

I CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] **Paul, who was called by the will of God to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, and [from] our brother Sosthenes;** 2) [it is being sent] **to the church of God at Corinth.** [You people are] **set apart in [the fellowship of] Christ Jesus and called [by God] to be saints [i.e., His holy people], along with all [others] everywhere who call on our Lord Jesus Christ [i.e., in prayer]. He is their Lord and ours [as well].** 3) **May you experience unearned favor and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

4) **I always thank God for you, [especially] for God's unearned favor that was given to you [in providing salvation and blessings] in Christ Jesus.** 5) **For in [fellowship with] Him you people have been made [spiritually] rich in every way, through all [kinds of] speech and knowledge.** [Note: This probably refers to the communication and comprehension of truth represented by the spiritual gifts of languages and revelation]. 6) **The message about Christ has become firmly established there among you [i.e., by such gifts],** 7) **so that you are not lacking in any [spiritual] gift, while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed [i.e., at His second coming].** 8) **He will also make you stand firm [in the faith] to the end [of your lives], so that you will be [considered] without just blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ [returns].** 9) **God is faithful [i.e., He will continue working among you] and it is through Him that you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

10) **Now I urge you, brothers, through the name [i.e., by the authority] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you should all agree in what you say, so that no divisions [continue] among you. Be restored [to unity] by having common thoughts and convictions [i.e., in spiritual matters].** 11) **For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers, by some of Chloe's family, that there is quarreling [going on] among you.** 12) **Now this is what I mean: Each of you is saying, "I am a follower of Paul," and another "I am a follower of Apollos," and another "I am a follower of Cephas [i.e., Peter]," and another "I am a**

follower of Christ.” 13) Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you immersed into the name of Paul? 14) I am thankful that I did not immerse any of you, except for Crispus and Gaius, 15) so that none of you could say that you were immersed into my name. 16) (Oh, yes, I also immersed the family of Stephanas. Besides these, I do not remember immersing anyone else). 17) For Christ did not send me to immerse people, but to preach the good news. [Note: Christ specifically commissioned Paul to preach; most of the immersing was done by his attendants]. **It was not to be done with words of [human] wisdom, so that the [message of the] cross of Christ would not have its power taken away.**

18) For the message of [Christ dying on] the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing [i.e., in a lost state], but it is God’s power to us who are being saved. 19) For it is written [Isa. 29:14], “I [i.e., God] will destroy the wisdom of wise people, and will set aside [i.e., hinder] the understanding of intelligent people.” 20) Where is the wise person? And where is the expert in the law? [And] where is the debater of this world? 21) For since, according to God’s [true] wisdom, the world did not know about Him through its wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe [in Christ] through the “foolishness” of the message preached. 22) Now Jews ask for [miraculous] signs and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] are looking for wisdom, 23) but we [apostles] preach that Christ was crucified [for our sins]. This message is offensive to Jews and foolishness to [unconverted] Gentiles. 24) But to those who are called [by God to be saved], both Jews and Gentiles, [the message of] Christ is the power of God [See 1:16] and the wisdom of God. [See 1:30]. 25) For the “foolish things” of God are wiser than men’s [wisdom], and the “weakness” of God is stronger than men’s [strength].

26) Now consider how you were when you were called, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were from prominent families. 27) But God chose what the world considers foolish [i.e., people with little apparent ability], in order to shame the “wise people.” And He chose what the world considers weak in order to shame what it considers strong. 28) And He chose what the world considers insignificant and contemptible, and [even] what it considers “nothing,” in order to nullify what

appears to be something. 29) This was all done so that no human being could boast in front of God. 30) But God brought you into [fellowship with] Christ Jesus, who was made to be God's wisdom for us. Through Christ you have received a right relationship with God, [as well as] holiness and redemption [i.e., being bought back from Satan]. 31) So, as it is written [Jer. 9:23f], "The person who [wants to] boast, let him boast about the Lord."

CHAPTER TWO

1) And when I came to you, brothers, it was not with eloquent words or [superior] wisdom that I proclaimed to you the testimony [or, mystery] about God. 2) For I have decided not to know anything [while] among you, except Jesus Christ and His being crucified. 3) And I was weak, apprehensive and fearful when I was [there] with you. [Note: This probably refers to Paul's sense of inadequacy in view of the task before him]. 4) And I did not use persuasive words of [human] wisdom in my message and preaching, but they were [accompanied by] a demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power [from God]. [Note: This "demonstration" could have included the evidence of miraculous spiritual gifts which Paul utilized while there in Corinth. See 14:18]. 5) This was so that your faith would not [have to] depend on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

6) However, we speak [divine] wisdom among people who are [spiritually] mature, yet it is not the wisdom of this current age, nor of [its] current rulers, who are coming to nothing. 7) But we [apostles] speak God's secret wisdom, which has been hidden [through the ages], which God predetermined for our honor before time began. 8) None of the rulers of this age knew about this [divine] wisdom, for if they had [known it], they would not have crucified the glorious Lord [i.e., Jesus]. 9) But as it is written [Isa. 64:4], "The things which no eye saw or ear heard, and which did not [even] enter the mind of men, is what God has prepared for those who love Him." 10) But God has revealed [to us] these things [i.e., His divine wisdom. See verses 7-8] through the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God. 11) For what person knows the thoughts of a man except that man's [own] spirit which is in him? In the same way, no one knows the

thoughts of God except God's Holy Spirit. 12) But we [apostles] **did not receive the spirit of the world** [i.e., human wisdom. See verse 6], **but the Holy Spirit from God, so that we could understand what was freely given to us from God** [i.e., the gift of inspiration. See verses 9-10]. 13) **These also are the things we [apostles] speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but [in words] taught by the Holy Spirit. We use [or, combine] Spirit-taught words to express [or, with] Spirit-given truth.** 14) **Now the natural person** [Note: Since this person is contrasted with the spiritual person of verse 15, it is taken here to mean the person without the Holy Spirit] **does not receive the things** [i.e., truths] **revealed by the Holy Spirit of God, because they are [considered] foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them because they must be discerned by using spiritual judgment** [i.e., judgment aided by the Holy Spirit]. 15) **But the spiritual person** [i.e., one who has the Holy Spirit] **is able to discern all things** [i.e., has the ability to make right judgments about things], **and he himself** [i.e., his conduct] **cannot be [critically] discerned by any [unbelieving] man.** 16) [Isa. 40:13 says], **“For who knows [what is in] the Lord's mind? And who is capable of instructing Him? But we have the mind of Christ.** [Note: The “we” may refer to the apostles, who had the gift of inspiration (See verse 12), or to all Christians who have spiritual discernment].

CHAPTER THREE

1) **And I could not speak to you, brothers, as I would to spiritual people, but [I have to speak to you] as I would to worldly people, for you are immature children in [the fellowship of] Christ.** 2) **For I fed you with milk, not with solid food** [i.e., with basic fundamentals instead of more advanced teaching. See Heb. 5:12-13] **because you were not able to absorb it,** 3) **for you are still worldly [minded]. And since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, is that not evidence that you are [still] worldly and living like [unspiritual] people?** 4) **For when one of you says, “I am a follower of Paul,” and another says, “I am a follower of Apollos,” are you not [acting like worldly] people?** 5) **After all, who is Apollos? And who is Paul? They are [only] servants through whom you believed [in Christ], with each one doing what the Lord gave him to do.** 6) **I**

[Paul] **planted** [i.e., preached God's word], **Apollos watered** [it], **but God made it grow.** **7) So then, it does not matter who plants or who waters, but [it is] God who matters, for He makes the seed grow.** **8) Now the person who plants and the person who waters have the same [purpose], and each one will receive his own wages, according to the work each one does.** **9) For we are all fellow-workers in God's service; you people are God's farm land; [you are] God's building.**

10) Using the unearned favor shown to me by God [Note: Paul here probably refers to his apostleship and its attending spiritual gifts], **as an expert building contractor, I laid the foundation** [i.e., in starting the Corinthian church], **and someone else is building on it** [i.e., Apollos. See verse 6]. **11) For no one can lay [any] other foundation than the one which [God] has [already] lain, which is Jesus Christ.** **12) But if anyone** [i.e., a preacher or soul winner] **builds on this foundation with gold, silver, expensive building stones, wood, grass, or straw,** **13) [the quality of] each person's work will become evident** [i.e., for what is it made of]. **For the [judgment] day will expose his workmanship. And it will be revealed by the fire** [of judgment], **which will test the quality of a person's workmanship** [i.e., the faithfulness of his converts]. **14) If the work of anyone lasts** [i.e., if his converts are judged faithful], **he will receive a reward** [i.e., his converts will constitute part of his reward]. **15) But if anyone's work is burned up** [i.e., does not survive the judgment], **he will experience loss** [i.e., of his converts], **but he himself will [still] be saved, like a person escaping from the fire** [i.e., of a burning building, which consumes his efforts].

