

Dividing around People

The Goal

1. The Goal
2. The Problem
3. The Solution

The Goal

1 Cor 1:10 *Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

Paul encourages the Corinthians to **speak** the same thing.

We learn from the immediate context that he wants everyone to say they are of **Christ**.

He is not commanding that we all agree perfectly on every issue. In chapter eight he acknowledges that it was acceptable that they had different views on eating meats offered to idols.

1 Cor 10:31-33 *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. NKJV*

There are certain principles in the eating of meat that we need to follow today.

- Whatever we do, we should do with a good conscience.
- We should avoid causing a brother to stumble.
- Don't be overly concerned about the things that don't have eternal consequences.

1 Cor 15:12-19 *Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. NKJV*

We **must** all say the same thing about the resurrection of Christ!

1 Cor 1:13 *Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? NKJV*

We must all agree that Christ was crucified for our sins and that **forgiveness** is granted when we are baptized in the name of Christ.

Paul wanted no divisions among the church of God at Corinth.

Paul expected that they be **perfectly** joined together in the same mind and judgment.

The Problem

1 Cor 1:11-13 *For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? NKJV*

There were **contentions** among them concerning who they were following.
Some were following Paul, some Apollos, and others Cephas instead of or in **conjunction** to following Christ.

1 Cor 3:1-4 *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal? NKJV*

The root of the problem was that the Corinthians were still carnal people instead of **spiritual** people.
Whenever there are envy, strife, and divisions, there are **carnal** people.
The word carnal means something that is fleshly or of this world. (Romans 15:27; 1 Corinthians 9:11; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Peter 2:11)

The Solutions

Christ is the only one who matters!

1 Cor 1:13 *Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. NKJV*

Paul **stressed** the importance of Christ, His cross, and His gospel.

1 Cor 1:18 *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. NKJV*

1 Cor 1:22-25 *For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. NKJV*

Paul said that he, Apollos, and Peter preached Christ **crucified**.

1 Cor 1:30-31 *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." NKJV*

We should glory in the **Lord** not in other people.

1 Cor 2:2 *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. NKJV*

Paul was **determined** to keep the focus on Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

People should never be our focus!

1 Cor 2:10-16 *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16 For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. NKJV*

Paul said that they were simply **messengers** of the things God had revealed to them through the Spirit.

1 Cor 3:1-4 The spiritual person is the one who understands the place that men have in the kingdom.

1 Cor 3:5-6 *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. NKJV*

Paul referred to himself and Apollos as simply **servants** of God who happened to share God's message with them.

Minister - diakonos (dee-ak'-on-os); probably from an obsolete diako (to run on errands; compare NT:1377); an attendant, i.e. (genitive case) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties). (Strong's Concordance)

Thayer adds – "Those who advance other's interests even at the sacrifice of their own."

Paul also wants the Corinthians to remember that Paul and Apollos played **small** roles in their salvation. They simply planted and watered. God gave the increase.

1 Cor 3:9-15 *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. NKJV*

Paul and Apollos were **builders** who built on the foundation of Christ. It's important that none of you put stock in your earthly wisdom.

1 Cor 3:21-23 *Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come — all are yours. 23 And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. NKJV*

The conclusion is that we should **never** boast in men, even the apostles of Jesus Christ. We belong to **Christ** not men.

1 Cor 4:1-5 *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will*

both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. NKJV

Paul instructs the Corinthians to think of him as a servant of Christ and a **steward** of the mysteries of God. Paul's responsibility is to be faithful to Christ and God.

1 Cor 4:6-7 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? NKJV

He wanted to make sure that the **saints** who made up the church of God at Corinth realized that they were also simply ministers, stewards, planters, waterers, builders and messengers.

They **received** everything they have.

As a result, they should not be puffed up against each other. This is the foundation of a lot of their problems.

Phil 2:3-4 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. NKJV*

3 John 9-10 *I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. NKJV*

If others want to follow you instead of Christ, you have the **obligation** of reminding them of your insignificance and Christ's preeminence.

If anyone among us wants to have the preeminence, we need to deal with it **immediately** before it becomes a bigger problem.