

1. I Corinthians 13 is called "The Love Chapter". It is right in the middle of Paul's teaching on spiritual gifts and puts that teaching into the proper place. The gifts are important, but without 'love' nothing else matters. The elderly Apostle John would repeat over and over as he was carried to worship services in Ephesus: "Little children, love one another."

2. Three Greek words for love:

- A. Eros - physical love - "if" love
- B. Philos - brotherly love - "because of" love
- C. Agape - sacrificial love - "in spite of" love

3. I Corinthians 12:31: "You desire eagerly the greater gifts but now I will show you the excellent way." And the teaching on love is "the excellent way" that follows in chapter 13.

4. I Corinthians 13:8 is used by some to say that the gift of tongues has ceased, but that is poor exegesis, as we know that "knowledge" (another piece of that verse) has not ceased.

5. Chapter 14: The gifts of the Spirit are to be used to build up and encourage the body - to be used in the service of others. They are not for self-aggrandizement.

6. Paul is concerned that any use of the gift of tongues in public worship be interpreted so that the body of Christ is edified.

7. The last part of chapter 14 gives a "snapshot" view of the worship of the early church. It was not passive - everyone participated.

8. Paul permitted the exercise of the gift of tongues - with interpretation - in public services. He also permitted the use of the gift of prophecy - "revelation" - as long as the one speaking was in control and not in some sort of prophetic ecstasy.

9. In chapter 11, Paul assumes that women will both pray and prophesy in public worship. In this chapter he is speaking against women speaking in such a way that they disrupt services or show disrespect to their husbands.

10. The picture of the worship service of the early church, which emerges here, is that it was both spontaneous and orderly. It did not seem to revolve around the "pastor teacher" as our services to today. God spoke through the ordinary Christian as well as through the specially designated "pastor".

1. Four important passages that stand out on the teachings of the Apostle Paul:
 - A. Rom. 3 - It gives us the heart of the Gospel and explains what happened on the cross.
 - B. Romans 8: It expresses the scope of our salvation for predestination to glorification.
 - C. I Cor. 13 - In its description of love it focuses us on the heart of the Christian life.
 - D. I Corinthians 15 - It shows us the meaning and the importance of the resurrection.
2. Paul has dealt with an incredible range of practical issues in this book:
 - A. Division in the church
 - B. Immorality in the church
 - C. How to handle the “gray” areas, like eating meat sacrificed to idols
 - D. Proper decorum in worship and the use of the spiritual gifts
3. In Chapter 15 he is tackling a doctrinal issue - he defends and explains the doctrine of the resurrection, upon which all of Christianity rises or falls. “If Christ is not risen, our faith is useless and we are still in our sins.”
4. Four things to focus on in regards to the resurrection:
 - A. It roots Christianity historically and makes it a distinctive religion.
 1. Jesus’ resurrection is critical to His claim to actually be God in the flesh.
 2. Christianity invites evaluation and there is abundant evidence of its most spectacular claims:
 - a. God invaded history in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Jesus died, was buried and rose from the dead.
 - B. There is a massive amount of evidence that Jesus did actually rise from the dead.
 1. At the time of Paul’s writing, there were 500 witnesses of His resurrection alive, some of whom were not “believers” until after they saw Him alive.
 2. All of these witnesses went to their graves without recanting that they saw Him alive after His crucifixion - most died because they would not recant.
 3. Many people who have set out to disprove the resurrection have instead become believers.
 - C. Paul had to defend the resurrection because 1st century people had just as hard a time as 21st century people believing that someone could be dead and then come alive after 3 days!
 - D. Christ’s resurrection is all the proof that we need (as believers) to be sure that we too will rise from death. Because He lives, we also will live. “Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
5. I Cor. 15:7-10: Insight into what made Paul “tick” - he saw himself as important because he was chosen by God and as insignificant and unworthy, because he was one “abnormally” born.
6. Grace: “By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect...”
7. The tantalizing reference Paul makes to “fighting wild beasts” in Ephesus makes us realize how much we do not know about the life of Paul.
8. The Gentile churches took up a collection to meet the needs of the famine-stricken Jewish church in Jerusalem. We are one body - when one part suffers, we all do, and we are responsible to help one another.
9. I Corinthians 16:22 is translated, “Come, Lord Jesus.” The word that Paul wrote there and that would have been shouted back by the Corinthian believers was “Maranatha” - the Lord is coming!

1. Setting the stage for the Book of 2 Corinthians: The believers corrected the practical abuses Paul talked about in 1 Corinthians; conditions in the church, however, deteriorated because of the influence of Judaizers from Palestine; one of the spokesman openly insulted Paul; Titus is sent to Corinth with a “severe letter” from Paul; Titus arrives back in Macedonia with an encouraging report of the Corinthian church’s responsiveness to that letter.

2. Paul was chiefly a pastor at heart and he loved his people. He urges them to forgive and reaffirm their love for the one who had caused trouble and been disciplined. The enemy stirs up opposition. Paul provides a model of forgiveness for us when we are slandered - even by another brother.

3. The intense trial to which Paul refers could have been the “wild beasts” mentioned to 1 Corinthians or some kind of near-fatal illness. We will see other possibilities later in this book.