16) Do you people not know that you are God's Temple [i.e., the church. See I Pet. 2:5; I Tim. 3:15], **and that the Holy Spirit of God lives in you** [i.e., collectively]? **17) If any person destroys God's Temple, God will destroy him. For God's Temple is holy** [i.e., set apart for His service], **and you people are His [holy] Temple.**

18) No one should fool himself. If any person among you thinks he is smart, by human standards, he should become a "fool," so that he can become [really] wise. **19) For this world's "wisdom" is foolishness to God. For it is written** [Job 5:13], **"He [i.e., God] catches wise people in their cleverness."** **20) And again, it says** [Psa. 94:11], **"The Lord knows that the**

thoughts of ‘wise people’ are worthless.” 21) So, no one should boast about [the knowledge or position of] people. For all things belong to you, 22) including Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas [i.e., Peter], and the world, and life and death, and present and future things. All of these things are yours. [Note: Paul is showing that, as Christians, they really possessed and should value all preachers and circumstances of life alike]. 23) And you people belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) So, a person should look at us as servants of Christ and property managers entrusted with the secret truths of God. 2) Furthermore, one thing required of [good] property managers is that they prove dependable. 3) But it is a small matter for me to be judged by you or by any human court, for I do not [even] judge myself [to be wrong]. 4) For I am not aware of anything [wrong] against myself, but that does not make me right. But the One who judges me is the Lord. 5) So, do not judge anything until the appointed time, when the Lord returns [i.e., to do the judging]. He will both shed light on the hidden things done in the dark and make known the motives of people’s hearts. Then each person [i.e., who deserves it] will receive praise from God.

6) Now I have applied these things, brothers, to myself and to Apollos as an illustration for your benefit, so that you might learn to “follow the written message.” [Note: This is thought to have been a common way of referring, in that day, to the importance of adhering to Old Testament Scripture]. So, none of you should be more proud of one [leader] than of another. 7) For who makes you different [from each other]? [i.e., with some being viewed as superior and others inferior]. And what do you have that you did not receive [from God]? But if you received it [from Him], then why do you boast as though you did not [receive it as a gift]? 8) [Now] you already have all you want! You have already become wealthy! You have begun to rule as kings without our help! How I wish that you had [really] begun to rule as kings, so that we also could rule with you! 9) For I think that God has displayed us apostles last in line, as men doomed to die. [Note: The picture here is that of gladiators in the arena]. We are being stared at [i.e., as performers on a theater

stage] for the whole world to see, both angels and people. 10) We are “fools” for Christ’s sake, but you people [think you] are “wise” in [the fellowship of] Christ. We are weak, but you people [think you] are “strong.” You are honored, but we are despised. 11) Even to this moment, we [apostles] are hungry and thirsty; we have inadequate clothing; we have been beaten; we do not have a permanent place to live; 12) we work hard with our hands. [Though] we are cursed, we [ask God’s] blessing [on people]; [though] we are persecuted, we persevere; 13) [though] we are slandered, we reply kindly. We have become [like] the scum of the earth, the dregs of all society, to this day.

14) I am not writing this to shame you but to warn you, as my dearly loved children. 15) For although you have ten thousand guardians [Note: This word means someone who transported a child to his teacher] in [the fellowship of] Christ, you do not have many [spiritual] fathers. For I [spiritually] conceived you people through [preaching to you] the good news [about Christ]. [Note: Paul here refers to his work in establishing the church at Corinth]. 16) So, I urge you to imitate my lifestyle. 17) This is the reason that I am sending Timothy to you. He is my dearly loved and faithful [spiritual] son in [the service of] the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways [i.e., my teaching and conduct] which are in [the service of] Christ. I teach these things in every congregation wherever [I go].

18) Now some of you have become arrogant, thinking that I would not [dare to] come to you. 19) But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wants me to. Then I will determine not [only] what these arrogant people are saying, but how much power they have. 20) For God’s kingdom is not a matter of [impressive] words, but of [spiritual] power. 21) Which do you [really] want? Shall I come to you with a rod [of discipline], or lovingly, and with a spirit of gentleness?

CHAPTER FIVE

1) It has actually been reported [to me] that there is a case of sexual immorality among you that is unheard of, even among the [unconverted] Gentiles. One of you is having sex with his stepmother. 2) And you are arrogant [about it] instead [of being ashamed]. Should you not be grieved to the point of

removing from your fellowship the person who has done this [terrible] deed? 3) For although physically absent [from you], I am truly present with you in spirit and have already judged the person who did this [terrible] thing, just as if I were there [in person]. 4) [I command you], when you people are assembled together, with my spirit [also present], in the name [i.e., by the authority] and power of our Lord Jesus, 5) to turn such a person over to Satan for his body to be destroyed [Note: This probably refers to his removal from their fellowship. See verse 2], in order for his spirit to be saved in the day of the Lord [i.e., the judgment day]. [Note: This implies that his removal from their fellowship will have produced a genuine repentance before that time].

6) Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little yeast can leaven the whole batch of dough? 7) Get rid of the old yeast [i.e., of sin, and especially the unrepentant sinner], so that you can be a new batch of dough, without yeast in it [i.e., a godly church without unrepentant sinners in it] as [I know] you really are. For our Passover [Lamb], Christ, has already been sacrificed. 8) So, we should observe the Festival [i.e., live the Christian life], but not with the old yeast [i.e., old sinful ways], such as the leavening [effect] of evil and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9) I wrote you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. 10) I did not mean the sexually immoral people of this world, or with greedy people and swindlers, or with idolaters. For [to do this] you would have to go out of the world. [Note: If taken literally, this implies that there are no sinful people outside our planet]. 11) But I wrote to you not to associate with anyone claiming to be a [Christian] brother who is [guilty of being] sexually immoral, or greedy, or an idolater, or who speaks abusively, or a drunkard, or a swindler. Do not even eat [a social meal] with such a person. 12)-13) For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? [i.e., non-Christians]; God judges them. But should you not judge those people who are inside? [i.e., Christians]. [So], remove the evil person from your fellowship [See Deut. 17:7].

CHAPTER SIX

1) If any one of you has a complaint against someone,

how can you dare to take it before non-Christian judges [to be decided], instead of before the saints [i.e., God's holy people]? 2) Or, do you not know that God's people will judge the world? [Note: Possibly this refers to Christians somehow assisting Christ on the judgment day]. And if the world is [to be] judged by you [at that time], are you not capable of judging small matters [now]? 3) Do you not know that we will judge [even] angels? [And if so], then how much more [must we judge] the things of this life! 4) So then, if you have cases [or, courts] for deciding matters of this life, do you appoint [as judges] those who have no standing in the church? [i.e., heathens]. [Note: This difficult passage may also be taken as a statement, using sarcasm, "you appoint as judges..."]. 5) I am saying this to make you ashamed. Can there not be found one wise person [there] among you who is able to decide [on a matter] between his [Christian] brothers? 6) But [instead], a brother goes to court against his brother, and that in front of an unbelieving [judge]! 7) Indeed, the fact that you have lawsuits with one another is [evidence of] a complete failure among you. Why should you not rather take the wrong? Why should you not rather accept being cheated? 8) But [instead], you yourselves do the wrong and cheat [others], and you do this to [Christian] brothers!

9) Or, do you not know that evil people will not possess God's kingdom? Do not be misled: neither will sexually immoral people, nor idolaters, nor those who are sexually unfaithful to their mates, nor homosexual perverts. [Note: The Greek uses two words here, denoting both the passive and active partners in male homosexual acts]. 10) And neither will thieves, nor greedy people, nor drunkards, nor abusive talkers, nor swindlers possess God's kingdom. 11) And some of you have practiced such things, but you were washed [i.e., from your sins. See Acts 22:16]; you were dedicated [i.e., set apart for God's service]; you were made right with God in the name [i.e., by the authority] of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit of our God.

