv36–38). Paul claims Christ's authority for what he writes, and makes it the test of every "prophet or spiritual" man. Henry: "The Spirit of Christ can never contradict itself." Guzik: if we are really spiritual, "we will stick to the Word of God." Sproul: "the Spirit never works against the Word but always with it and through it."

Word study (Greek):

- **pursue — *diōkō* (G1377):** to chase, hunt down; the same verb as "persecute" (15:9) and "press on" (Phil 3:12).
- **desire earnestly — *zēloō* (G2206):** burn with zeal; what love does not do selfishly (13:4); commanded toward gifts (vv1, 39).
- **zealous — *zēlōtēs* (G2207):** a zealot; Corinth's zeal aimed at edification (v12).
- **spiritual gifts / spiritual — *pneumatikos* (G4152):** "spiritual things," the word of 12:1, 14:1 and 14:37.
- **prophesy — *prophēteuō* (G4395):** speak forth what God gives; with the noun *prophēteia* (G4394) and *prophētēs* (G4396), fourteen times in the chapter.
- **tongue — *glōssa* (G1100):** tongue, language; sixteen times in the NASB.

- **mysteries — *mystērion* (G3466):** things hidden from the hearer, known to God (v2).
- **edification / edify — *oikodomē* (G3619) / *oikodomeō* (G3618):** house-building; seven times; the test of the chapter.
- **exhortation — *paraklēsis* (G3874):** a calling alongside; verb *parakaleō* (G3870) in v31.
- **consolation — *paramythia* (G3889):** steadying comfort; only here in the NT.
- **interpret — *diermēneuō* (G1329):** carry the meaning through (Luke 24:27); interpreter *diermēneutēs* (G1328), interpretation *hermēneia* (G2058).
- **distinction — *diastolē* (G1293):** the gaps between the notes (v7).
- **indistinct — *adēlos* (G82):** not plain; only here and Luke 11:44.
- **bugle — *salpinx* (G4536):** the war trumpet; also the last trumpet (15:52).
- **clear — *eusēmos* (G2154):** well-marked, easily recognized; only here in the NT.
- **air — *aēr* (G109):** speaking into the air (v9; compare 9:26).
- **without meaning — *aphōnos* (G880):** voiceless; Henry's "a voice, and no voice."
- **barbarian — *barbaros* (G915):** foreigner whose speech is unintelligible (Acts 28:2; Rom 1:14).
- **mind — *nous* (G3563):** the understanding; four times (vv14, 15, 19).
- **unfruitful — *akarpos* (G175):** fruitless (Matt 13:22).
- **sing — *psallō* (G5567):** sing praise; root of *psalmos*, psalm (G5568, v26).
- **ungifted — *idiōtēs* (G2399):** the ordinary person without the gift; vv16, 23, 24 (Acts 4:13).
- **Amen — *amēn* (G281):** "so be it," the congregation's response (v16).
- **thinking — *phrēn* (G5424):** the judging mind; only in v20 (twice).
- **be infants — *nēpiazō* (G3515):** only here in the NT; be a baby in evil.
- **mature — *teleios* (G5046):** full-grown (2:6; 13:10).
- **evil — *kakia* (G2549):** malice, bad will.
- **strange tongues — *heteroglōssos* (G2084):** "other-tongued"; only here (Isa 28:11).
- **sign — *sēmeion* (G4592):** a pointer, an indicator (v22).
- **mad — *mainomai* (G3105):** out of one's mind (Acts 26:24).
- **convicted — *elenchō* (G1651):** exposed and convicted (John 16:8).
- **called to account — *anakrinō* (G350):** examined closely (2:15).
- **secrets — *kryptos* (G2927):** hidden things brought to light (4:5).
- **pass judgment — *diakrinō* (G1252):** sift, discern (11:29; 12:10).
- **keep silent — *sigaō* (G4601):** three times — vv28, 30, 34.
- **subject — *hypotassō* (G5293):** arrange under; vv32 and 34.
- **confusion — *akatastasia* (G181):** disorder, unrest (James 3:16).
- **peace — *eirēnē* (G1515):** wholeness; God's character (v33).
- **improper — *aischros* (G150):** shameful by the standards of the setting (v35; 11:6).
- **commandment — *entolē* (G1785):** the Lord's command (v37).
- **is not recognized — *agnoeō* (G50):** NASB passive "he is not recognized"; KJV "let him be ignorant" (v38).
- **forbid — *kōlyō* (G2967):** hinder; Jesus' "Do not hinder him" (Mark 9:39).

- **properly — *euschēmonōs* (G2156):** becomingly (Rom 13:13; 1 Thess 4:12).
- **orderly manner — *taxis* (G5010):** rank, order, sequence (Col 2:5).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The chapter begins with love** — every rule that follows is love applied to a meeting (14:1).
2. **Edification is the test** — seven times in the NASB; which gift builds the house?
3. **Paul regulates; he does not forbid** (vv5, 18, 39). Sproul: "he does not outlaw their use."
4. **Sound is not communication** — flute, bugle, barbarian; "a voice, and no voice" (Henry).
5. **The mind is never bypassed in the meeting** — with the spirit and with the mind also (v15).
6. **Five words over ten thousand** — Paul came to bless, not to be blessed (Guzik).
7. **Paul watches the door** — the goal is "God is certainly among you" (v25).
8. **The Spirit does not overwhelm** — the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets (v32).
9. **Every word is weighed** — let the others pass judgment (v29), by the written Word.
10. **Freedom and order belong together** — do not forbid; properly and in order (vv39–40).

Cross-references: Gen 3:16; Num 10:9; 11:29; Deut 27:15–26; 28:49; Neh 8:6; Isa 28:9–12; Joel 2:28; Matt 13:22; 22:37; Mark 9:38–39; Luke 11:11–13; 24:27; John 14:16; 16:8; Acts 2:4–11; 4:13; 10:46; 19:6; 26:24; 28:2; Rom 1:14; 12:2; 14:19; 15:2; 1 Cor 2:6, 15; 3:1, 9; 8:1; 10:23; 11:5–6, 29; 12:3, 7, 10, 31; 13:1, 4–5, 10–13; 15:52; 2 Cor 11:6; Gal 1:8; Eph 2:20; 4:12, 16, 29; 5:19; Phil 3:12–14; Col 2:5; 3:16; 1 Thess 4:12, 16; 5:11, 19–21; 1 Tim 2:11–12; Heb 5:14; 10:25; James 3:16; 1 John 4:1.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 14:40

"But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."

FIGURE · THE ORDERLY MEETING

"WHEN YOU ASSEMBLE, EACH ONE HAS …" · 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26–33

a psalm | a teaching | a revelation | a tongue | an interpretation

"Let all things be done for edification" (v26)

TONGUES · vv27–28	PROPHETS · vv29–31
two, or at the most three	two or three
each in turn	the others pass judgment
one must interpret	revelation to another →
no interpreter → keep silent;	the first keeps silent
speak to himself and to God	all, one by one

WHY THE RULES — THREE REASONS IN THE TEXT

The goal: "so that all may learn and all may be exhorted" (v31)

The gift: "the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets" (v32)

The God: "not a God of confusion but of peace" — in all the churches (v33)

Every member brings something; the limits on tongues and prophecy serve the goal, and the goal reflects the character of God.

Command to obey — "Let all things be done for edification." Paul says "each one has," and I don't get to come to the table only to receive. On Thursday nights I want to walk in asking God for one man to build — one word, one prayer, one question that helps a brother stand. If I've got nothing that builds, Spurgeon's line is for me: better to hold my tongue.

Sin to confess — spiritual self-indulgence. Guzik quotes Spurgeon: "Spiritual self indulgence is a monstrous evil; yet we see it all around." I've done it — measured a meeting by how it made me feel, used a story or a testimony to look good, talked over a brother because I had something "better." The Corinthians had big gifts and little love. I confess the times my zeal was about me.

Command to obey — pray with the mind also. Some of the men I walk with pray like they're reading a script; some don't pray out loud at all because they think they don't have the words. Paul wants prayer the man next to me can

follow and say Amen to. Five plain words — "Lord, help my brother tonight" — are worth more in the room than ten thousand that impress.

