

THE BOOK

OF

FIRST CORINTHIANS

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The Book of First Corinthians

Syllabus

1. Geographical and Historical Setting of Corinth
2. Divisions in the Church at Corinth
3. Incest and Law Suits
4. Marriage
5. Meats Offered to Idols and Christian Liberty
6. These Things Were Our Examples
7. Covering, Authority, and Public Worship
8. The Gifts of the Spirit
9. Faith, Hope and Charity
10. Order in the Assembly
11. The Resurrection.
12. Closing Words & Review

Most of the material in this course was taken from *The Letters to the Corinthians, Revised Edition*, William Barclay. Westminster John Knox Press. Louisville, KY. 1975.

Requirements for Course:

1. View all videos.
2. Read materials and the Book of First Corinthians in the Bible.
3. Final Exam

LESSON ONE

“The Epistles to the Corinthians”

Background of Corinth

- 1) Corinth located on an isthmus only four miles across between the Corinthian Gulf on the west and the Saronic Gulf to the east.
 - a) One of the greatest trading and commercial centers of the ancient world.
 - b) All traffic from Athens and the north of Greece to Sparta had to be routed through Corinth.
 - c) The greater part of the east to west traffic of the Mediterranean passed through Corinth by choice.
 - d) At the extreme southern tip of Greece was known as Cape Malea. It was dangerous.
 - i) Mariners sailed up the Saronic Gulf; if their boats were small enough, they were dragged across the isthmus on roller.
 - ii) If boats too large, cargo unloaded, carried across isthmus and reloaded on ships in the other gulf.
 - iii) Saved a journey of 202 miles around the cape, which was the most dangerous of the Mediterranean.
- 2) Object of luxury found their way to the markets visited by every nation in the civilized world.
- 3) Corinth was called the Vanity Fair of the ancient world.
- 4) Corinth was a rich and populous city with one of the greatest commercial trades in the ancient world.

The Wickedness of Corinth

- 1) Corinth had a reputation for commercial prosperity, but she was also a byword for evil living.
 - a) The word *korinthiazesthai*, to live like a Corinthian, had become a part of the Greek language, and it meant to live with drunken and immoral debauchery.
 - b) The very name Corinth was synonymous with debauchery and there was one source of evil in the city which was known all over the civilized world.
 - i) Above the isthmus towered the hill of the Acropolis; on it stood the great temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.
 - ii) To the temple was attached one thousand priestesses who were sacred prostitutes.
- 2) Vices came from traders and sailors from the ends of the earth.
- 3) Corinth became not only a synonym for wealth and luxury, drunkenness and debauchery, but also for filth.

The History of Corinth

- 1) Corinth was an ancient city.
- 2) In 146 B.C., disaster befell Corinth.
 - a) The Romans captured Corinth and left her a desolate heap of ruins.
 - b) Exactly 100 years later, in 46 B.C., Julius Caesar rebuilt her.
 - c) She became a Roman colony.
 - d) She became a capital city, the metropolis of the Roman province of Achaea, which included practically all Greece.
- 3) In the days of Paul, the population was very mixed.
 - a) Roman soldiers, who were granted citizenship, were sent to newly-founded cities and given a grand of land.
 - b) When Corinth was rebuilt, the merchants came back.
 - c) There were many Jews among the population.
 - d) Many people from the east, who brought their exotic customs and their hysterical ways.
 - e) A conglomerate of Jews, ex-soldiers, philosophers, merchants, sailors, freedmen, slaves, trades-people, hucksters and agents of every form of vice.
- 4) It was in this environment that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

Paul in Corinth

- 1) Paul stayed longer in Corinth (18 months) than any other with the exception of Ephesus.
- 2) Paul left Macedonia with his life in peril and crossed over to Athens.
- 3) There he had little success and went to Corinth.
- 4) The whole story of that 18 months is recorded in Acts 18:1-17.
- 5) When Paul arrived in Corinth, he lived with Aquila and Priscilla.
- 6) He preached in the synagogue with great success.
- 7) When Timothy and Silas arrived, he redoubled his efforts, but the Jews were stubbornly hostile; he had to leave the synagogue.
- 8) Took up residence with Justus, who lived next door to the synagogue.
- 9) His most notable convert was Crispus, who was the ruler of the synagogue.

Correspondence with Corinth

- 1) Paul learned that things weren't well at Corinth, and he wrote the church.
- 2) When all the Corinthian letters were collected, they were not arranged in the right order.
 - a) There was a letter which preceded 1 Corinthians. (1 Cor. 5:9).
 - i) Refers to the previous letter.
 - ii) Some believe it is contained in 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.
 - b) News came to Paul from various sources of trouble at Corinth.
 - i) News from household of Chloe.
 - ii) News from Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus to Ephesus.