12) "Everything is permissible for me [to do];" but not everything is profitable. [Note: The words in quote marks in this and the following verse are thought to have been commonly held views of that day, to which Paul gives an inspired reply]. "Everything is permissible for me [to do];" but I will not be ruled by anything. 13) "Food is for the stomach, and the

stomach is for food;” but God will destroy both of them. Yet the body is not intended for sexual immorality, but is intended for the Lord’s [honor and service]; and the Lord is for the body’s [benefit]. 14) Now God has both raised up the Lord [Jesus], and will [also] raise us up [from the dead] through His power. 15) Do you not know that your [physical] bodies are parts of [the spiritual body of] Christ? So, shall I take away parts of Christ’s [spiritual] body and join them to a prostitute’s body? Certainly not! 16) Or, do you not know that the person who is joined to a prostitute is one body [with her, physically]? For God says [Gen. 2:24], “The two will become one flesh” [i.e., united in such a close relationship as to practically constitute one body]. 17) But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit [with Him]. [Note: Just as the person who has sex with someone enters a close physical union with that person, so the person who becomes a Christian enters a close spiritual union with Christ]. 18) Stay away from [any involvement in] sexual immorality. Every sin a person commits is outside [the realm] of his body; but the one who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. [Note: Possibly this means that sex, because it requires the deepest and most complete commitment of human involvement, becomes a unique sin when its true purpose and expression are violated]. 19) Or, do you not know that your [physical] body is a temple [i.e., sanctuary] for the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves, 20) for you were bought [by God] for a price. So, honor God with your [physical] body.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) I now want to reply to the matters you people wrote me about. It is [a] good [idea] for a man not to get married. [Note: The words “to get married” here are “to touch” in the Greek and probably refer to sexual relations within marriage. This advice, not a prohibition, is further explained in verses 26-35]. 2) But, because of so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. 3) The husband should fulfill his [marital] duty to his wife, and the wife should do the same thing for her husband. 4) The wife does not have [sole] authority over her own [physical] body, but the husband [also has his right to it]. And in the same way,

the husband also does not have [sole] authority over his own [physical] body, but the wife [i.e., has her right to it, as well]. 5) Do not deprive each other [of these marital rights], except by mutual agreement, so that you can spend the time in prayer. Then resume [normal sexual] relations again, so Satan is not able to tempt you [i.e., to have an affair] because of your lack of self-control. 6) But I am telling you this by way of [granting you] permission and not as a command. 7) Yet I wish that everyone were like me [i.e., with the ability to remain single. See 9:5]. However, each person has his own special gift from God; one has this gift [i.e., being content to remain single. See Matt. 19:12], and another has the other gift [i.e., feeling the need to marry and have a family].

8) Now to those people who are not married [Note: This probably refers to all unmarried people, and not just to widowers, as some think], or who are widows, I say it is [a] good [idea] for them to remain like me [i.e., single. See verse 7 and 9:5]. 9) But if they cannot control their [sexual] desires, they should get married, for it is better [for them] to marry than to burn [i.e., with sexual lust which cannot be legitimately gratified]. 10) Now I command married people, although it is [really] the Lord's command [See. Mark 10:2-12]: A wife should not separate from her husband. [Note: This act implies the intention of pursuing a legal and permanent breach of the marriage relationship by divorce. "Separate" and "divorce" appear to be used interchangeably in this section. See verses 11-15]. 11) (But if she does separate [from her husband], she should remain unmarried, or else [attempt] a reconciliation with her husband). And a husband should not divorce his wife.

12) But I, not the Lord, say this to the rest of you [Note: Paul now addresses the matter of mixed marriages, a circumstance Jesus never taught about]: If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she agrees to continue living with him [Note: In these verses Paul addresses a situation where one marriage partner is converted after they are married], he should not divorce her. 13) And the woman with a husband who is an unbeliever, who agrees to continue living with her, should not divorce her husband. 14) For the unbelieving husband is set apart [i.e., as an acceptable mate, although not yet saved. See verse 16], through his wife [i.e., her Christian commitment is viewed as having a godly effect on the home], and the

unbelieving wife is set apart through the brother [i.e., for the same reason]. **Otherwise, your children would be** [considered] **unclean**. [Note: “Unclean” suggests they would be viewed as pagans were it not for one parent being a Christian]. **But, as it is, they are set apart as acceptable** [i.e., to God, because of the influence of the one Christian parent]. **15) Yet if the unbelieving mate separates** [from his spouse], **let him go. The brother or sister is not obligated** [to continue the marriage] **under such circumstances. For God has called you** [believers] **to live in peace. 16) How can you know,** [Christian] **wife, whether or not you will** [be able to] **convert your husband? Or how can you know,** [Christian] **husband, whether or not you will** [be able to] **convert you wife?**

17) Each person should live according to what the Lord has given him and in the state he was when God called him. And this is what I require in all the churches. 18) Was any man already circumcised when he was called [by God to be a Christian]? **Then he should not** [try to] **become uncircumcised**. [Note: Some Jews in that day resorted to a surgical procedure in an attempt to conceal their circumcision]. **Was any man uncircumcised when he was called? Then he should not become circumcised. 19) Being circumcised does not matter** [with God], **nor does being uncircumcised matter** [either]. **But observing God’s commands is what matters. 20) Each person should remain in the** [same] **state he was in when he was called** [by God]. **21) Were you a slave when you were called? It should not matter to you** [i.e., if you still are]. **But if, indeed, you can become a free person, then use that freedom instead** [i.e., for serving God]. **22) For the person who was a slave when called by the Lord is** [now] **the Lord’s freed person. In the same way, the person who was free when he was called** [by the Lord] **is** [now] **Christ’s slave. 23) [Since] you people were bought for a price** [i.e., the blood of Christ], **do not become slaves to** [other] **people. 24) Brothers, each person should remain** [in fellowship] **with God in the** [same] **state he was in when he was called** [by God to be a Christian].

25) Now I have no command from the Lord concerning [what you wrote about] **unmarried women**. [Note: The word here is “virgins” but some think it includes both males and females]. **But I give my advice as someone who has received the Lord’s mercy to be counted trustworthy. 26) So, because of the**

impending crisis, I think it is a good thing for a man to remain as he is. 27) Are you married? [If so], then do not separate [from your mate]. Are you unmarried? [If so], then do not look for a wife. 28) But if you should marry, you have not sinned. And if a virgin girl marries, she has not sinned. Yet those individuals [who do marry] will have troubles in this life, and I want to spare you of that.

29) But I say this, brothers; there is not much time left [i.e., before the crisis arrives in full fury. See verse 26]. From now on those men who are married should live as though they were single. 30) Those who cry [should live] as though they were not sad. Those who rejoice [should live] as though they were not happy. Those who buy things [should live] as though they did not own them. 31) And those who make use of the things of the world [should live] as though they were not [really] involved with them. For the world as we know it is passing away. [Note: The five “as though’s” of verses 29-31 are intended to emphasize that Christians should live with eternity in mind and not to become preoccupied with even legitimate earthly circumstances]. 32) But I want you to be free from worry. The man who is not married is concerned about the affairs of the Lord [and] how to please the Lord. 33) But the person who is married is [also] concerned about the affairs of the world [and] how to please his wife, 34) so his interests are divided. However, the unmarried woman [Note: Possibly this refers to a widow, divorcee or non-virgin] and the virgin are concerned about the affairs of the Lord [and] how to be dedicated [to God] in both body and spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the affairs of the world [and] how to please her husband. 35) Now I am saying this for your own benefit, not in order to put [unreasonable] restrictions on you, but that you may do whatever is proper and devote yourselves to the Lord’s service without distraction.

36) But if any man thinks he is [being tempted to] behave improperly toward his virgin [fiancée], and she is past prime [marriageable] age, and feels the need [to get married] [Note: The Greek says “and so it has to be”], he should do what he wants; they should get married --- that man has not sinned. 37) But [another] man, who has a conviction in his heart [about the matter], and does not feel it is necessary [to get married], but has control over his will [i.e., his sexual passion], and has made

up his mind to keep [from marrying] his own virgin [fiancée] --- that man is doing the right thing [also]. 38) So then, the man who marries his virgin [fiancée] is doing the right thing and the man who does not marry her is doing [even] better.