Example to follow — the visitor at the door. Paul keeps asking how the meeting sounds to the man who just walked in. In recovery and in the prison chapel that man is always there: guarded, skeptical, sure church is not for him. I want what he hears to be clear enough to reach the secrets of his heart — not noise, not insider talk, but the truth about sin and Jesus, plain enough that he says, "God is certainly among you."

Truth to live in — "the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets." I can't say "I couldn't help it." The Spirit does not make a man lose control; He gives self-control (Gal 5:23). That covers my temper, my tongue, my urges. Disorder is not a sign of the Spirit; peace is, because that's what my God is like.

Humility on hard texts. Good, godly teachers read tongues today and verses 34–35 differently. I want to hold my convictions, open my Bible with the man who disagrees, weigh every word by the Lord's commandment, and keep the peace — because "God is not a God of confusion but of peace."

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. When I bring something to our Thursday table — a word, a prayer, a story — do I first ask whom it will build? (14:1, 26; 13:5) *"Let all things be done for edification." Love does not seek its own (13:5).*
2. Where am I zealous for God in a way that is really about being seen? How would I aim that zeal at building the house? (14:12; 8:1) *Paul does not quench the Corinthians' zeal; he aims it (v12).*
3. Do I pray with my mind engaged, or on autopilot? What would it look like this week to say, "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also"? (14:14–15; Rom 12:2) *The mind unfruitful is the problem Paul names (v14).*
4. Think of the last man who walked into our group for the first time. What did he understand — and what would it take for him to say "God is certainly among you"? (14:23–25) *Plain truth reaches the secrets of the heart (vv24–25).*
5. Where am I tempted to say "I couldn't help it" — in anger, in talk, in an outburst I call spiritual? (14:32–33; Gal 5:22–23) *"The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets." No gift, and no Spirit-led man, is out of control.*
6. Our teachers disagree about tongues today and about verses 34–35. How do I hold a conviction on a disputed text and still keep peace with a brother who reads it differently? (14:33, 37–40) *Weigh every word by Scripture, love the brother, and remember the God of peace (v33).*

Worship. My God is not a God of confusion but of peace. He gave His church gifts so that we would build one another, He gave us minds to understand and say Amen, and He is so present among His people that an outsider can fall on his face and say it out loud: God is certainly among you.

Prayer. Father, teach me to pursue love before I reach for anything else. Make me a man who builds the brother beside me. Let my words be clear, my prayers honest, my zeal aimed at Your house and not at my name. Give me self-control by Your Spirit, humility on the hard texts, and a heart that wants the man at the door to meet You. Let all things in our gatherings be done properly and in order, for the glory of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 15

Your Toil Is Not in Vain — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Christ died for my sins, was buried, was raised, and was seen — and because He lives, I will be raised and changed. That is why nothing I do for Him, however small or unseen, is ever wasted.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 15 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

11 Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;

14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.

16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;

17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men ⚠ most to be pitied.

20 △ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the ⟲ first fruits of those who are asleep.

21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also ☆ in Christ all will be made alive.

23 But ◷ each in his own order: Christ the ⟲ first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

25 For △ He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

26 ☆ The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.

28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, △ so that God may be all in all.

29 Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not ⟲ raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?

30 Why are we also in danger every hour?

31 I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, ◷ I die daily.

32 If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not ⟲ raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.

33 Do not be deceived: "⚠ Bad company corrupts good morals."

34 ⍗ Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

35 But someone will say, "How are the dead ⟲ raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"

36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;

37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

38 But △ God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.

40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, ☆ it is raised an imperishable body;

43 it is sown in dishonor, ☆ it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, ☆ it is raised in power;

44 it is sown a natural body, ☆ it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." △ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.

49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, ☆ we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but ☆ we will all be changed,

52 in a moment, ◷ in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be ⟲ raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.

55 “O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “the gospel which I preached to you” — God — His character & actions
- **v2** “hold fast the word” — Command / instruction
- **v3** “as of first importance” — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** “Christ died for our sins” — God — His character & actions
- **v4** “He was raised on the third day” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “more than five hundred brethren at one time” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “by the grace of God I am what I am” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “our preaching is vain” — Sin / warning
- **v17** “you are still in your sins” — Sin / warning
- **v19** “most to be pitied” — Sin / warning
- **v20** “But now Christ has been raised from the dead” — God — His character & actions
- **v22** “in Christ all will be made alive” — Promise / blessing
- **v23** “each in his own order” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “He must reign” — God — His character & actions
- **v26** “The last enemy that will be abolished is death” — Promise / blessing
- **v28** “so that God may be all in all” — God — His character & actions
- **v28** “that God may be all in all” — God — His character & actions
- **v31** “I die daily” — Time / place / contrast
- **v33** “Bad company corrupts good morals” — Sin / warning
- **v34** “Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning” — Command / instruction
- **v38** “God gives it a body just as He wished” — God — His character & actions
- **v42** “it is raised an imperishable body” — Promise / blessing
- **v43** “it is raised in glory” — Promise / blessing
- **v43** “it is raised in power” — Promise / blessing
- **v44** “it is raised a spiritual body” — Promise / blessing
- **v45** “The last Adam became a life-giving spirit” — God — His character & actions
- **v49** “we will also bear the image of the heavenly” — Promise / blessing
- **v51** “we will all be changed” — Promise / blessing
- **v52** “in the twinkling of an eye” — Time / place / contrast
- **v54** “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory” — Promise / blessing
- **v56** “The sting of death is sin” — Sin / warning
- **v57** “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory” — God — His character & actions
- **v58** “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” — Command / instruction
- **v58** “your toil is not in vain in the Lord” — Promise / blessing
- **v3** “according to the Scriptures” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** “first fruits” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v4** “raised” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v2** “vain” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,"

FIGURE · SEVEN "IF"S AND THEIR ANSWERS

IF THE DEAD ARE NOT RAISED … (1 Corinthians 15:12–19)		BUT NOW CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED (the rest of the chapter answers each link)	
1 Christ has not been raised	vv13, 16	→ Christ has been raised	v20
2 our preaching is vain	v14	→ so we preach and so you believed	v11
3 your faith also is vain	v14	→ the gospel … in which also you stand	v1
4 we are false witnesses of God	v15	→ He appeared … to more than five hundred	vv5–8
5 you are still in your sins	v17	→ Christ died for our sins	v3
6 the dead in Christ have perished	v18	→ the first fruits of those who are asleep	v20
7 of all men most to be pitied	v19	→ your toil is not in vain in the Lord	v58

Pull out one fact — the empty tomb — and every link falls. Put it back, and every link holds.

Read each row left to right: every consequence Paul draws in vv. 12–19 if Christ is still dead is answered somewhere else in the chapter by the fact that He is not.

Setting. Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8) to a church that has believed the gospel and is still standing in it (v1), but some of whom say "there is no resurrection of the dead" (v12). They did not deny Jesus' resurrection — "so we preach and so you believed" (v11). They denied ours. Chapter 15 is the longest chapter in the letter, and Paul saved it for last.

Structure:

- vv1–11 — **the gospel received and seen:** received, stood in, saved by, if held fast (vv1–2). Of first importance: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (vv3–4). He appeared to Cephas, the twelve, more than five hundred at one time (most still alive),

James, all the apostles, and last of all to Paul "as to one untimely born" (vv5–8). "By the grace of God I am what I am" (vv9–10). The same message from every apostle (v11).

