

# 1 Corinthians When Faith & Life Collide

## Study 1

### The Gospel and the Divided Church

#### 1 Corinthians 1:1-8

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“Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

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

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## Background

1. **Comprehension question. What were the two things the city of Corinth was known for?**

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2. **Open ended question. The following are the issues plaguing the fractured Corinthian church. What should be happening in the church instead? (This question requires answers in your own words.)**

Issue	Expected Behaviour
Disunity	
Splits	
Pride-sophistication	
Immorality	
Law suits	
Compromise	
Asceticism	
Reject apostolic authority	
Question resurrection	

**3. Comprehension question. What is the layout of the letter?**

<b>Chapter 1-4</b>	
<b>Chapter 5-16</b>	

**1 Corinthians 1:1-2**

“Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:”

**4. Comprehension question. Paul asserts his apostleship at the beginning of this letter. What defines an apostle?**



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**b) Reflection question. Give a practical example of the above.**

**9. Comprehension question. Based on what John Piper says, what is the essence of holiness?**

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**10. Comprehension question. What do people mistake for holiness?**

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**11. Comprehension question. What is the difference between “made holy” and “called to be holy”?**

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### **1 Corinthians 1:4-6**

“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you”

## **B. The Blessings of the Church**

**12. a) Comprehension question. What gifts has the Corinthian church been gifted with?**

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**b) Comprehension question. What are the gifts evidence of?**

### **1 Corinthians 1:12-17**

“Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.”

### **C. The Unity of the Church**

**13. Discussion question. In a church, can there be both personal loyalty to the leader of the church or loyalty to the truth? Why or why not?**

**14. Comprehension question. What is the evidence of a leader's authenticity when preaching?**

**15. Discussion question. When one associates himself/herself with a famous individual, what does he/she want from that person?**

**16. Comprehension question. What are the signs that we are vulnerable to finding glory from others?**

**17. What should be the basis of our unity in church?**

**18. What is the main reason for the breakdown of church unity?**

### **Takeaway**

- A. The Corinthian church was deeply divided and fractured**
- B. The reason for their division is because of their personal loyalty to individual leaders instead of loyalty to the truth**
- C. We are called to be holy**
- D. The essence of holiness is happiness in God**
- E. The basis of our unity in church is the Gospel of Christ crucified**
- F. The main reason for the breakdown of church unity is the loss of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

### **Case Study**

#### **Case 1 – Clouded Judgement**

**Lee Cheow Hwa is very troubled as he comes from the Kalimantan Pentecostal Church , a multi congregational church where there has been great turmoil. The pastor Rev Moses Yong is known to be impatient and in his first meeting with one the congregation's leaders, he reacted badly to their criticisms of him and sacked all 5 in the committee on the spot. This caused much turmoil amongst the particular congregation who lost their leaders.**

**However as far as he is concerned the pastor has been good to Cheow Hwa as he ministered to his family when he was sick , down and out. Cheow Hwa is convinced he is a good man and defended him whenever there was any criticism about Rev Moses.**

**Some other leaders tried to mediate in the case and persuade the pastor to restore the sacked leaders who had to leave the church. They arranged for the 5 to apologise to Rev Moses in a meeting but Rev Moses stood firm - he instead doubled down and said the five were evil and would not restore them.**

**In the months that followed Rev Moses fell out with another two pastors and sacked them. One of them was because he felt he had no calling although he had been serving full time for the last 7 years and gave up his business to go full time. The other pastor tried to defend him and in the process upset Rev Moses who then did not renew his contract as well.**

**A portion of the church was very unhappy as they were attached to the pastors who were dismissed. Another portion was upset with Rev Moses because of the sacking of the 5 in the committee and then there was the faction who would support Rev Moses no matter what.**

**Other leaders grew unhappy and the church attendance dropped 50% over the ensuing year. Then came the time for renewal of pastor Rev Moses Yong's contract and he needed a 75% majority to continue but at this time many folk were not happy with him. The leaders in the church council stood by Rev Moses Yong but other leaders did not want him renewed. They said Rev Moses has the Lord's authority and wisdom and we must all listen to him.**

**1. What was wrong with Rev Moses and his fellow leaders? Why do you think that Rev Moses was not willing to forgive and restore the 5 committee members? In what ways does his actions cause divisiveness in church?**

**2. What was wrong with Mr Lee Cheow Hwa's actions in this debacle? What should Mr Lee Cheow Hwa have done in this circumstance?**

**3. What can the leaders do?**