

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH

Small Group Study Guide: 1 Corinthians

Week of August 11 (Week 2)

1 Corinthians 1: Causes and Cures of Splits in the Church



CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY

1 Corinthians 1 underscores the critical need for unity in the church, centered in Christ and His message. It teaches us that true wisdom and power come from God, not the world, and that in Christ we find our sanctification and redemption.

OBSERVING THE TEXT

Starting with God

1. What does 1 Corinthians 1 tell us about the character and nature of God?

Reflection: How does the character and nature of God found in 1 Corinthians 1 help you deepen your relationship with God?

Continuing the Conversation

2. What are the two characteristics of the church/believers that Paul mentioned in verse 2?

Reflection: How do the qualities of Christians that are listed in verse 2 challenge or convict you?

3. Despite the mess the church at Corinth was going through, what was Paul thankful to God for according to 1 Corinthians 1:4-9?

Reflection: It is Paul's regular habit ("always") to give thanks for his converts, as well as for other believers. Indeed, his ability to give thanks for these believers probably says much about his own character. What can we learn from Paul in dealing with believers who are in a mess like the Corinthians?

4. According to verses 10-12, what is going on in the church at Corinth?

5. According to Paul, on whom-person (1:13) and on what-message (1:17b) is the church's/believers' unity based?

Reflection: Power plays within the church can result in obscuring the centrality of Christ and perhaps unwittingly causing “splits.” Are there traits in our own secular culture that draw Christians into such power plays? What happens to the vulnerable when church people play this role? What might prevent people from “using” respected ministers, or their names, as convenient rallying points for divisive crusades or personal agendas? (Thiselton, 41).

6. The church at Corinth viewed Christian life and ministry through the lens of “wisdom and eloquence” (v. 17) which was the basis for division among them. To right the wrong perception of the Corinthians, what does Paul say about the gospel or the message of the cross and the people who believe in the message of the cross in verses 18–31?

Reflection: Verses 29–31 present the conclusion of the subject Paul covered in verses 18–31: In the gospel ministry, “no one takes credit or boasts.” How does Paul’s conclusion stated in verses 29-31 speak to you?

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

August 12-16, 2024

Read 1 Corinthians 1

Monday: 1:2 *"To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints."* The church belongs to God and carries His mandate in whatever place it is called to represent as His church. Meditate on what it means to be the church of God in Kansas City. Be the church of God wherever you are by living a life that is different ("sanctified") from the world.

Tuesday: 1:4ff *"I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus."* Ponder on how enriched our church is by the giftedness of people in our church. Some are gifted with "speech and all knowledge," others with administration, music and the list goes on. Let us always be thankful to God for the gift that each one has in the body of Christ.

Wednesday: 1:9 *"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."* Contemplate on the faithfulness of God who has called us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, and promises to see us through to the end.

Thursday: 1:10 *"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."* Think about how we can all agree on the fundamental nature of the gospel despite differences in opinion about secondary and tertiary matters.

Friday: "26-31 *"Not many of you were wise according to worldly standard ... But God chose what is weak in the world to shame the wise ... what is low and despised ... even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are ... so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.""* Consider God's acceptance and use of unworthy people like us for His glory. May we always be grateful to God.