- vv12–19 — **the nightmare if it is false:** no resurrection of the dead → Christ not raised → preaching vain, faith vain, false witnesses, faith worthless, still in your sins, the dead in Christ perished → "of all men most to be pitied."
- vv20–28 — **"But now":** Christ raised, the first fruits of those asleep (v20). By a man death, by a man the resurrection; in Adam all die, in Christ all made alive (vv21–22). Each in his own order: Christ, then those who are His at His coming, then the end — the kingdom handed to the Father, every rule abolished, He must reign until all enemies are under His feet, death the last enemy, God all in all (vv23–28).
- vv29–34 — **why risk anything?** Those baptized for the dead (v29), danger every hour, "I die daily," wild beasts at Ephesus (vv30–32). If the dead are not raised, "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (v32). Do not be deceived; bad company; sober up; stop sinning; some have no knowledge of God (vv33–34).
- vv35–49 — **what kind of body?** The question (v35). The seed: it must die; you sow a bare grain; God gives it a body (vv36–38). Many kinds of flesh and glory (vv39–41). Four contrasts: perishable/imperishable, dishonor/glory, weakness/power, natural/spiritual (vv42–44). Two Adams: a living soul / a life-giving spirit; earthy / heavenly; we have borne one image and will bear the other (vv45–49).
- vv50–58 — **the mystery and the victory:** flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom (v50). We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet (vv51–52). The perishable puts on the imperishable, the mortal immortality (v53). "Death is swallowed up in victory," Isaiah and Hosea's taunt, the sting and the power, thanks to God who gives us the victory (vv54–57). Therefore — steadfast, immovable, abounding; your toil is not in vain in the Lord (v58).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "raised" ×18 (+ "raise" v15 = 19) — vv4, 12, 13, 14, 15 (×2), 16 (×2), 17, 20, 29, 32, 35, 42, 43 (×2), 44, 52. The chapter's key word.
- "Christ" ×15 — vv3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 (×2), 31, 57.
- "dead" ×13 — vv12 (×2), 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 29 (×2), 32, 35, 42, 52.
- "body / bodies" ×12 — vv35, 37, 38 (×2), 40 (×2), 42 (×2), 44 (×4).
- "if" ×12 — vv2, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 29, 32 (×2), 44; seven of them in vv12–19.
- "God" ×11 — vv9, 10 (×2), 15 (×2), 24, 28, 34, 38, 50, 57.
- "sow / sown" ×7 — vv36, 37 (×2), 42, 43 (×2), 44; "glory" ×7 — vv40 (×2), 41 (×4), 43.
- "death" ×6 — vv21, 26, 54, 55 (×2), 56; plus "die / dies / died" ×5 — vv3, 22, 31, 32, 36.
- "subjection / subjected" ×6 — vv27 (×3), 28 (×3).
- "flesh" ×6 — vv39 (×5), 50.
- "vain" ×5 — vv2, 10, 14 (×2), 58 (and "worthless" v17).
- "preach / preached / preaching" ×5 — vv1, 2, 11, 12, 14; "brethren" ×5 — vv1, 6, 31, 50, 58.
- "imperishable" ×5 — vv42, 50, 52, 53, 54; "perishable" ×4 — vv42, 50, 53, 54.
- "heavenly" ×5 — vv40 (×2), 48 (×2), 49; "earthy" ×4 — vv47, 48 (×2), 49.
- "appeared" ×4 — vv5, 6, 7, 8; "asleep / sleep" ×4 — vv6, 18, 20, 51; "spiritual" ×4 — vv44 (×2), 46 (×2).
- "victory" ×3 — vv54, 55, 57; "Adam" ×3 — vv22, 45 (×2); "grace" ×3 — v10.

- "according to the Scriptures" ×2 — vv3, 4; "first fruits" ×2 — vv20, 23; "sting" ×2 — vv55, 56; "changed" ×2 — vv51, 52; "image" ×2 — v49.

Contrasts: received and stand (v1) ⟷ believed in vain (v2). If not raised (vv12–19) ⟷ "But now" (v20). In Adam all die ⟷ in Christ all made alive (v22). Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die (v32) ⟷ become sober-minded and stop sinning (v34). Sown perishable / dishonor / weakness / natural ⟷ raised imperishable / glory / power / spiritual (vv42–44). The first man, a living soul, from the earth ⟷ the last Adam, a life-giving spirit, from heaven (vv45–47). The image of the earthy ⟷ the image of the heavenly (v49). Death swallowing ⟷ death swallowed up (v54). Vain (v14) ⟷ not in vain (v58).

Shape of the chapter: history (1–11), logic (12–19), sequence (20–28), life (29–34), nature (35–49), victory and duty (50–58). It begins with what Paul delivered and ends with what we are to do, and the hinge is two words: "But now" (v20).

Chapter theme (my words): The gospel stands or falls on an empty tomb. Because Christ has been raised as the first fruits, everyone who belongs to Him will be raised and changed, death will be swallowed up, and every bit of work done in the Lord will prove to have been worth it.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20

"△ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the ☆ first fruits of those who are asleep."

FIGURE · EACH IN HIS OWN ORDER

"EACH IN HIS OWN ORDER" · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:23–28

1 · CHRIST THE FIRST FRUITS	2 · AFTER THAT THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S	3 · THEN COMES THE END
raised on the third day "the first fruits of those who are asleep" (v20)	raised "at His coming" (v23; parousia — the King's arrival)	He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father (v24)

"HE MUST REIGN UNTIL HE HAS PUT ALL HIS ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET" (v25)

Psalm 110:1 — the King reigns now, from the right hand, until the last foe falls

all rule (v24) · all authority (v24) · all power (v24) · death, the last (v26)

"… SO THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL" (v28)

Readers differ on the gap between 2 and 3: Guzik sees Christ's thousand-year reign (Rev 20); Henry reads His present mediatorial reign running on to the end. All agree on the order.

Christ first, then His people at His coming, then the end — every enemy under His feet, death last, and God all in all.

FIGURE · TWO MEN, TWO IMAGES

1 COR 15	THE FIRST MAN, ADAM	THE LAST ADAM
WHAT HE BROUGHT	by a man came death (v21)	by a man … the resurrection of the dead (v21)
THOSE IN HIM	in Adam all die (v22)	in Christ all will be made alive (v22)
WHAT HE BECAME	a living soul — received life (v45; Genesis 2:7)	a life-giving spirit — gives life (v45)
WHERE HE IS FROM	from the earth, earthy (v47)	from heaven (v47)
HIS IMAGE IN US	we have borne the image of the earthy (v49)	we will also bear the image of the heavenly (v49)

Paul sets the first man and the last Adam side by side twice (vv. 21–22, 45–49): what each brought, what each became, and whose image we bear.

What were the Corinthians denying? Not Jesus' resurrection (v11) but the resurrection of believers. Guzik: they "did not deny Jesus' resurrection; they denied our resurrection," shaped by Greek philosophy (a pure spirit is better than a body) or by Sadducee thinking. Henry thinks they were "perfect Sadducees" who took death for the end of the whole man — which is why Paul can say the dead in Christ "have perished" (v18). Paul's point: you cannot hold the one and deny the other. If the dead are not raised, "not even Christ has been raised" (vv13, 16).

The gospel as fact (vv1–8). Four "that" clauses — died, buried, raised, appeared. Guzik: "At the core of the gospel are things that happened – actual, real, historical events." Sproul: our faith "does not rest on inferences drawn from a missing body," but on the testimony of those who saw, touched, ate and spoke with Him. Spurgeon: preachers "are not makers and inventors; we are repeaters." "Most of whom remain until now" (v6) is an invitation to ask them.

Why the burial and the third day matter. The burial proves the death (Guzik). "The third day" is Jewish reckoning — parts of Friday, Saturday and Sunday — and "according to the Scriptures" points to Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 53, Hosea 6:2, Jonah and Isaac (Henry and Guzik). The perfect tense *egēgertai* says He was raised and remains raised.

Paul's "untimely birth" (vv8–10). *Ektrōma* is a stillbirth — Paul's harshest word for himself, perhaps picking up the Corinthians' own contempt. He calls himself the least of the apostles because he persecuted the church; but "by the grace of God I am what I am." Guzik: "The grace that saves us also changes us," and puts us to work: "God does it and we do it."

The chain of consequences (vv12–19). If Christ is not raised: preaching empty, faith empty, apostles false witnesses, sins unpaid, the dead lost, believers most pitiable (see the figure). Guzik: "if Jesus is not risen, He is

unable to save." Sproul: "take away the resurrection, you take away Christianity." Henry: "the gospel is a jest; it is chaff and emptiness." Christianity is not a moral philosophy that would survive the loss of its founding event.

First fruits and the two heads (vv20–23). The first sheaf (Lev 23:10–11) pledged the whole harvest; Jesus rose on that very feast day (Guzik). Lazarus was revived and died again; Jesus is the first to rise never to die. "In Adam all die … in Christ all will be made alive" — both Guzik and Henry read the second "all" as those in Christ: all will be raised (John 5:29), but only those in Christ to life.

The end and the reign (vv24–28) — where teachers differ. Guzik reads "He must reign" as the thousand-year reign of Revelation 20, with death abolished after it. Henry reads Christ's present mediatorial kingdom, given after His ascension and handed back when every enemy is down — no gap. Sproul: Christ reigns now, but "Christ has rebellious subjects." All agree on the order (Christ, then His people at His coming, then the end), on death as a real enemy, and that the Son's subjection (v28) is His role as Mediator, not a lesser nature (Guzik: "the administrative order of the Godhead"; Henry: the man Christ Jesus appears as the Father's subject).

