

Lesson 3

**July 11-17*

Unity *in* Christ

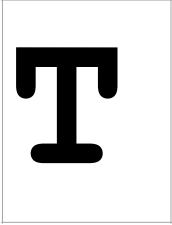
Sabbath Afternoon

Read for This Week's Study: *1 Cor. 1:12-17,*
Rom. 1:29, 1 Cor. 1:10, 1 Cor. 3:1-4, Phil.
2:5-8, 2 Cor. 11:23-28, Col. 1:24.

Memory Text: *"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, ESV).



Those who observe wildlife know that some creatures live in packs, in herds, in groups, all of varying sizes. From wolves (of course), to dolphins, to even army ants, these creatures stick together. Chimpanzees are especially known for their tight-knit social bonds, sometimes existing in groups of from 15 to 150 fellow chimps. However, these relationships are not always harmonious, and sometimes the chimps fight among themselves.

Humans are somewhat like that as well; that is, not only do they tend to exist in groups, but they sometimes fight among themselves in

those groups. And that's a reality even in our churches! Cliques form, often around some kind of charismatic leader. And, even worse, sometimes one clique does not get along with others.

Have you ever seen that in your church?

If so, then you have an idea of an issue Paul faced in Corinth. This week we will take a look at 1 Corinthians 1-4, where the apostle Paul deals with the problem of quarrels in the church and how to overcome them, namely, through unity in Christ.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 18.*

Sunday

July 12

The Problem of Cliques in the Church

Paul's appeal that "there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10, ESV) dominates the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians. In fact, most scholars agree that unity is the all-encompassing theme that binds all the parts of the letter together.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:12-17. How does this passage help us understand how absurd it is to form cliques around local leaders? What is Paul's solution?

1 Cor. 1:12-17:

"NOW THIS I SAY, THAT EVERY ONE OF YOU SAITH, I AM OF PAUL; AND I OF APOLLOS; AND I OF CEPHAS; AND I OF

CHRIST. IS CHRIST DIVIDED? WAS PAUL CRUCIFIED FOR YOU?
OR WERE YE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF PAUL?
I THANK GOD THAT I BAPTIZED NONE OF YOU, BUT CRISPUS AND
GAIUS; LEST ANY SHOULD SAY THAT I HAD BAPTIZED IN MINE
OWN NAME. AND I BAPTIZED ALSO THE HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANAS:
BESIDES, I KNOW NOT WHETHER I BAPTIZED ANY OTHER. FOR
CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE, BUT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL:
NOT WITH WISDOM OF WORDS, LEST THE CROSS OF CHRIST SHOULD
BE MADE OF NONE EFFECT."

Paul employs strong words to portray the
lack of unity among the church members in
Corinth. He uses the Greek terms *schisma*
("division," 1 Cor. 1:10, NKJV) and *eris*
("contention," 1 Cor. 1:11, NKJV).

"FOR IT HATH BEEN DECLARED UNTO ME OF YOU, MY BRETHREN,
BY THEM WHICH ARE OF THE HOUSE OF CHLOE, THAT THERE ARE
CONTENTIONS (#2054-QUARRELS) AMONG YOU."

The noun *schisma* (as well as the verb *schizō*,
"to split") is used elsewhere in the New

Testament to describe differences of opinion
resulting in factions. [In turn,]
The noun *eris* ("contention") frequently appears
in lists of vices that must not be practiced by
Christians.

**Read Romans 1:29, Romans 13:13, 1
Corinthians 3:3, 2 Corinthians 12:20, and
Galatians 5:20.**

**What other sins are listed along with *eris*
("contention," "strife")? What does this tell us
about how bad it is?**

"Being filled with all unrighteousness,
fornication, wickedness, covetousness,
maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate
(#2054-quarrel), deceit, malignity; whisperers,"

Romans 1:29

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in
rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and

wantonness, not in strife (#2054-quarrel) and
envying." ROMANS 13:13

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is
among you envying, and strife (#2054-quarrels),
and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as
men? (1 Cor. 3:3)

"For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find
you such as I would, and that I shall be found
unto you such as ye would not: lest there be
debates (#2054-quarrels), envyings, wraths,
strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings,
tumults:" (2 Cor. 12:20)

"Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance (#2054-
quarrels), emulations, wrath, strife, seditions,
heresies," (Galatians 5:20)

The disagreements in the church of Corinth
came to the surface—even in the form of lawsuits
against one another

(1 Cor. 6:1-3). "I say this to your shame," Paul told them (1 Cor. 6:5, NKJV) about these lawsuits between church members. In fact, they didn't lay aside their differences even when celebrating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-22).