39) A wife is bound [i.e., to stay married] for as long as her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants; [but it must be] only in the Lord [i.e., he must be a faithful Christian]. 40) But she will be happier if she remains as she is [i.e., single]. This is my advice and I think that I, too, have God's Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) I now want to reply to the matter of idolatrous sacrifices [which you wrote to me about]. We know that we all possess knowledge. [Note: This may be a statement posed to Paul by the Corinthians, who seemed quite preoccupied with "knowledge"]. Knowledge [only] makes people arrogant, while love builds them up [spiritually]. 2) If anyone thinks he knows something, he [really] does not know as much as he ought to. 3) But if anyone loves God, that person is known by God.

4) Now concerning [the matter of] eating foods [once] offered as sacrifices to idols, we know that an idol is [really] nothing in the world [at all], and that there is only one God. 5) For [even] if there were things called "gods," whether in heaven or on earth; [and even if] there were many "gods" and many "lords," 6) yet there is [only] one God to us, [and He is] the Father, from whom all things have come, and for whom we live. And [there is only] one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things have come, and through whom we live. 7) However, not every person knows this [truth]. For some people have been so used to an idol all this time that they still think of the idol [as a reality] when eating food that has been sacrificed to it. And their weak conscience becomes polluted. [Note: These people cannot seem to shake off the idea that somehow the idol is real, so feel guilty of wrongdoing when eating food sacrificed to it]. 8) But [eating certain] foods will not improve our relationship to God; we are neither any worse off if we do not eat [certain things], nor are we any better off if we do eat them.

9) But pay attention [to this], so that somehow this liberty of yours [i.e., to eat whatever you want to] does not

become an occasion over which weak people could fall [away from God]. 10) For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, who have [correct] knowledge [in this matter], eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged to eat food sacrificed to idols? 11) So, this weak brother, for whose sake Christ died, becomes [spiritually] destroyed, [and all] because of your "knowledge" [i.e., you know that such eating is harmless, but your weak brother does not know this, so he is led into sin by your unloving example]. 12) And in this way, when you sin against the brothers by injuring their weak conscience, you are [actually] sinning against Christ. 13) Therefore, if [eating certain] foods causes my brother to fall away [from God], I will never eat meat again, so I do not cause my brother to fall away.

CHAPTER NINE

1) Am I not a free man? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? [See Acts 9:17; I Cor. 15:8]. Are you people not [the result of] my work in [the service of] the Lord? 2) [Even] if I am not [accepted as] an apostle with other people, at least I am with you. For you people are my seal [i.e., proof] of my apostleship in [the service of] the Lord.

3) My defense to those people who [want to] examine my credentials is this: 4) Do we [i.e., Barnabas and Paul. See verse 6] not have the right to eat and drink [i.e., at the expense of the church]? 5) Do we not have the right to take a believing [i.e., a Christian] wife with us [on our preaching tours], just like the rest of the apostles, and the Lord's brothers do [i.e., James, Joseph, Judas and Simon. Mark 6:3], and Cephas [i.e., Peter]? 6) Or, are Barnabas and I the only ones who must have a [secular] job for our living? 7) What soldier ever served [in the army] and paid his own expenses? Who [ever] planted a grape orchard and did not get to eat some of the grapes it produced? Or, who [ever] tended a flock of goats and did not get to drink some of the milk? 8) Do I say these things from a purely human standpoint, or does not the Law of Moses also teach the same thing? 9) For it is written in the Law of Moses [Deut. 25:4], "You should not put a muzzle on an ox while it tramples over the grain." Is it the oxen that God is concerned about? 10) Or, is He not really saying this for our sakes? Yes, it was

written for us because the farmer ought to plow in hope [of planting a crop], and the harvester ought to thresh grain in hope of reaping a crop. 11) If we have planted spiritual seeds [i.e., the Gospel message] among you, is it too much to expect to reap a material harvest from you? 12) If other people have the right to receive a share of what you have, should we not have even more [right to it]? Yet we did not make use of this right, but instead we put up with whatever we had to so we would not become a hindrance to [the spread of] the good news [about Christ]. 13) Do you not know that those who perform service in the Temple [are permitted to] eat food from the Temple? And those who serve at the Altar receive a share of what is sacrificed on the Altar? 14) Even so the Lord directed that those who proclaim the good news [about Christ] should get their living from [preaching] that good news. 15) But I have not availed myself of any of these rights. And I am not writing this so that it would be done in my case, for I would rather die than have anyone make my boast [i.e., of preaching without financial support] an empty one. 16) [But] I do not have anything to boast about if I preach the good news because I am compelled to do it. For it would be too bad for me if I did not preach the good news. 17) For if I preached because [I personally decided] I wanted to, I could claim a reward. But if I did not preach from a personal decision to do so, then it would be because I was entrusted with the task [by God]. 18) Then what is my reward? It is being able to preach the good news without receiving financial support [for it], so as not to claim my full rights in [the work of preaching] the good news.

19) For although I am free from [being accountable to] all people, I placed myself under obligation to them [as a slave], so as to win as many as possible [to Christ]. 20) I behaved like a Jew in front of the Jews in order to win Jews [to Christ]. I behaved like a person who was under [obligation to observe] the law [i.e., Jews] in front of those who observe that law, although I was not [really] under [obligation to] it. I did this to win those who are under [obligation to observe] the law. 21) I [also] behaved like a person without [obligation to observe] the law [i.e., a Gentile] in front of those who are not obligated to it, although I was not [really] without obligation to God's law; but was under [obligation to] Christ's law. I did this to win those who are without [obligation to observe] the law

[i.e., Gentiles]. **22) I behaved like a weak person in front of weak people** [See 8:9-12], **in order to win them over** [i.e., to help them become stronger]. **I have become all things to all people so that, in every way, I could save some of them.** **23) And everything I do is for the sake of** [the work of] **the Gospel, so that I may share in its benefits.**

24) Do you not know that [although] **everyone runs in a race, only one person wins the prize? So, you should run in order to win.** **25) And everyone who** [strenuously] **competes in athletic events exercises self-control during training. Now they do this to receive a laurel wreath that withers, but we** [do it to receive] **a lasting crown.** **26) So, I run with a purpose and I fight that way** [too]; **I do not just shadow box.** **27) But I work out and get my body in shape** [i.e., spiritually], **so that after preaching to other people, I myself do not become disqualified** [i.e., for winning the prize from God. See verse 24].

CHAPTER TEN

1) For I want you to be [fully] **aware, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud, and all of them passed** [safely] **through the** [Red] **Sea.** [Note: This refers to God guiding the Israelites through the desert during the daytime by a cloud moving along above them. See Ex. 13:21-22]. **2) [In doing this] they were all** [actually] **immersed into** [fellowship with] **Moses in the cloud and in the sea.** **3) And they all ate the same spiritual food** [i.e., the supernatural manna. See Ex. 16:4-5], **4) and drank the same spiritual drink** [i.e., water coming from a rock supernaturally. See Ex. 17:6]. **For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.** [Note: Besides actual water, they were refreshed from the spiritual presence of Christ]. **5) However, God was not pleased with the vast majority of them, for their bodies were scattered over the desert** [See Num. 14:29ff]. **6) Now these events were examples for us, so that we should not have strong desires for evil things like they did.** **7) [So], do not worship idols as some of them did, as it is written** [Ex. 32:6], **“The people sat down to feast and drink, then got up and played.”** [Note: This refers to the Israelites engaging in an orgy of dancing and sex. See Ex. 32:17-19]. **8) Neither should we commit sexual immorality as some of them did, [with] 23,000 people falling dead in one day.** [Note: Num. 25:9]

mentions 24,000 people slain, but that number could have included the additional people slain by the judges. See Num. 25:5]. **9) Neither should we put the Lord to a test as some of them did, and were killed by snake bites** [See Num. 21:5ff]. **10) Neither should you people complain as some of them did and were killed by the destroying angel** [See Ex. 12:23?].