Baptized for the dead (v29) — honestly hard. Guzik counts more than thirty interpretations; Henry, "more than three times three." Guzik: a pagan or superstitious custom Paul mentions without approving (note "they," not "we"); the Mormon practice is "neither Scriptural nor sensible." Henry prefers converts baptized on account of those God took at Corinth (11:30). Others read "for the sake of" believers who died, hoping to rejoin them. What no reading can do is make the living's baptism save the dead. Paul's argument stands on any reading: the practice is pointless if the dead are not raised.

"I die daily" (v31). Guzik insists the context is physical danger (Acts 23:12–13), not mortifying the flesh; Spurgeon's sermon "Dying Daily" draws the devotional posture from it — "to hold this world with a loose hand." Both are true in their place; the text itself is about danger.

Bad company (vv33–34). Paul quotes Menander's comedy *Thais*. Doctrine and morals travel together: deny tomorrow and you will live for today (v32; Isa 22:13). Henry: "Real atheism lies at the bottom of men's disbelief of a future state."

What kind of body (vv35–49)? Continuity and change. The same seed, a different body (Spurgeon: "The identity is preserved," yet "The difference shall be extraordinary"). "Spiritual body" does not mean a body made of spirit (Henry: "Not that body would be changed into spirit"); it is a real body wholly fitted to and ruled by the Spirit — like Jesus' risen body, which ate and was touched (Luke 24:39–43). The first Adam received life; the last Adam gives it.

The mystery and the last trumpet (vv50–52) — again some difference. Guzik connects the instant change with the catching up of 1 Thess 4:16–17 and holds that the last trumpet need not be the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11; Henry reads it as the summons of all the living and dead to Christ's tribunal. All agree: the dead in Christ are raised imperishable, the living are changed in an instant, and "flesh and blood" — these bodies as they are — cannot inherit the kingdom.

The sting and the power (vv55–57). Death strikes with sin; sin gets its power from the law that condemns it. Christ bore sin and satisfied the law, so death is left without a stinger. Henry: "It may hiss therefore, but it cannot hurt." Sproul: "The sting of death was removed by the captain of our salvation." For the one outside Christ, Guzik warns, death is still an enemy.

Word study (Greek):

- **gospel — *euangelion* (G2098):** good news; "the gospel which I preached" (v1).

- **received / delivered — *paralambanō* (G3880) / *paradidōmi* (G3860):** the technical pair for handing on tradition intact (vv1, 3; 11:23).
- **hold fast — *katechō* (G2722):** keep holding on — present tense (v2).
- **in vain — *eikē* (G1500):** to no purpose, for nothing (v2; Gal 3:4; 4:11).
- **raised — *egeirō* (G1453):** perfect *egēgertai* seven times — raised and remaining raised (vv4, 12–14, 16–17, 20).
- **appeared — *horaō* (G3708):** aorist passive *ōphthē*, "He was seen," four times (vv5–8).
- **untimely born — *ektrōma* (G1626):** a stillbirth; only here in the NT.
- **grace — *charis* (G5485):** three times in v10 — what made Paul, what worked with him.
- **vain / empty — *kenos* (G2756):** empty, hollow (vv10, 14 ×2, 58).
- **worthless — *mataios* (G3152):** futile, getting nowhere (v17).
- **fallen asleep — *koimaō* (G2837):** the believer's death as sleep (vv6, 18, 20, 51); root of "cemetery."
- **most to be pitied — *eleeinos* (G1652):** pitiable; elsewhere only Rev 3:17.
- **first fruits — *aparchē* (G536):** the first sheaf, pledge of the harvest (vv20, 23; Lev 23:10).
- **order — *tagma* (G5001):** a military rank or division; only here.
- **coming — *parousia* (G3952):** arrival, a king's visit (v23; 1 Thess 4:15).
- **abolished — *katargeō* (G2673):** render powerless, put out of business (vv24, 26; 2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:14).
- **subject — *hypotassō* (G5293):** to put under; six times in vv27–28.
- **baptized — *baptizō* (G907):** with *hyper*, "for / on behalf of / on account of" the dead (v29).
- **company — *homilia* (G3657):** association, keeping company; only here.
- **become sober-minded — *eknēphō* (G1594):** sober up out of a stupor; aorist imperative; only here.
- **you fool — *aphrōn* (G878):** senseless (v36; Luke 12:20).
- **perishable / imperishable — *phthora* (G5356) / *aphtharsia* (G861):** decay / incorruptibility (vv42, 50, 53–54).
- **natural / spiritual — *psychikos* (G5591) / *pneumatikos* (G4152):** fitted to this life / ruled by the Spirit (vv44, 46; 2:14–15).
- **life-giving — *zōopoieō* (G2227):** make alive (vv22, 36, 45).
- **image — *eikōn* (G1504):** likeness (v49; Gen 1:27; Rom 8:29).
- **mystery — *mystērion* (G3466):** a truth hidden until God reveals it (v51).
- **changed — *allassō* (G236):** altered, not replaced (vv51–52).
- **moment / twinkling — *atomos* (G823) / *rhipē* (G4493):** an uncuttable instant / the flick of an eye; both only here.
- **immortality — *athanasia* (G110):** deathlessness (vv53–54; 1 Tim 6:16).
- **swallowed up — *katapinō* (G2666):** gulped down whole (v54; 2 Cor 5:4).
- **victory — *nikos* (G3534):** three times (vv54, 55, 57) — won by Christ, given to us.
- **sting — *kentron* (G2759):** a goad or stinger (vv55–56; Acts 26:14).
- **steadfast — *hedraios* (G1476):** seated, settled (v58; 7:37; Col 1:23).
- **immovable — *ametakinētos* (G277):** not to be moved off; only here.
- **abounding — *perisseuō* (G4052):** overflowing (v58).
- **toil — *kopos* (G2873):** labor to the point of weariness (v58).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The gospel is a report before it is a request** — died, buried, raised, appeared (vv3–5); received and delivered, not invented.
2. **He has been raised — and stays raised.** The perfect *egēgertai*, seven times.
3. **Go and ask them.** Living witnesses (v6); faith not built on a missing body (Sproul).
4. **The empty tomb is the receipt** (Guzik) — without it we are still in our sins (v17).
5. **Everything hangs on one fact** — seven "if"s, each answered in the chapter (Henry: "Remove this foundation, and the whole fabric falls").
6. **A first fruits means a harvest** — the first sheaf, the day after the Passover Sabbath.
7. **Death is an enemy — and the last one** (v26); Christ reigns until it falls.
8. **What we believe about tomorrow shapes how we live today** (vv32–34).
9. **Burial is a sowing** — the same seed, a different body (vv36–44).
10. **Doctrine ends with a shovel** — steadfast, immovable, abounding; not *kenos* (v58).

Cross-references: Gen 1:27; 2:7, 17; 22:1–14; Lev 23:9–14; Num 12:12; Job 19:25–27; Ps 8:6; 16:10; 110:1; Prov 13:20; Isa 22:13; 25:8; 53:3–12; Dan 12:2; Hos 6:2; 13:14; Jonah 1:17; Matt 12:40; 27:52–53; 28:16–17; Luke 12:20; 24:34, 36–43; John 5:28–29; 11:25–26; 12:24; 14:19; 20:19–29; Acts 1:3, 14; 17:31–32; 19:23–41; 23:6–8; 26:8, 14; Rom 1:4; 4:25; 5:12–21; 6:4–5; 8:11, 23, 29; 1 Cor 6:13–14; 11:23, 30; 16:15; 2 Cor 4:14; 5:1–8; 11:23–28; Gal 1:11–16; Phil 3:10–11, 20–21; Col 1:18, 23; 1 Thess 4:13–18; 1 Tim 1:12–16; 6:16; 2 Tim 1:10; 2:17–18; Heb 2:14–15; 6:10; 1 Pet 1:3–4; Rev 1:17–18; 3:17; 20:4–6, 14; 21:4.

