

# 1 Corinthians, Chapters 1-4

*For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. - 1 Corinthians 1:11*

Prior to his Roman imprisonment and while in Ephesus, Paul wrote this letter to a spiritually troubled church. Located in southern Greece the city of Corinth was a busy seaport containing within many cultures, vices, rampant sexual immorality, and the worship of numerous Greek gods. In this letter Paul is responding to the report of persistent problems within the church. In these first four chapters he addresses the division that has occurred in the church, some claiming to be followers of this one, or that one; each of the factions voicing specific allegiances.

## **THEME:**

*"I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.- 1 Corinthians 1:10*

**1:4-9 – God has given them gifts** - A bright young boy who was easily distracted practiced little self-discipline when it came to his studies. Several kind teachers who cared for his future all wrote the same thing on his quarterly report cards: *"Your son has marvelous potential; if only he would utilize the gifts he possesses."*

**1:10-17 - The problem reported** - The Corinthians are exhibiting devotion to men rather than Christ.

**1:18-19** - If someone asked you what verses 18 and 19 mean, what would you tell that person?

**2:1-5 - Faith is not to rest in the wisdom of men** - Such devotion to human wisdom is foolishness. Paul reminds them that he did not depend on excellent speech or persuasive words, but rather he proclaimed Jesus Christ who was crucified, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

**2:10-13** - Philosophers were respected as people who could search out deep truths; in contrast, how does Paul say the truth of the Gospel is discovered?

**3:4-15 – Preachers are servants to be used by God** - To help them understand role of preachers, Paul reminds them that they are *all* fellow workers laboring for God. Work that Christians do in Christ-like faith and obedience will survive and be rewarded; work done in the power of the "flesh" or in disobedience to Scripture will not.

**3:18-23** – They are not to glory in the wisdom of this world nor in men. They should boast only in God.

**Chapter 4 - Concluding remarks on the problem of division** - Having pointed out their error, Paul tells them he is sending Timothy to remind them of what is proper, and that he himself will be coming to deal with any unresolved problems if necessary.

**4:6** - Corinthian factions judged one another by the reputation of the leader they followed.

What then does Paul mean by the saying in v.6: *"I have applied these to myself...[do not go] beyond what is written."*?

**4:6-7** - Pride is a theme that runs through much of Paul's writings. This is the second time in this book that Paul mentions pride (1:26-31). We know that *Pride comes before the fall* (Prov. 16:18), so how would you describe pride to a five yr-old? How does pride reveal itself; is it always evident (in others or yourself)? Are there different degrees/amounts of pride; if so, in what amount/circumstance is pride acceptable? (1 Cor. 1:31)

What do the following passages teach about judging and judgment: **2:14-15; 3:12-15; 4:3-5; 4:14 & 21**