11) Now these events happened to those people as examples [to us], **and they were written as warnings to us, to whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.** [Note: This refers to past ages concluding with the coming of Christ in that day]. **12) So, the person who thinks he is standing firm** [in the faith] **should pay attention** [to his life], **so that he does not fall** [away from God]. **13) Every temptation that you have experienced is one that commonly happens to people. But God is dependable and will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability** [to cope with it]; [instead] **He will provide, along with the temptation, also a way of escaping** [it], **so you people will be able to endure it.**

14) Therefore, my dearly loved ones, run away from idol worship. **15) I am speaking to you as** [I would] **to sensible people,** [so] **judge for yourselves what I am saying.** **16) Does not the “cup of blessing,” which we bless, signify a fellowship with Christ’s** [physical] **blood?** [Note: This was the cup used at the close of the Passover meal and was called this because of the prayer of thanksgiving offered for it. Paul refers to such a prayer in connection with its use in the Lord’s Supper]. **Does not the bread which we break signify a fellowship with Christ’s** [physical] **body?** **17) Inasmuch as there is one loaf of bread that we all share, we who are many make up one body** [of believers].

18) Look at the physical nation of Israel; do not their people [i.e., the priests] **who eat the** [animal] **sacrifices have fellowship** [with God] **in the Altar** [service]? **19) So, what am I saying? That an animal sacrificed to idols is** [really] **anything, or that an idol** [itself] **is anything?** **20) [Certainly not!] But I am saying that the Gentile sacrifices are** [really] **offered to evil spirits and not to God. And I do not want you to have fellowship with evil spirits.** **21) You cannot drink** [both] **the cup of the Lord and the cup of evil spirits** [i.e., and still be acceptable to God]. **You cannot share in** [both] **the Lord’s Table and the table of evil spirits** [and still be acceptable to God]. **22)**

Or, are we [trying to] make the Lord jealous [by doing this]? [Do we think] we are stronger than He is?

23) “Everything is permissible [to do];” but not everything is profitable [See note at 6:12]. “Everything is permissible [to do];” but not everything builds [people] up. 24) No one should look out for his own interests [only], but for the interests of others [as well].

25) Eat whatever is sold in the [public] meat markets, without asking any questions [about it] for [your] conscience’ sake [i.e., do not inquire about the previous use of the food you buy, because you might discover something about it that would make you feel guilty of wrongdoing if you ate it]. 26) For the earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord. 27) Now if an unbeliever invites you for a meal and you decide to go, eat whatever is set in front of you without asking any questions for [your] conscience’ sake [See verse 25]. 28) But if anyone says to you, “This [food] has been offered as a sacrifice [to an idol],” do not eat it, for the sake of the person who pointed this out to you, and for conscience’ sake --- 29) that is, for the sake of the other person’s conscience, not your own. For why should my freedom [to eat what I want] be judged [as wrong] by another person’s conscience? [Note: The questions in this and the following verse may mean, “It is not worth eating questionable things, if doing so would bring criticism from a weak brother”]. 30) If I thank God for what I eat, why should I be criticized for eating something I have [already] thanked Him for?

31) So, whether you people eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to honor God. 32) Do not [do what could] cause Jews, Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] or the church of God to fall [away from God]. 33) For even I myself [try] to please everyone in every way, and not to look out [just] for my own good, but [also] for the good of many people, so that they may be saved.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) You people should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.

2) Now I commend you for remembering me in everything and for remaining loyal to the [inspired] traditions which I have handed on to you.

3) But I want you to know that Christ is the [spiritual]

head [i.e., authority] **over every man; and the man is the** [spiritual] **head over the woman** [Note: The Greek words for “woman” and “wife” are the same. “Wife” is obviously meant by the context]; **and God is the head over Christ.** **4) Every man who prays or prophesies** [i.e., speaks in a public assembly, since prophecy was always for the benefit of others] **with his** [physical] **head covered** [Note: The Greek word here denotes “something hanging down” and could refer to long hair or a cloth shawl], **shows disrespect for his head** [i.e., Christ]. **5) But every woman who prays or prophesies** [in the public assembly] **with her** [physical] **head uncovered** [i.e., with hair or a shawl] **shows disrespect for her head** [i.e., for her husband. See verse 3]. **Such appearance is the same as if her** [physical] **head were shaved.** [Note: Various sources point out that a shaved or closely cropped head was an emblem of a prostitute or a woman found guilty of sexual unfaithfulness to her husband. See Num. 5:11-18]. **6) So, if a woman does not cover her** [physical] **head** [i.e., with sufficient hair or a cloth shawl], **she might as well cut her hair off. But if it is a shame for a woman to cut her hair off or shave her head** [See note on verse 5], **then she should have her head covered** [i.e., with hair or a shawl]. **7) But a man should certainly not cover his** [physical] **head** [i.e., with “something hanging down,” such as long hair or a cloth shawl. See verse 4], **since he is the image and glory of God. But the woman** [i.e., his wife] **is the glory of the man** [i.e., her husband]. **8) For man did not come from woman** [i.e., Adam was created directly by God], **but woman came from man** [i.e., she was taken from his side. See Gen. 2:18-23]. **9) And indeed, man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman** [was created] **for man’s sake.** **10) This** [i.e., the order of creation] **is the reason that the woman should have** [a symbol of] **authority on her** [physical] **head** [i.e., hair or a shawl to indicate subjection to her husband], **and because of the angels.** [Note: This difficult phrase probably means that angels, who observe the activities of Christian assemblies, are pleased when they see things being done in their proper order]. **11) Nevertheless, in** [the fellowship of] **the Lord, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.** [See Gal. 3:28]. **12) For as the woman was created from man, so also the man is born from the woman. But everything comes from God.** **13) [So], judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God** [in the assembly] **with**

her [physical] head uncovered [i.e., by hair or a shawl]? 14) [And] does not the very nature of things teach you that it is disgraceful for a man to have long hair? [Note: The prevailing, worldwide custom, observable to Paul even in his day, was shorter hair on men and longer hair on women. The fact of exceptions to this arrangement only proves the rule. See Num. 6:5; I Sam. 1:11]. 15) But if a woman wears long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given to her for a covering [i.e., in place of the cloth shawl]. 16) But if anyone is inclined to argue [about this matter], neither we [apostles] nor the churches of God have any [other] custom than this.

17) But in giving you these instructions, I have a criticism to make [about you people]. It is that your assemblies are doing more harm than good. 18) For first of all, I have been informed [Note: This was probably by Chloe's family. See 1:11] that divisions exist among you people when you assemble as a congregation. And I am inclined to believe it [is true]. 19) For it is to be expected [i.e., it is inevitable] that there would be dissensions among you, so that those who are approved [by God] can become known among you. 20) So, when you people assemble together [Note: This was a church meeting at which they also shared a common meal prior to the Lord's Supper], it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper [properly]. 21) For as you are eating, each one of you partakes of his own supper [ahead of the others], so that one person is [still] hungry while the other gets drunk. 22) Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or, do you despise the church of God and put to shame those people who do not have anything [to eat]? What should I say to you? Should I commend you for doing this? Certainly not!

23) For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you: On the night the Lord Jesus was turned over [to the Jewish authorities] He took bread, 24) and after giving thanks [for it], He broke it [in pieces] and said, "This represents my [physical] body, which is [to be given] for you. [Continue to] do this in memory of me." 25) In the same way [He took] the cup also, after supper, and said, "This cup [i.e., its contents] represents the New Agreement [ratified] by my blood. [Continue to] do this, whenever you people drink from it, in memory of me." 26) For whenever you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death

until He comes [again]. 27) Therefore, whoever eats the [Lord's] bread or drinks from the Lord's cup in a way that is unworthy [of them. See verse 21], will be guilty of [dishonoring] the body and the blood of the Lord. 28) So, a person should examine himself [first] and then he should eat the bread and drink from the cup. 29) For a person who eats and drinks without determining the significance of the body [of Jesus], [i.e., without showing proper reverence for Christ, as represented by the bread and cup (see verse 27), or without distinguishing this sacred memorial Supper from a common meal], eats and drinks judgment upon himself. [Note: Some apply "the body" in this verse to the church and explain it as a warning against failing to appreciate the unity that the Supper is intended to signify]. 30) Because of this [i.e., their improper partaking of the Supper], many people among you are weak and ill, and a number have fallen asleep [i.e., died]. [Note: While most commentators view this judgment as physical, there is a distinct possibility that it refers to spiritual sickness and death]. 31) But if we [had] examined ourselves [properly], we would not be [i.e., not have been] judged [i.e., with sickness and death. See verse 30]. 32) But since we are being judged, we are [also] being disciplined by the Lord, so that we do not have to be condemned along with the world.