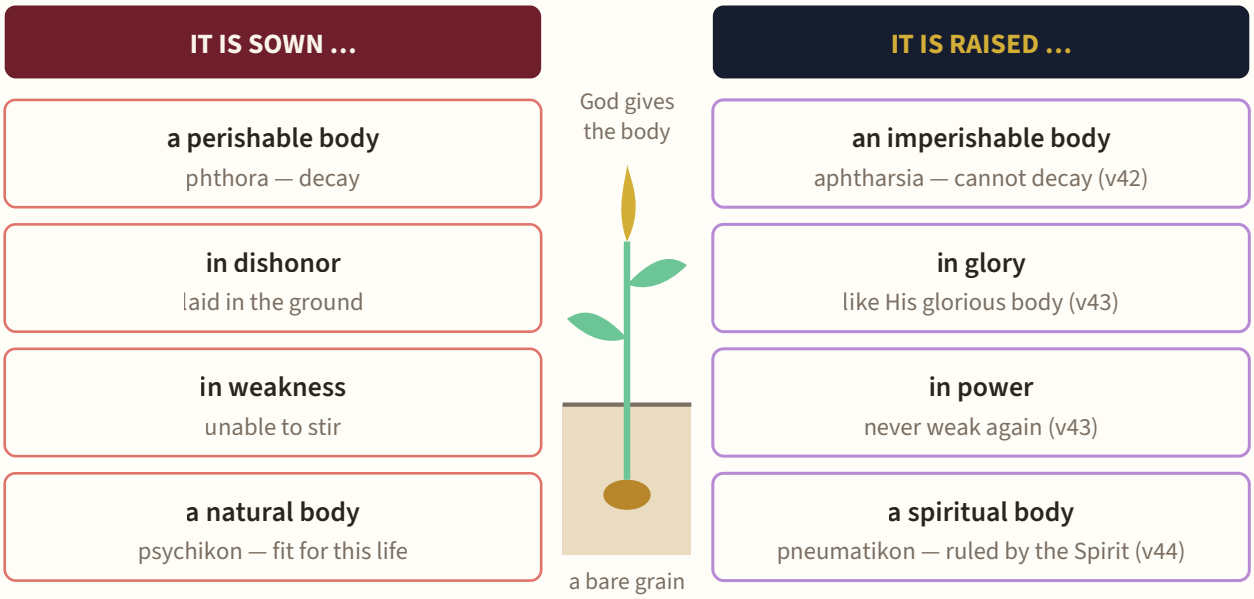
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:43

"it is sown in dishonor, ☆it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, ☆it is raised in power;"

FIGURE · SOWN A SEED, RAISED A BODY



"That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies" (v36) — the same seed, a different body.
Spurgeon: "The identity is preserved." Guzik: they "are not lost; they are sown" (quoting Spurgeon).

Burial is a sowing: the four contrasts of vv. 42–44 run down the page, and the seed in the middle is the same life coming up in a far greater body.

Truth to hold — "of first importance." I can spend a whole week on second things: the schedule, the argument, the bill, the game. Paul puts one thing first: Christ died for my sins, was buried, was raised, and was seen. I want to be able to say those four clauses to any man at the table and to the man in the mirror. If the resurrection is first, it will rearrange everything else.

Sin to confess — living as if this life were all. Verse 19 searches me. If my hopes, my fears, my spending and my temper would look exactly the same if Christ were still in the grave, then I am hoping in Him "in this life only." I confess the times I have lived like the "eat and drink" crowd (v32) — grabbing comfort now because I am not really expecting anything later — and the company I keep that pulls me that way (v33).

Command to obey — "Become sober-minded … and stop sinning." For many of the men I walk with, "sober up" is not a metaphor. Paul uses a word that means coming out of a drunken stupor, and he ties it straight to the

resurrection: if there is a tomorrow with God, then today matters. This week I will name one piece of "bad company" — a person, a place, a feed, a habit — and step away from it, out loud, with a brother.

Promise to trust — the seed and the trumpet. I have stood at graves — my parents', friends', men from the program who did not make it. Paul says a believer's burial is a sowing: sown in weakness, raised in power. The ones who died in Christ are not lost; they are sown. And at the last trumpet, in a moment, we will all be changed. I can grieve, but not as one who has no hope (1 Thess 4:13).

Example to follow — Paul's grace and Paul's labor. Paul never forgot that he persecuted the church, and he never let it stop him: "by the grace of God I am what I am … I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (v10). My past does not disqualify me; grace both makes me and works with me. For the men I serve who carry a record, this verse is a door, not a wall.

Work to keep doing — "your toil is not in vain in the Lord." Fifty-seven verses of doctrine end with a shovel in my hands. The lesson for a few men on a Thursday night, the prison visit, the phone call to the brother who relapsed, the prayer no one heard — none of it is empty. I will be steadfast (seated, settled), immovable (not pushed off the foundation by the next idea), and always abounding — not doing the minimum.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul calls the death, burial and resurrection "of first importance." What have I let crowd it out of first place? (15:1–4; Gal 1:11–12) *Received, stood in, held fast — past, present and future all resting on one message.*
2. If Christ had not been raised, what in my life would look exactly the same? (15:17–19) *If nothing would change, I may be hoping in Christ "in this life only."*
3. Paul was the man who "persecuted the church of God," and grace made him what he was. What does my past say about what grace can do? (15:9–10; 1 Tim 1:15) *"By the grace of God I am what I am" — and that grace "did not prove vain."*
4. What company is shaping what I believe about the future — and how I live now? (15:32–34; Prov 13:20) *Bad company corrupts good morals; wake up and stop sinning.*
5. How does the picture of the seed change the way I stand at a believer's grave? (15:42–44; 1 Thess 4:13) *It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power — we grieve, but not as those who have no hope.*
6. What work for the Lord have I been tempted to think is wasted? (15:58; Heb 6:10) *Your toil is not in vain in the Lord — not the lesson, not the prayer, not the visit no one thanked you for.*

Worship. Christ the first fruits, the first sheaf waved before the Father. Every enemy under His feet, and death last. A trumpet, a twinkling, a change. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer. Father, thank You that Christ died for my sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day, and that He lives. By Your grace I am what I am; let that grace not prove vain in me. Wake me up from the stupor of living for this life only, and keep me from the company that corrupts. When I stand at the graves of those who sleep in Jesus, remind me that they are sown, not lost. Make me steadfast, immovable, always abounding in Your work — and keep me, and the men I serve, until the trumpet sounds and we are changed. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 16

Stand Firm, and Do All in Love — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The resurrection hope of chapter 15 comes down to Monday in chapter 16: money set aside for the poor, plans held under God, younger brothers protected, servants honored. Stand firm like a man, do everything in love, love Jesus from the heart — and live looking for Him to come.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 16 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

3 When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem;

4 and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me.

5 But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia;

6 and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go.

7 For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.

8 But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost;

9 for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am.

11 So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren.

12 But concerning Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you with the brethren; and it was not at all his desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity.

13 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

14 Let all that you do be done in love.

15 Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints),

16 that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors.

17 I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part.

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

19 The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 The greeting is in my own hand—Paul.

22 If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “the collection for the saints” — Command / instruction
- **v2** “On the first day of every week” — Time / place / contrast
- **v2** “each one of you is to put aside and save” — Command / instruction
- **v2** “as he may prosper” — God — His character & actions
- **v3** “to carry your gift to Jerusalem” — Promise / blessing
- **v7** “if the Lord permits” — God — His character & actions
- **v7** “if the Lord permit” — God — His character & actions
- **v8** “I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost” — Time / place / contrast
- **v9** “a wide door for effective service has opened to me” — Promise / blessing
- **v9** “there are many adversaries” — Sin / warning
- **v10** “he is doing the Lord’s work” — God — His character & actions
- **v11** “let no one despise him” — Sin / warning
- **v12** “he will come when he has opportunity” — Time / place / contrast
- **v13** “Be on the alert” — Command / instruction
- **v13** “stand firm in the faith” — Command / instruction
- **v13** “act like men” — Command / instruction
- **v13** “be strong” — Command / instruction
- **v14** “Let all that you do be done in love” — Command / instruction
- **v15** “the first fruits of Achaia” — Promise / blessing
- **v15** “devoted themselves for ministry to the saints” — Command / instruction
- **v16** “be in subjection to such men” — Command / instruction
- **v17** “they have supplied what was lacking on your part” — Promise / blessing
- **v18** “they have refreshed my spirit and yours” — Promise / blessing
- **v18** “acknowledge such men” — Command / instruction
- **v19** “the church that is in their house” — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** “Greet one another with a holy kiss” — Command / instruction
- **v21** “in my own hand” — Time / place / contrast
- **v22** “If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed” — Sin / warning
- **v22** “Maranatha” — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you” — Promise / blessing
- **v24** “My love be with you all in Christ Jesus” — Promise / blessing
- **v11** “brethren” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v19** “greet” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v2** “come” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