The problem of lack of unity among church members is so terrifying, and Paul is so worried about it, that this is the first issue he addresses in this letter to the Corinthians.

Read again 1 Corinthians 1:12-27. Then reflect on how this passage helps us understand why cliques are so dangerous to the unity of the church. What can your local church do in order to avoid this problem? OF DISUNITY IN THE CHURCH.

COMPARE 1 COR. 11:18, 19 WITH 2 TIMOTHY 2:14-17
Of these things put them in remembrance,
charging them before the Lord that they strive

not about words to no profit, but to the
subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself
approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to
be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
But shun profane and vain babblings: for they
will increase unto more ungodliness. And their
word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is
Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth
have erred, saying that the resurrection is past
already; and overthrow the faith of some.

IF THE RESURRECTION IS PAST THEN WHERE ARE THOSE
WHO WERE RESURRECTED? THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE
SAVED AND THE LOST WILL BE RESURRECTED BY JESUS
IN THEIR TURN BEFORE AND AFTER THE 1,000 YEARS
(REVELATION 20:1-5). HOWEVER, IF THE
RESURRECTION IS PAST ALREADY, PASTOR RYAN, THEN
WHERE ARE THE SAVED AND WHERE ARE THE LOST?
YES, IF THE TEACHING OF HYMENAEUS AND PHILETUS
IS ACCEPTED THAT THE RESURRECTION IS PAST
ALREADY, THEN THE SAVED ARE IN HEAVEN AND THE

LOST ARE IN HELL AND THE FAITH OF SOME, PERHAPS
TODAY WE MIGHT SAY THE FAITH OF MANY, EVEN THE
VAST MAJORITY OF PROFESSED CHRISTIANS HAS BEEN
OVERTHROWN, ACCORDING TO THE INSPIRED APOSTLE
PAUL.

— WE CANNOT TOTALLY AVOID HERESIES IN THE
CHURCH BUT GOD CAN OVERRULE THEM FOR GOOD.
ACCORDING TO 1 COR. 11:18, 19 WHEN COMPARED WITH
2 TIMOTHY 2:15 GOD CAN WORK THROUGH HERESY AS A
MEANS OF GETTING US BACK INTO THE BIBLE TO STUDY
TO SHOW OURSELVES APPROVED UNTO GOD.

SOP — 2SM 293-295; 5T 707; GW 298, 299

THE PRIMARY REASON FOR QUARRELS, DEBATES,
STRIFE, CONTENTIONS IN CHRISTIANITY IS,
ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLE PAUL'S INSPIRED
WRITINGS, THAT WE FOLLOW MEN INSTEAD OF GOD.

GOOD MEN! EVEN GODLY MEN! MEN LIKE PAUL, CEPHAS
AND APOLLOS. INSTEAD OF ASKING FOR A "THUS SAITH
THE LORD" AND FOLLOWING GOD'S INSPIRED WORD WE
FOLLOW MEN AND THERE OPIONS OF GOD'S INSPIRED

PROPHETS. WE FOLLOW A "A THUS SAITH JAMES OR A THUS SAID JOHN OR RYAN OR SHELLEY" IN THE PLACE OF A "THUS SAITH THE LORD"

PAUL GIVES US A REMEDY FOR THIS. IF THERE IS A PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE OF BIBLICAL TEACHING THAT IS NOT CLEAR, DO NOT MAKE THAT A TEST ISSUE TO BE CRITICAL OR JUDGMENTAL OF THOSE WHO DO NOT SEE IT AS YOU DO.

IF THE TEACHING OF THE BIBLE IS CLEAR, FOLLOW IT, PRACTICE IT, RECEIVE IT AS YOU WOULD RECEIVE CHRIST IF HE WERE STANDING BEFORE YOU BECAUSE HE IS. CHRIST STANDS AT THE DOOR OF YOUR HEART IN THE FORM OF THE WORD OF GOD AND KNOCKS FOR ENTRANCE. STOP FOLLOWING, RECEIVING AND PRACTICING THE WORDS, TRADITIONS AND SPECULATIONS OF MEN AND RECEIVE THE WORD OF OUR CREATOR REDEEMER GOD.

NEXT WEEK — SIN IN THE CHURCH LESSON 4 —