33) So, my brothers, when you assemble for a meal, wait for each other [i.e., so some will not be finished before others. See verse 21]. 34) If anyone is [too] hungry [i.e., to wait], he should eat at home, so that your assembly does not result in judgment [falling on some of you. See verse 30]. And I will tend to the remaining matters when I come [to you].

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) Now concerning spiritual [i.e., supernatural] gifts, brothers, I want you to be [fully] knowledgeable. 2) You people know that when you were [still unconverted] Gentiles, you were led astray to [worship] lifeless idols, however you were led [i.e., wherever you turned, you were being led into idolatrous practices]. 3) Therefore, I am telling you that no one who speaks under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God says, "Jesus is cursed!" And no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

4) Now there are a variety of [spiritual] gifts, but [they are given by] the same Holy Spirit. 5) And there are a variety of services, but [they are rendered to] the same Lord. 6) And there are a variety of [Christian] activities, but the same God provides the power for everyone to do all of them [i.e., it is God who empowers every person who has a gift]. 7) But the evidence of the Holy Spirit's [power] is given to each person for the good of everyone. 8) For one person is given the [supernatural] message of wisdom through the Holy Spirit; another person is given the [supernatural] message of knowledge by means of the same Holy Spirit. 9) Still another person is given [supernatural] faith [See 13:2] by the same Holy Spirit; yet another person is given gifts [providing the ability] to perform [supernatural] healings by that one Holy Spirit. 10) Another [is given] the ability to perform miracles; and another [is given] the ability to prophesy [supernaturally]; and another [is given] the ability to speak in different languages [supernaturally]; and still another [is given] the ability to interpret those languages [supernaturally]. 11) Now all of these [supernatural gifts] are the work of one and the same Holy Spirit, who distributes them to each person individually as He desires.

12) For [just] as the human body is one [unit], made up of many parts, and all the many parts make up a single body, so it is with Christ. [Note: Just as a human body is a single unit and Christ is a single being, so the members of His body, the church, constitute one body. See verses 27-28]. 13) For we were all immersed by means of the one Holy Spirit into one body [i.e., the church], whether [we were] Jews or Greeks [i.e., Gentiles], whether slaves or free people, and were all given the one [and the same] Holy Spirit to drink. [Note: This probably refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, given to all immersed believers. See John 7:37-39; Acts 2:38]. 14) For the human body is not made up of [only] one part, but of many parts. 15) If the foot should say, "I am not part of the body because I'm not the hand," that does not mean it is not part of the body [does it?]. 16) And if the ear should say, "I am not part of the body because I am not the eye," that does not mean it is not part of the body [does it?] 17) If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? 18) But the way it is, God has placed each individual part in the human body just as it pleased Him. 19) And if all

the parts were one part, how could there be a [whole] body? 20) But the way it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21) And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," or again, the head [cannot say] to the feet, "I do not need you." 22) On the contrary, those parts of the body which seem to be weaker [i.e., delicate organs like the heart, lungs, kidneys, etc.] are necessary [for life]. 23) And those parts of the body which we consider less honorable [i.e., probably female breasts, buttocks, etc.], we clothe with greater honor. [Note: The Greek word for "clothe" here refers to clothing elsewhere in the New Testament]. And our unpresentable parts [i.e., probably sex organs] need to be more presentable [i.e., by being covered up with modest clothing], 24) whereas, our presentable parts [i.e., probably face and hands] do not need [covering up]. But God has put the body together [in such a way as] to give greater honor to that part which lacked it, 25) so that there would not be any division in the body [Note: Paul here leaves the analogy of the physical body and makes application to the spiritual body, the church], but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26) So, if one part [i.e., one Christian] suffers, then all the parts [i.e., the other Christians] should suffer with it. Or, if one part is honored, all the [other] parts should rejoice with it.

27) Now you people are the [spiritual] body of Christ and each one of you is an individual part of it. 28) Now God has placed some [ministries] in the church [as follows]: First apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then [those able to perform] miracles, then gifts [enabling people] to perform [supernatural] healings, [those able] to help the needy, [wise] administrators, [and] those able to speak in different languages. 29) Are all [ministers in the church] apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all perform miracles? 30) Do all have gifts [enabling them] to perform [supernatural] healings? Do all speak in languages? Do all interpret [those languages]? 31) [Obviously not], but you should eagerly desire the more important gifts.

And now I will show you a much better way [i.e., a better way to serve one another in the church than using supernatural gifts]:

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) If I have the ability to speak in the languages of human beings and angels [Note: Perhaps the idea is supernaturally and eloquently], **but do not have love** [for people], **I have become** [no more than] **a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.** **2) And if I have the** [spiritual] **gift of prophecy, and can understand all** [of God's] **secret purposes, and have all knowledge; and if I have all** [the supernatural] **faith necessary to relocate mountains** [See Matt. 17:20], **but do not have love** [for people], **I am nothing.** **3) And if I donate all my possessions to feed poor people, and if I surrender my body to be burned** [Note: This probably refers to becoming a martyr, but some manuscripts read, "that I may be able to boast"], **but do not have love** [for people], **it is no benefit to me.**

4) [Note: The following traits should be understood in the context of love for people]. **Love is patient** [with people], **and is kind** [to them]; **love does not envy** [what people are or have]; **love does not boast** [of being superior to others], **it is not arrogant** [in dealing with people]. **5)** [Love] **does not act improperly** [toward people]; **it does not insist on having its own way** [at the expense of others]; **it is not easily irritated** [by others]; **it does not keep track of the wrongs** [done by others]. **6)** [Love] **is not glad about the evil** [that people do], **but is glad about the truth** [i.e., the good in their lives]. **7)** [Love] **conceals all** [people's] **faults; it believes** [the best about] **all people; it hopes** [for the best in] **all people; it endures** [ill treatment from] **all people.**

8) Love will never cease. But though there are [now supernatural gifts of] **prophecies,** [someday] **they will be abolished** [i.e., such gifts will cease to be exercised]. **Though there are** [now supernatural gifts of] **languages,** [someday] **they will stop** [i.e., such gifts will cease to be exercised]. **Though there is** [now the supernatural gift of] **knowledge,** [someday] **it will be abolished** [i.e., this gift will cease to be exercised]. **9) For** [now] **we have partial knowledge and partial prophetic messages,** **10) but when that which is complete comes** [i.e., the full revelation of God's will, contained in the New Testament Scriptures], **then the partial will be abolished** [i.e., the supernatural gifts, which provided only part of the revealed will of God, will cease to be exercised]. **11) When I was a child I spoke,**

thought and reasoned like a child. But now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things. [Note: Paul uses an analogy to illustrate that the church made use of the supernatural gifts in its infancy, but that these would no longer be needed when it matured]. **12) For now** [i.e., during the church's infant state] **we see in a mirror** [Note: God's word is elsewhere likened to a mirror. See James 1:22-25] **indistinctly** [i.e., because of having only partial knowledge and prophecy], **but then** [i.e., when the church matures and has the completed Scriptures], **we will see face to face** [i.e., clearly]. **Now I have [only] partial knowledge, but then I will have full knowledge, just as [God has] full knowledge of me.** **13) But now** [i.e., since the temporary gifts are to pass away], **these three things remain: faith, hope and love; and the most important of them is love.**

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1) You should make loving [others] your aim, yet eagerly desire [to possess] spiritual gifts, and especially [the gift of] prophecy. **2) For the person who speaks in a language [supernaturally] does not speak to people, but to God, for no one can understand him** [i.e., unless there is an interpreter or it is the person's native language]; **he speaks [previously] unrevealed truths under the influence of the Holy Spirit** [or "in his spirit"]. [Note: For a correct understanding of this chapter, it must be kept in mind that Paul is addressing a *misuse* of the gift of speaking in languages supernaturally. The Corinthians were doing this in the wrong way and for the wrong purpose]. **3) But the person who prophesies speaks [God's message] to people to build them up [spiritually], encourage them and comfort them.** **4) The person who speaks in a language [supernaturally], builds up [only] himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.** **5) Now I would like all of you to speak in languages [supernaturally], but I would rather have you prophecy. For the person who prophesies is more important [i.e., to the church] than those who speak in languages [supernaturally], unless that person interprets [the languages], so the church can be built up [spiritually].**

6) But now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in languages [supernaturally], how will I benefit you unless my speaking consists of a revelation [from God], or a [message of]

knowledge [See 12:8], or a prophecy, or a teaching? [i.e., the message must be intelligible to be beneficial]. 7) [This is true] even of inanimate objects which make sounds, such as a flute or harp. If they do not make distinguishable sounds, how will anyone know what tune [or signal] is being played? 8) For if the trumpet gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for a battle? 9) So, unless you people also speak clearly with your tongue, how will your speaking be understood? For it will be like you were speaking into the air. 10) There are, no doubt, many kinds of sounds [i.e., languages] in the world, and none of them is meaningless. 11) So, if I do not know the meaning of the sound [i.e., language], I will [appear] as a foreigner to the person speaking [that language to me]. And the person speaking [to me] will [appear] as a foreigner to me. 12) So, you people also, since you are eager for [supernatural] spiritual gifts, should look for ways to excel in building up the church.