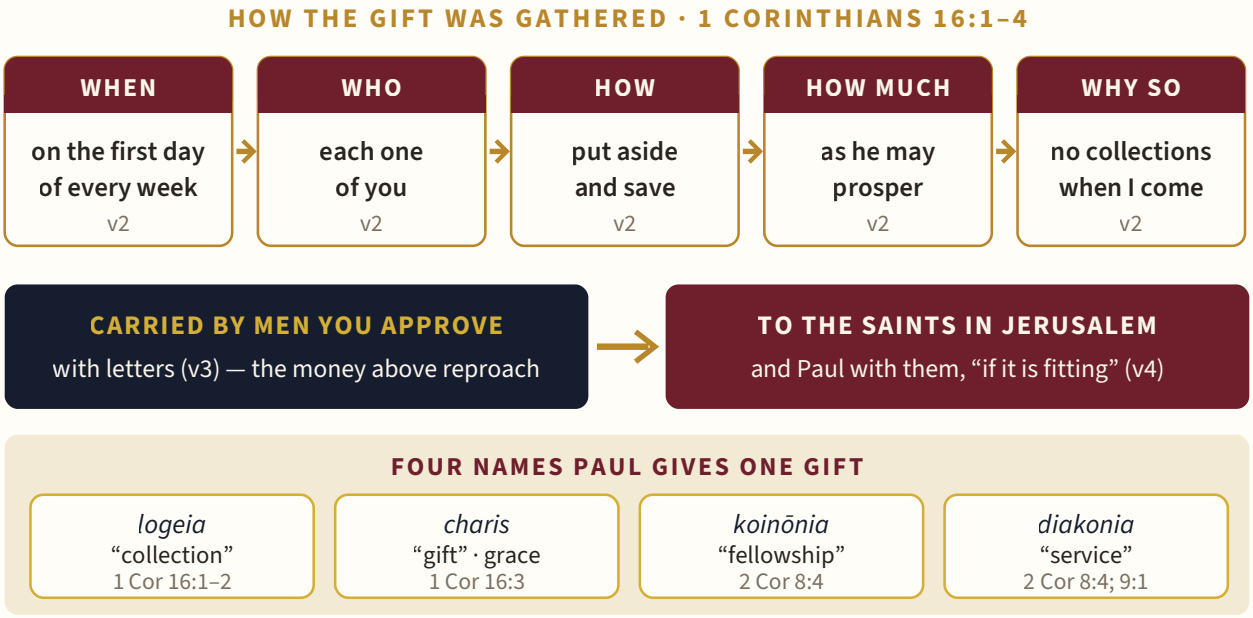
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 16:2

"On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come."

FIGURE · HOW THE GIFT WAS GATHERED



Read left to right: weekly, personal, set aside at home, in proportion, without pressure — then carried by trusted men to Jerusalem; the bottom row shows the four words Paul uses for one offering.

Setting. Paul is in Ephesus (v8), near the end of his long stay there (Acts 19:10), and he is finishing the letter the Corinthians sent questions for. "Now concerning" (v1, and again v12) is the same formula that opened his answers in 7:1, 7:25, 8:1 and 12:1. Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus have come from Corinth (v17) and will most likely carry this letter home. Chapter 15 ended, "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (15:58); chapter 16 shows what that work looks like.

Structure:

- vv1–4 — **the gift:** the collection for the saints, as Paul directed in Galatia. On the first day of every week each one puts aside and saves, as he may prosper, so there are no collections when Paul comes. The church approves its own couriers, with letters; Paul may go with them to Jerusalem.
- vv5–9 — **the plan:** through Macedonia to Corinth, perhaps for the winter; not a visit "just in passing" — "if the Lord permits." But Paul stays in Ephesus until Pentecost: a wide door for effective service, and many adversaries.

- vv10–12 — **the workers:** if Timothy comes, let him be with you without cause to be afraid — he is doing the Lord's work; let no one despise him; send him on in peace. Apollos was urged to come, was not willing now, and will come when he has opportunity.
- vv13–14 — **the charge:** be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.
- vv15–18 — **the servants:** the household of Stephanas — first fruits of Achaia, devoted to ministry to the saints; be in subjection to such men. Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus supplied what was lacking and refreshed Paul's spirit — acknowledge such men.
- vv19–24 — **the farewell:** greetings from the churches of Asia, Aquila and Prisca and the church in their house, all the brethren; a holy kiss; Paul's own hand; "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha." Grace, and Paul's love, to all in Christ Jesus.

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "come / comes / coming" ×8 — vv2, 5, 10, 11, 12 (×3), 17; plus "arrive" v3. The chapter is full of travel.
- "I" ×17 — vv1, 2, 3 (×2), 5 (×3), 6 (×2), 7 (×2), 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17. Paul is personal here, more than anywhere in the letter.
- "greet / greeting" ×5 — vv19 (×2), 20 (×2), 21.
- "Lord / Lord's" ×5 — vv7, 10, 19, 22, 23; "Jesus" ×2 — vv23, 24; "Christ" ×1 — v24.
- "brethren" ×4 — vv11, 12, 15, 20; "brother" ×1 — v12 (Apollos).
- "with you" ×5 — vv6, 7, 10, 23, 24 — Paul wants to be with them, and ends wishing grace and love to be with them.
- "go" ×4 — vv4 (×2), 5, 6; "send" ×3 — vv3, 6, 11.
- "love" ×3 — vv14, 22, 24 (Greek *agapē*, *phileō*, *agapē*).
- "saints" ×2 — vv1, 15; "such men" ×2 — vv16, 18; "work" ×2 — vv10, 16; "remain" ×2 — vv7, 8.

Contrasts: a wide door ⟷ many adversaries (v9). "Not … just in passing" ⟷ "remain with you for some time" (v7). Paul urged ⟷ Apollos not willing (v12). Firm, manly, strong (v13) ⟷ all in love (v14). What was lacking on your part ⟷ what they supplied (v17). A holy kiss (v20) ⟷ accursed (v22). Accursed (v22) ⟷ grace (v23) and love (v24).

Shape of the chapter: business (1–12), a battle cry (13–14), honor for servants (15–18), farewell (19–24). It starts with money for the poor and ends with the Lord's coming; in the middle stands one verse that sums up the letter — "Let all that you do be done in love."

Chapter theme (my words): The gospel that raises the dead also reorganizes a man's wallet, his calendar and his friendships. Stand firm, do it in love, and love Jesus until He comes.