4. Comfort: “Praise be to the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” The ability to comfort others is one of the blessings that comes from our own times of trouble.

5. The greatest hurts and trials of our lives are the foundation upon which our unique and often our most powerful ministries are built.

6. 2 Cor. 2:14 - Chapter 7 describe the nature of Paul’s apostolic ministry. His authority had been challenged and some wanted him to produce his credentials. The results of his ministry were converts and churches all over Asia and Macedonia - the Corinthians themselves were his credentials.

7. In chapter 3, the Law and the Spirit are compared - the Old and the New Covenants.

A. The Law brought condemnation because it showed us how far short we fall of those demands; the Spirit brings righteousness.

B. We were in bondage to the Law, but the Spirit of the Lord brings freedom.

C. The radiance of Moses’ face after being in God’s presence was glorious (so much so that it had to be veiled), but it faded the farther he got from that experience. But now “we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

8. The “ever-increasing” glory experience is called “sanctification.” It is the process by which we are being made over into the exact likeness of Jesus.

9. People should know we are different: we should shine with the radiance of Christ and we should emit the fragrance of Christ.

1. Chapters 4-6 give us more insight into the life of Paul, the great missionary and church planter. The conditions under which Paul consistently had to work: “Troubles, hardships, distresses, beatings, imprisonments, riots, hard work, sleepless nights, hunger, genuine yet regarded as an imposter, known yet regarded as unknown, dying yet living on, beaten but not killed, sorrowful but always rejoicing, poor yet making many rich, having nothing yet possessing everything.”

2. How do you stay focused while enduring all of that? Paul was living every moment in the light of eternity.

Life Principle #1: Eternity will last longer than time.

A. “The One who raised Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in His presence.” (Chapter 4)

B. “We do not lose heart even though outwardly we are wasting away... for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.” (Chapter 4)

C. This earthly body is not even worth comparing with the new body we will have in heaven. (Chapter 5)

Life Principle #2: Always act in full consciousness that you will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and explain your actions.

D. “We all must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ...” (Chapter 5)

Life Principle #3: Is what I am doing right now important in light of the fact that people without Christ people are on their way to hell.

E. “Since we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men.”

4. Revivals have this same “eternity” focus:

A. George Whitefield: “They heard like people hearing for eternity.”

B. Alexander Webster: “They hear as for eternity.”

5. Question: Do I really live for eternity?

6. Great verses of 2 Corinthians 5:

A. Verse 10 - “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

B. Verse 14: “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that One died for all therefore all died.”

C. Verse 17: “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”

D. Verse 21: “God made Him who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might have the righteousness of God.”

1. Jesus made a trade on the cross - our sin for His righteousness.

2. “Imputed righteousness is not anything we have done or earned but the righteousness of Christ deposited into our accounts so when God looks at us He sees Jesus.”

7 Chapter 6: “Do not be yoked together unequally with non-believers.” This is in a general form and can apply to many situations. Paul is saying “do not become partners”; he is not saying, “never cooperate.” The balance lies in being “in the world but not of the world” (Jesus in John 17).

1. Chapters 7-9 pick up the narrative Paul laid aside in chapter 2. Any strain in the relationship between him and the Corinthian church has been removed because of their genuine repentance.

2. 2 Cor. 7:10: "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."

- A. Being "sorry" and being truly "repentant" are very different.
- B. What I do with the feelings of remorse is really important.
 - 1. Understand that I have sinned against God. (Psalm 51)
 - 2. My sin revolts me, just as it does God.
 - 3. I confess my sin both to God and the one(s) against whom I sinned, making restitution if necessary (as in the case of Zaccheus).
 - 4. Having obtained God's forgiveness, I turn my back on that sin.
- C. "Sorry" can mean:
 - 1. I am sorry I got caught.
 - 2. I feel guilty but do nothing to remedy the sin.
 - 3. I feel sorry but try to hide the sin.
 - 4. I feel sorry and confess the sin, but I do not renounce it - I keep doing it.
- D. God's call is to complete repentance.

3. Chapters 8 and 9 are concerned with the relief offering taken for the famine-stricken church in Jerusalem:

- A. Paul was taking this offering to Jerusalem when he was arrested (and was eventually sent to Rome).
- B. The offering was Paul's idea.
 - 1. To share the bounty of one group with the need of the other
 - 2. To prove the genuineness of the Gentile believers to the Jewish believers
 - 3. To heal the strained relations between these 2 groups
 - 4. Paul flatters, encourages and lets the Gentile church know that he expects them to give generously to this need.
 - 5. Paul uses Jesus' example to motivate: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that through His poverty you might become rich."

5. Christian giving is summed up this way in Chapter 9: "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver... You will be made rich in every way so you can be generous on every occasion..." The more we give (out of joy and not duty), the more we will have to give. The activity of giving is always tied by Paul to God's great gift: "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

6. The law of tithing found in the Old Testament is not reiterated in the New Testament, not because God expects less of us, but because He expects more of us, and if we honor Him in this, He will honor us in extraordinary ways.

7. Titus was one of Paul's apprentices. Having an apprentice keeps our walk straight and our hearts warm, and it multiplies our ministries. It is an important principle of discipleship.