13) Therefore, the person who speaks in a language [supernaturally] should pray [i.e., in advance] for the ability to interpret it [as well]. 14) For if I pray in a language [supernaturally], [it is] my spirit that is praying, but my mind does not understand [what I am saying]. [Note: Here Paul raises an objection to the use of a language without the person knowing what he is saying]. 15) What should I do then? I will pray with my spirit [i.e. from within], and I will pray with my understanding also [i.e., with a knowledge of what I am saying]. I will sing with my spirit, and I will sing with my understanding also. 16) For if you [ask God to] bless with your spirit [i.e., in a language supernaturally], how will the person there, who does not have the gift [i.e., of interpreting the language] be able to say, "May it be so," when you offer [a prayer of] thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? 17) For [though] you truly offer thanksgiving acceptably, the other person is not built up.

18) I thank God that I speak in languages [i.e., supernaturally] more than all of you. 19) However, in the assembly I would rather speak five words with my understanding, so that I can instruct other people also, than to speak ten thousand words in a language [that people do not understand].

20) Brothers, do not be children in the way you think, but be babies in wrongdoing; yet be mature in your thinking.

21) It is written in the law [Isa. 28:11f], “I [i.e., God] will speak to these people [i.e., the Israelites] by men with foreign languages and through the lips of strangers, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.”

22) Therefore, languages [i.e., spoken supernaturally] are for a [miraculous] sign to unbelievers, not to believers. But prophesying is for a [miraculous] sign to believers, not to unbelievers. 23) Therefore, if the whole church assembles together and everyone speaks in languages [i.e., supernaturally], and outsiders [i.e., people who do not understand the language being spoken] or unbelievers come [into the assembly], will they not say that you people are crazy? 24) But if everyone prophesies and someone comes [into the assembly] who is an outsider or an unbeliever, he will be convicted [of his sins] by everyone [i.e., who speaks the message in an intelligible language], and judged by everyone. 25) The secrets of his heart will be revealed so that he will fall [to the ground] on his face and worship God, declaring that God is truly among you.

26) So, what is the conclusion, brothers? When you people assemble together, each one of you has a psalm [to sing], or a lesson [to teach], or a [supernatural] revelation [to give], or a language [to speak supernaturally], or an interpretation [of that language]. Everything that is done should be for the building up [of the church]. 27) If any person speaks in a language [supernaturally], there should be [only] two, or at most three people [doing it in one meeting], and they should take turns. And [only] one person should interpret [the language spoken]. 28) But if there is no interpreter present [at the meeting], the person [i.e., with the ability to speak a language supernaturally] should remain quiet in the assembly. [Note: This implies that the speaker would know before he begins speaking whether or not an interpreter is present]. [In that case], he should speak [only] to himself and to God. [See verse 2].

29) And [only] two or three prophets should speak [in one meeting], and [then] other people should determine the significance [of their messages]. 30) But if something is revealed [supernaturally, at about the same time] to another person sitting nearby, the first one should finish speaking [i.e., before the second one begins]. 31) For all of you [i.e., who have the gifts], can prophesy, one at a time, so that all of you may learn and be encouraged. 32) And the prophets’ spirits are [to be] under

the prophets' control [i.e., a prophet was to determine if or when he exercised his gift], **33) because God is not a God of disorder but of peace** [i.e., harmony].

As is the practice in all of the churches of the saints [i.e., God's holy people], **34) the women should remain quiet in the assemblies. For they are not permitted to speak** [i.e., in a language supernaturally, or to prophesy], **but they are to be in subjection** [i.e., to male leaders. See I Tim. 2:11-12], **as the law also says.** [See Gen. 3:16?]. **35) And if they want to find out about something, they should ask their own husbands at home** [i.e., instead of asking someone else in the assembly and thereby suggesting insubordination to their husbands]. **For it is a shame for a woman to speak in the assembly.** [See verse 34]. **36) Did the message of God originate from you** [i.e., the church in Corinth]? **Or, were you people the only ones who received it?**

37) If any man thinks he is a prophet or has a spiritual gift, he should realize that the things I am writing to you are the Lord's commandment. **38) But if any man does not know this, he should remain ignorant.** [Note: The Greek may mean, "If any man does not recognize this (truth), he will not be recognized (in the Judgment)"].

39) Therefore, my brothers, desire eagerly to prophesy and [yet] do not prohibit people from speaking in a language [supernaturally]. **40) But everything** [in the assembly] **should be done properly and orderly.**

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the good news which I preached to you. You received it; you are standing firm in it; 2) [and] you have been saved by it also, if you hold on to it firmly [i.e., continue believing and practicing it]. **For if you do not [hold on to it firmly], you will have believed [it] all for nothing.**

3) For I passed on to you the [following] main principles that I received [i.e., by revelation]: **Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; 4) He was buried; He was raised [from the dead] on the third day, according to the Scriptures; 5) and He appeared to Cephas** [i.e., Peter. See Luke 24:34], **and then to the twelve apostles.** [See Luke 24:33]. **6) After that He appeared to over five hundred brothers at one**

time, most of whom are still alive, but some have died. 7) Then He appeared to James [Note: This was probably Jesus' half-brother. See Acts 12:17; Gal. 1:19], and then to all of the apostles. [See John 20:26]. 8) Then last of all, He appeared to me also, as someone born abnormally. [Note: This probably refers to Paul being converted later than the rest of the apostles]. 9) For I am the least [significant] of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10) But I am whatever I am because of God's unearned favor, and the favor He showed me was not for nothing [i.e., Paul made the most of his conversion by being extra diligent in his service to God]. But I worked harder than all the other apostles, yet it was not I, but God's favor on me [that accomplished it]. 11) So, whether it was I, or the other apostles [who did the work], this is [the message] that we have preached, and that you people have received.

12) Now if it is preached that Christ was raised from the dead, how can some people among you say that people will not be raised from the dead? 13) But if there is no resurrection from the dead, [then] Christ has not been raised up either. 14) And if Christ has not been raised up, then our preaching is for nothing, and your faith is for nothing too. 15) And also, we are found to be false witnesses about God because we testified that God raised up Christ [from the dead], when [in reality] He did not raise Him up if, in fact, the dead are not raised up. 16) For if dead people are not raised up, [then] neither has Christ been raised. 17) And if Christ has not been raised up, [then] your faith is for nothing; you are still condemned by your sins. 18) Then [also], those who have died in [fellowship with] Christ are lost. 19) If we have placed our hope in Christ while in this life only, we are to be pitied more than all [other] people.