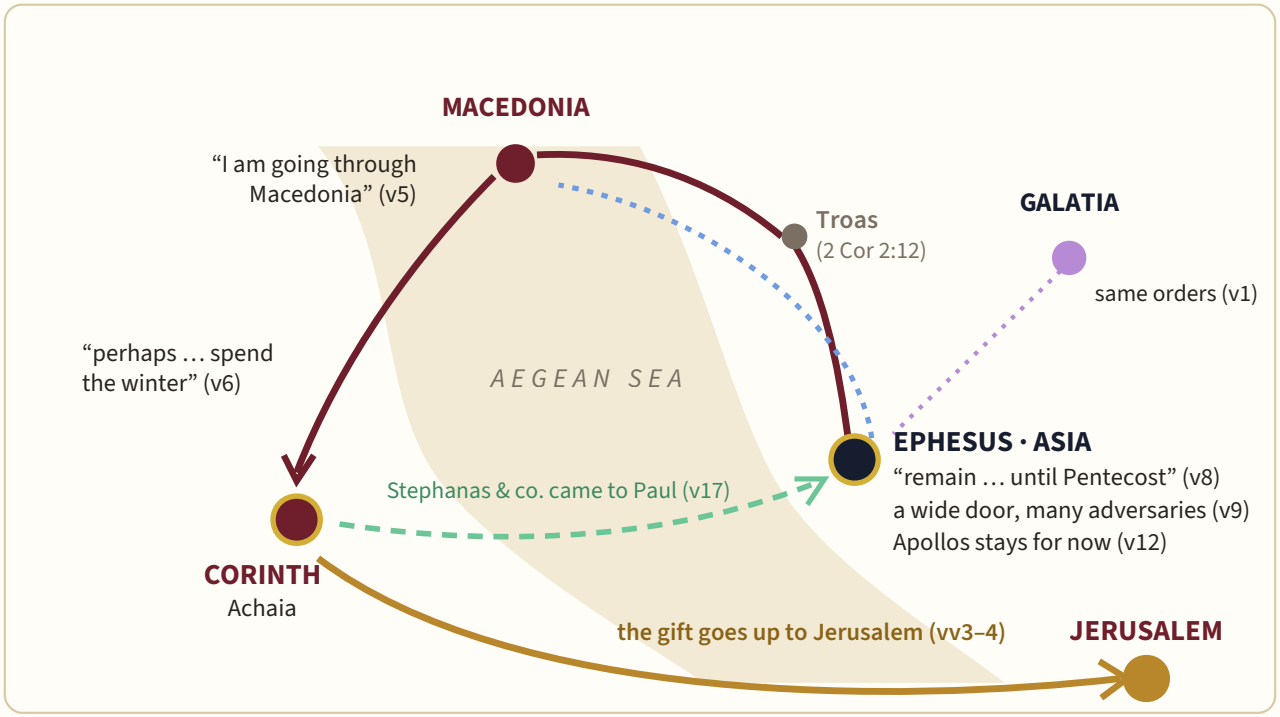
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 16:22

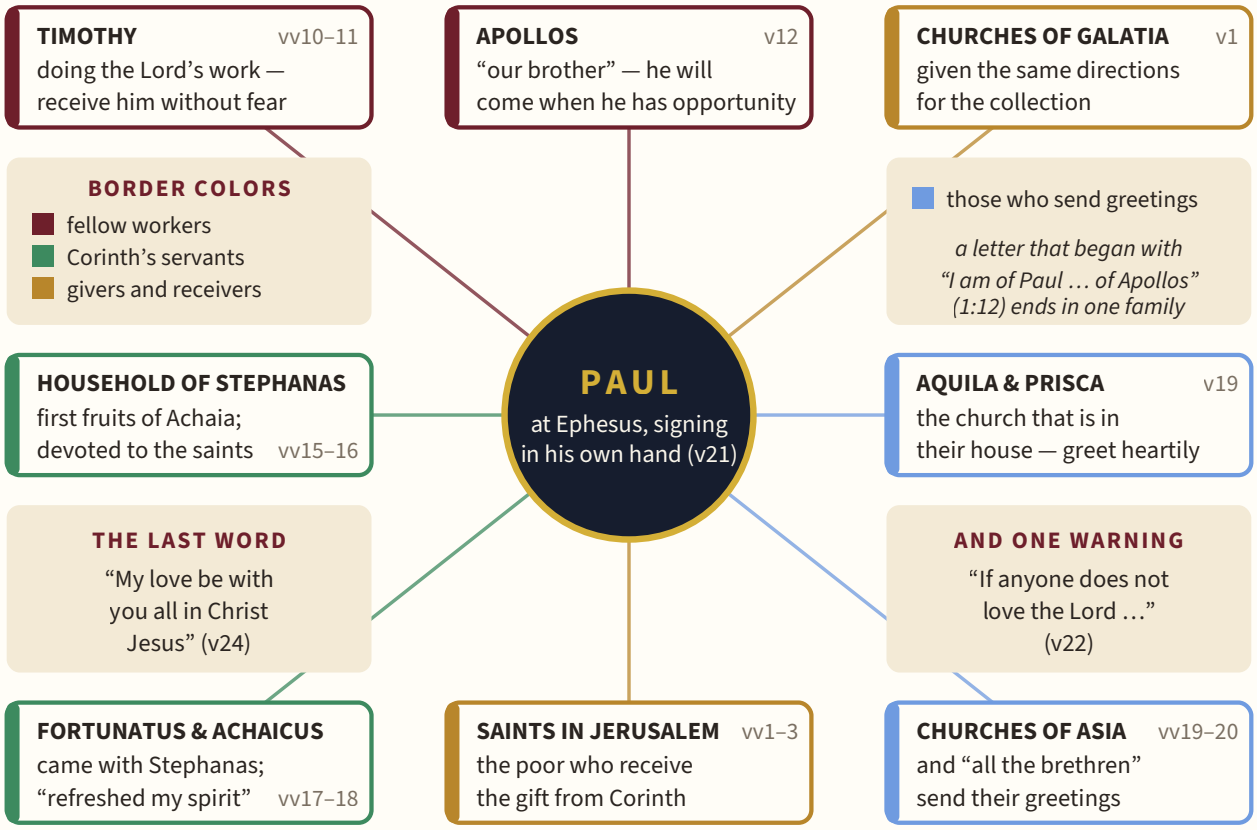
"⚠ If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. ◷ Maranatha."

FIGURE · PAUL'S MAP IN 1 CORINTHIANS 16



Paul writes from Ephesus, plans to go north through Macedonia and down to Corinth for the winter, and then send (or take) the gift to Jerusalem — while Timothy goes ahead and Stephanas' party carries the letter home.

FIGURE · EVERY NAME IN THE CHAPTER



Eight people or groups stand around Paul in twenty-four verses; the border color shows what each one is doing — working, serving, giving or greeting.

Is the collection a tax or a gift? Guzik takes *logeia* as "an extra collection," not compulsory: the church had to take the offering, but each person gave as God put it on his heart. Paul himself later says "not grudgingly or under compulsion" (2 Cor 9:7). Paul calls it *charis*, "grace" (v3), and elsewhere *koinōnia* and *diakonia* (2 Cor 8:4). The method protects both giver and church: weekly, prepared at home, carried by men the church approved — Guzik: "to be above reproach in financial matters."

Does this verse teach the tithe? — where our teachers differ. Sproul's Tabletalk articles hold that "the tithe continues in this new covenant era" and call it "the base minimum from which we progress." Guzik and Henry stress proportion — "as he may prosper" — without naming a percentage; Henry: "He is no tyrant nor cruel taskmaster, to exact brick without straw." Paul's verse gives a pattern (regular, personal, proportionate), not a number. All four agree on the heart of it: God has prospered us, so we give.

The first day of the week (v2). Paul ties giving to the day the church gathered (Acts 20:7). Guzik: early Christians met on Sunday, the day Jesus rose, and "knew that all days were alike to the Lord" (Col 2:16–17). Henry calls it "the Lord's day, the Christian holiday" and a day of holy rest, and Spurgeon speaks of "every Sabbath." Those are different convictions about the Lord's Day as Sabbath; the text itself only shows that Sunday was the church's day and giving belonged to it.

"If the Lord permits" (v7) and the change of plans. Paul planned well and held it loosely. Guzik notes that things went differently — he made "a soon, painful visit" (see 2 Cor 1:15–2:1). Sproul: providence is God's "foresight," and

"the affairs of men and nations, in the final analysis, are in His hands." Henry: "All our purposes must be made with submission to the divine providence."

Door and adversaries (v9). Paul says "and," not "but." Henry: "Great success in the work of the gospel commonly creates many enemies," and "True courage is whetted by opposition." Acts 19 tells the story: two years of teaching, all Asia hearing the word (19:10), then the riot of the silversmiths (19:23–41).

Timothy and Apollos (vv10–12). Timothy was young and probably timid (Guzik: "a lack of confidence and a lack of respect"), sent into a proud church; Henry: "Proud spirits cannot easily bear reproof." Apollos — the man one faction claimed (1:12) — refused to come now. Henry thinks he would not be "set at the head of a party." Paul does not command him; Guzik: "It was not a hierarchical relationship." Spurgeon: Paul "puts a kind construction upon his action." Sproul calls this the judgment of charity.

"Act like men" (v13). *Andrizomai* is used only here in the New Testament. Guzik: "to act like a man," and the KJV "quit you like men" is accurate. The Ligonier devotional on these verses notes that Paul is calling the whole church, women and men alike, to courage in the truth. For the men I serve, I won't water it down: it is a call to grow up, hold your post, and not run. But its Old Testament home (Ps 31:24) is courage that hopes in the LORD — and "be strong" is passive. Real manhood is received strength, under orders, in love.