20) But now Christ has been raised up from the dead; [He is] the first fruits of those who have died. [Note: By "first fruits" is meant the first installment of the crop which promises the entire harvest eventually]. 21) For since death happened to a man [i.e., Adam], the resurrection from the dead also happened to a man [i.e., Christ]. 22) For as all people die [physically] in [their relationship to] Adam, so also will all people be made alive [physically] in [their relationship to] Christ. [Note: However, some view "made alive" as referring to the new spiritual life given to believers]. 23) But each one [is

raised up] **in his own turn: Christ as the first fruits** [See verse 20]; **then those who are Christ's** [i.e., believers], **when He returns. 24) Then** [i.e., at Christ's return] **the end** [of the world] **will occur, when He will turn over the kingdom to God, the Father, after He has abolished all** [hostile] **dominion, authority and power. 25) For Christ must** [continue to] **rule** [over His kingdom, the church] **until God has put all of His enemies under Christ's feet. 26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27) For He** [i.e., God] **placed everything in subjection under His** [i.e., Christ's] **feet. But when God said, "Everything is in subjection [to Him]," it is clear that this did not include God** [Himself], **who placed everything in subjection to Him** [i.e., Christ]. **28) And after everything** [else] **has been subjected to Christ, then the Son Himself will also be subjected** [i.e., He will subject Himself] **to God, who subjected everything to Christ, so that God may rule over everything.**

29) Otherwise [i.e., if there were no resurrection], **what do people accomplish by being immersed for those who have** [already] **died? If dead people are not raised up at all, why then are people immersed on their behalf?** [Note: The foregoing rendition is the most commonly held one of over 30 interpretations given to this very difficult verse. Other possibilities are: a) "immersed in view of (being raised from) the dead," b) "immersed in view of being dead (to sin)," c) "immersed in view of (having to suffer) death," d) "immersed in view of (someday joining) the dead"]. **30) Why do we also risk danger every hour** [i.e., if there were no resurrection]? **31) I face death every day, I assure you brothers, as surely as I boast of** [fellowship with] **you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32) What benefit was it to me, from a human standpoint, if I fought wild animals in Ephesus, and** [yet] **the dead are not raised?** [Note: This probably refers to Paul facing ferocious opposition from people there in Ephesus]. **We should** [just] **eat and drink, for tomorrow we** [may] **die. 33) Do not be fooled; bad company ruins good moral behavior. 34) Come to your senses; do what is right and stop sinning. Some of you do not know God** [i.e., in a personal way]. **I am saying this to make you ashamed.**

35) But someone will ask, "How are dead people raised up?" and "What kind of a body will they have?" 36) You foolish person. The seed you plant does not come to life [i.e., grow] **unless it dies. 37) And what you yourself sow is not the**

plant that will [eventually] come up, but simply a seed. It may be a grain of wheat or something else. 38) But God gives it the [kind of] body He wants [it to have], so each seed gets its own plant. 39) All flesh is not the same [Note: The word “flesh” here refers to the material composition of matter, and in no way suggests anything sinful, as it does in many other places in Paul’s writings]. But mankind has one [kind of] flesh; animals have another kind; birds have another; and fish [still] another. 40) Also, there are heavenly bodies [i.e., stars and planets] and earthly bodies [i.e., men and animals]. But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one [kind], and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another [kind]. 41) The sun has one [kind] of splendor, and the moon has another [kind], and the stars [still] another. For [even] one star’s splendor is different from another’s. 42) It is the same way with the resurrection of dead people. [A person’s body] is buried [only] to decay; it is raised up never to decay again. 43) It is buried in dishonor; it is raised up in splendor. It is buried in weakness; it is raised up in power. 44) It is buried as a physical body; it is raised up as a spiritual body. If there is [such a thing as] a physical body, [then] there is also a spiritual body. 45) So, it is also written [Gen. 2:7], “The first man, Adam, became a living being.” The last Adam [i.e., Christ], became the Spirit who gives [never ending] life. [See John 5:21]. 46) However, the spiritual [body] does not come first, but the physical [body does]; then the spiritual [body comes]. 47) The first man [i.e., Adam] came from the dust of the ground [See Gen. 2:7]; the second man [i.e., Christ] came from heaven. 48) Just as earthly people are like the man who came from dust; so heavenly people are like the man who came from heaven. 49) And just as we [now] appear [in both a physical and spiritual body] like the man who came from dust [i.e., Adam]; we will also [someday] appear [in both a physical? and a spiritual body] like the man who came from heaven [i.e., Christ].

50) Now this is what I am saying, brothers; flesh and blood [i.e., physical bodies] cannot possess the kingdom of God [i.e., the heavenly realm]; neither can [bodies that] decay possess [a place] which does not decay. 51) Look, I am telling you a secret truth: We will not all die, but we will all be changed [i.e., physically and spiritually] 52) in a split second, as quickly as the twinkle of an eye, when the last trumpet blows. For the

trumpet will blow and dead people [i.e., believers] will be raised up, never to decay again, and [the living] will be changed [i.e., physically and spiritually]. 53) For this [body] that can decay must be clothed with [a body] which cannot decay. And this [body] that can die must be clothed with [a body] which cannot die. 54) But when this [body] that can decay has been clothed with one which cannot decay, and this [body] that can die has been clothed with one which cannot die, then the Scriptural saying will be fulfilled [Isa. 25:8], “Death has been swallowed up [i.e., eliminated] by victory.” [Note: The reference here is to the time when believers will experience victory over death by being resurrected or taken directly to be with God]. 55) [Hos. 13:14 says], “Death, where is your victory [over people]? Death, where is your [harmful] sting?” 56) The [harmful] sting that causes [physical] death is sin [See Rom. 5:12]; and the power of sin [to do this] comes from the law. [See Rom. 8:2]. 57) But I thank God for giving us victory [i.e., over sin and death] through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58) Therefore, my dearly loved brothers, stand firm [in the faith]; do not be moved [from your commitment]. Always do your best to work for the Lord, since you know that your labor in the Lord’s [service] is not for nothing.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) Now concerning the collection for the [needy] saints [whom you wrote me about]: You people also should do what I directed the churches in Galatia to do. 2) On every first day of the week [i.e., at the regular Sunday assembly] each one of you should set aside and store up [money] in proportion to your income, so that no collections will have to be taken when I come. 3) Then when I arrive, I will send letters with the men you appoint to take the gift to Jerusalem. 4) And if it seems suitable for me to go also, they can go with me.

5) But I will come to you after I have gone through Macedonia, for I am planning to go through Macedonia. [Note: This was the Roman province of northern Greece]. 6) And perhaps I will stay with you, even for the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7) But I do not plan to see you yet, as I will [only] be passing through. For I am hoping to stay with you for some time [i.e., in the future], if the

Lord permits. 8) But I will wait [here] in Ephesus until the Day of Pentecost [Note: This was an annual Jewish festival, held at spring harvest time]; **9) because a great door [of opportunity] has opened up to me [here] for doing an effective work [for God], but there are [also] many enemies who oppose me.** [See Acts 19].

10) Now if [or, probably, “when”] Timothy comes [i.e., there to Corinth], make sure he feels at ease [Note: Due to his youthful age and inexperience, Timothy was probably inclined to be easily intimidated], **for he is doing the Lord’s work, just as I am. 11) So, do not let anyone look down on him, but help him on his journey in peace so that he can come to me, for I am expecting him [to come] with the brothers.**

12) Now concerning our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the other brothers, but he was not at all willing to do so at this time. But he will go when he has the opportunity.

13) You people should be alert; stand firm in the faith; act like [godly] men; be [spiritually] strong. 14) Everything you do should be done lovingly.

15) You know that [members of] the family of Stephanas are the first fruits of Achaia [i.e., the first converts in that province of southern Greece], and that they have committed themselves to serving God’s people [i.e., the saints]. 16) Now I urge you, brothers, that you should also submit to [the leadership of] such people and to everyone [else] who works and labors [with them]. 17) And I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived [here in Ephesus], for they have provided [me] with what you were not able to. 18) For they cheered me up, as they have cheered [or, will cheer] you up [also]. [Note: How these three men did this for Paul and the Corinthians is not known]. **You should give recognition to such men.**

19) The churches in Asia send you their greetings [Note: This was the westernmost province in present-day Turkey]. **Aquila and Prisca** [Note: This married couple were close friends and fellow-tentmakers of Paul], **along with the church that meets in their house, send you their warm greetings in [fellowship with] Christ. 20) All of the brothers [and sisters] send you their greetings [also]. Greet one another with a holy kiss [i.e., to signify affection, yet without sensuality].**

21) These greetings are being written with my own hand. [See II Thess. 3:17].

22) If anyone [there] **does not love the Lord, he deserves to be cut off from God. O Lord, come** [back soon]. **23) May the unearned favor of the Lord Jesus Christ** [continue to] **be with you. 24) [I send] my love to all of you in** [fellowship with] **Christ Jesus. May it be so.**