Submitting to such men (vv15–16). The household of Stephanas "devoted themselves" — *etaxan heautous*, put themselves in line — to serve the saints, and Paul says, be in subjection (*hypotassō*) to such. Henry reads it as voluntary honor, "not … subjection to proper superiors"; Spurgeon presses the need for "watchful pastors" against "assemblies in which all rule, and none submit." Either way, the church should follow the servants, not the talkers.

Anathema and Maranatha (v22). Guzik describes *anathema* as the final, no-return level of synagogue discipline; whether or not that background is exact, Paul's own uses (Rom 9:3; Gal 1:8; 1 Cor 12:3) make it a curse before God. Sproul's T4G message shows its weight: Christ bore "the anathema of a Father" at the cross. Notice the verb is *phileō*: the warning is for the heart that has no affection for Jesus. Henry: "Many who have his name much in their mouths have no true love to him in their hearts." *Maranatha* can be read "Our Lord, come!" (Guzik) or "The Lord cometh" (Henry); either way, the coming Lord makes the warning real and the prayer sweet.

Word study (Greek):

- **collection — *logeia* (G3048):** only vv1–2 in the NT; an extra, voluntary gathering (Guzik).
- **first day … of the week — *mia sabbatou* (G1520, G4521):** "one of the week" — the day of the resurrection (Luke 24:1).
- **prosper — *euodoō* (G2137):** to have a good road; passive — "as he may be prospered."
- **gift — *charis* (G5485):** grace; the same word as v23 and 2 Cor 8:9.
- **send on my way — *propempō* (G4311):** to outfit a traveler for the road (vv6, 11).
- **passing — *parodos* (G3938):** a passing-by visit (v7).
- **door — *thyra* (G2374):** an opportunity God opens (2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3).
- **effective — *energēs* (G1756):** working, active (Heb 4:12).
- **adversaries — *antikeimai* (G480):** those who lie opposite, set against.
- **without fear — *aphobōs* (G870):** with no cause to be afraid.
- **despise — *exoutheneō* (G1848):** to count as nothing.
- **be on the alert — *grēgoreō* (G1127):** stay awake (Matt 26:41).

- **stand firm — *stēkō* (G4739):** hold your ground (Phil 4:1).
- **act like men — *andrizomai* (G407):** show courage; only here in the NT.
- **be strong — *krataioō* (G2901):** passive — be made strong (Eph 3:16).
- **love — *agapē* (G26):** v14 and v24 — self-giving love.
- **first fruits — *aparchē* (G536):** the first of the harvest; Christ in 15:20.
- **devoted themselves — *tassō* (G5021):** appointed, put themselves in line.
- **be in subjection — *hypotassō* (G5293):** to line up under.
- **refreshed — *anapauō* (G373):** to give rest (Matt 11:28).
- **love (the Lord) — *phileō* (G5368):** affection; only here and Titus 3:15 in Paul.
- **accursed — *anathema* (G331):** devoted to destruction (Josh 6:17; Gal 1:8).
- **Maranatha — *marana tha* (G3134):** Aramaic, "Our Lord, come!"

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **From resurrection to offering plate** — the hope of chapter 15 makes ordinary giving holy (Spurgeon).
2. **Paul's gift has four names** — collection, grace, fellowship, service.
3. **Weekly, personal, proportionate, accountable** — and no pressure at the door (Guzik).
4. **"If the Lord permits" is not a shrug** — careful plans, held under providence (Henry, Sproul).
5. **Open doors come with adversaries** — "and," not "but" (v9).
6. **Paul did not boss Apollos** — think the best you can of others (Spurgeon).
7. **"Act like men" is courage in the Lord** — and "be strong" is passive.
8. **Firmness without love is only hardness** — play the man, not the devil (Henry).
9. **The test is affection for Jesus** — *phileō*, the love of the heart (v22).
10. **The last word is love** — "it was all in love" (Spurgeon).

Cross-references: Josh 6:17; Ps 31:24; Matt 11:28; 26:41; Luke 24:1; John 21:15–17; Acts 11:27–30; 18:1–3, 18–28; 19:8–10, 21–41; 20:7; Rom 1:10; 9:3; 15:25–27; 16:3–5; 1 Cor 1:12, 16; 4:17; 12:3; 13:1–7; 15:20, 58; 2 Cor 1:15–2:1; 2:12; 8:4, 9; 9:1, 7; 10:10; Gal 1:8–9; 2:9–10; 6:11; Eph 3:16; Phil 4:1; Col 4:3; 2 Thess 3:17; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 3:15; Philem 2; James 4:15; Rev 22:20.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 16:14

"Let all that you do be done in love."

FIGURE · FOUR WATCHWORDS ON ONE FOUNDATION



Four soldier's commands stand on one footing: firmness without love is only hardness, so verse 14 sits under verse 13.

Command to obey — give on a plan. "On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper." Most of the men around my table don't have much. Paul didn't ask for a number; he asked for a habit — every week, each one, in proportion. For a man rebuilding his life, setting aside even a little on Sunday is a declaration: God provides for me, and I am not only a taker anymore. This week I will decide at home, in prayer, what I will give — before anyone asks.

Example to follow — plans in pencil. Paul planned Pentecost, Macedonia and the winter, and wrote "if the Lord permits" over all of it. I make plans — the job, the move, the release date, the next step in recovery — and then grip them like a fist. I want to hold them open. When a door opens, I will walk through it even if adversaries are standing on the other side, because Paul stayed for both reasons.

Sin to confess — despising the young, and assuming the worst. It is easy for an older man to look down on the new guy, or to take a brother's "no" as an insult. Paul protected Timothy and called Apollos "our brother" after Apollos turned him down. I confess the times I have treated a younger man as nothing and judged a brother's motives without knowing his heart.

Command to obey — stand like a man, in love. Watch. Stand firm in the faith. Act like a man. Be strong. I will not soften this for the men I serve — we are called to stop running and hold our post. But verse 14 is underneath it: let all that you do be done in love. Firmness without love is just a hard man; love without firmness is a soft one. Jesus was neither. And "be strong" is passive — I don't generate this strength; I receive it.

Example to follow — the household of Stephanas. Nobody assigned them; they put themselves in line to serve the saints, and they refreshed Paul's spirit. I want to be that kind of man in my church — the one who shows up, fills what is lacking, and leaves the pastor refreshed instead of drained.

Warning to heed — love the Lord. "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed." Not "if anyone gets his doctrine wrong," but if his heart is cold toward Jesus. I can know the right answers and still have no affection for Him. I want my love for Christ to be warm, and I want it to show in overt acts.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Do I give on a plan, or only when I'm pressed? What would "each one … as he may prosper" look like in my budget this month? (16:1–2; 2 Cor 9:7) *Weekly, personal, proportionate — prepared at home, not squeezed out at the door.*
2. Where am I holding a plan with a closed fist? How would saying "if the Lord permits" change the way I talk about next year? (16:7; James 4:15) *Henry: all our purposes made with submission to providence.*
3. What open door is in front of me right now — and am I reading the opposition as a reason to leave? (16:8–9; Acts 19:8–10) *"A wide door … and there are many adversaries."*
4. Who is the Timothy in my life — the younger or newer brother who could be despised? How will I make him "without cause to be afraid"? (16:10–11; 1 Tim 4:12) *The old should be considerate for the young.*
5. Which of the four commands — watch, stand firm, act like a man, be strong — is weakest in me, and where have I been firm without love? (16:13–14) *Firmness is not feverish wrath; all of it in love.*
6. Is my love for Jesus warm or only correct? What overt acts would show it this week? (16:22; John 21:15–17) *Phileō — affection of the heart, discernible by overt acts.*

Worship. The Lord Jesus became poor so that I might become rich (2 Cor 8:9); He bore the curse so that I could receive the grace of verse 23. He opens doors no one can shut, gives strength I don't have, and He is coming. Maranatha — our Lord, come.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, thank You that Your grace is with me, and that the letter that rebuked the Corinthians ends in love. Teach me to give on purpose, as You have prospered me. Hold my plans in Your hand; open the doors You want me to walk through, and give me courage when the adversaries show up. Make me watchful, firm in the faith, a man, and strong with strength You supply — and let everything I do be done in love. Warm my heart toward You. Make me a servant like Stephanas who refreshes others. Keep me, and the men I walk with, until You come. Maranatha. Amen.

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