- iii) News came in a letter in which the Corinthian Church had asked Paul's guidance on various problems (1 Cor. 7:1).
- c) The result of the letter was that things became worse than ever.
- d) Paul's visit did no good at all. Matters were exacerbated, and Paul wrote an exceedingly severe letter. (2 Cor. 2:4).
 - i) The severe letter was not 1 Corinthians, because everything was under control.
 - ii) 2 Corinthians chapters 1 through 9, everything is made up (letter of reconciliation, probably written from Philippi).
 - iii) Chapters 10 to 13 are heart-wrenching.
 - iv) Most scholars believe that chapters 10 to 13 are the severe letter; became misplaced when Paul's letters were put together (A.D. 90).

The Main Topics of First Corinthians

- 1) Chapters 1 through 4, the division of the church.
- 2) Chapter 5, fornication; the church and the world.
- 3) Chapter 6, going to court against a brother.
- 4) Chapter 7, marriage.
- 5) Chapters 8, 9, 10:
 - a) Meats offered to idols.
 - b) Christian liberty.
 - c) Sacraments.
- 6) Chapter 11, Covering and headship; the Lord's Supper.
- 7) Chapters 12, 13, and 14: Spiritual gifts and order in the church.
- 8) Chapter 15, the Resurrection.
- 9) Chapter 16, conclusion.

Divisions in the Church

An Apostolic Introduction

First Corinthians 1:1-3

- 1) The introduction tells us about two things.
 - a) The Church which is at Corinth.
 - b) The individual Christian.
 - i) He is consecrated in Jesus Christ.
 - ii) Those who have been called to be God's dedicated people.
 - iii) The company of those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord.
- 2) No lag in spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 1:4-9).
 - a) *Charisma* means a gift freely given to a man; a gift which he did not deserve and which he could never by himself have early.
 - i) Salvation is the *charisma* of God.
 - (1) Something man could never achieve himself.

- (2) It is an unearned gift, coming from the generosity of the love of God.
- ii) Whatever special gifts man may possess.
 - (1) Gift of speech.
 - (2) Gift of healing.
 - (3) Gift of music.
 - (4) Gift of art.

Division in the Church

- 1) The word used to describe the church was *schismata*, which is the word for *rents in a garment*.
- 2) Four parties identified in the Church at Corinth.
 - a) Paul.
 - i) Paul preached the gospel of Christian freedom and the end of the law.
 - ii) Likely this party attempted to turn liberty into licence and using their new found Christianity as an excuse to do as they liked.
 - b) Apollos.
 - i) An Alexandria; an eloquent man; well versed in scripture.
 - ii) Alexandria was the center of intellectual activity.
 - iii) Scholars made a science of allegorizing the scriptures and finding the most recondite meanings in the simplest passages.
 - iv) They were the people who intellectualized Christianity; fast turning Christianity into a philosophy instead of a religion.
 - c) Cephas.
 - i) These followers were most likely Jews.
 - ii) They sought to teach that a man must still observe the Jewish law.
 - iii) They were legalists who exalted law and belittled grace.
 - d) Christ.
 - i) Probably a small and rigid sect who claimed that they were the only true Christians in Corinth.
 - ii) Acted as if Christ belonged to them.
 - iii) May well describe a little, intolerant, self-righteous group.

LESSON TWO

Chapters 1-4 (Continued)

The Gospel as a Stumbling Block and Foolishness

First Corinthians 1:18-25.

- 1) The four great sermons in the Book of Acts (2:14-39; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 10:36-43).
 - a) A claim that the great promised time of God has come.
 - b) A summary of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - c) A claim that all this was the fulfillment of prophecy.
 - d) An assertion that Jesus will come again.
 - e) An urgent invitation to men to repent and receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) To the Jews this message was a stumbling block.
 - a) To them it was incredible that one who had ended life upon a cross could possibly be God's Chosen One.
 - i) The Jews had never dreamed of a suffering Messiah.
 - ii) The Jew sought for signs.
 - (1) In 45 A.D., Theudas emerged and persuaded thousands of people to follow him out to the Jordan to divide it and lead them across dry ground.
 - (2) In A.D. 54, an Egyptian persuaded thirty thousand people to follow him out to the Mount of Olives by promising that at his word the walls of Jerusalem would fall down.
 - b) In Jesus, the Jews saw one who was meek and lowly.
 - i) One who deliberately avoided the spectacular.
 - ii) One who served.
 - iii) One who ended on a Cross.
- 3) To the Greeks, the message was foolishness.
 - a) To the Greek, the first characteristic of God was *apatheia*, which means *total inability to feel*.
 - i) A God who suffered or felt emotions was to the Greeks a contradiction.
 - ii) The very idea of incarnation, God becoming a man, was revolting to the Greek mind.
 - iii) To the thinking Greek, the incarnation was an impossibility.
 - b) The Greek sought for wisdom.
 - i) Wisdom to the Greeks came to mean a man with a clever mind and cunning tongue, a mental acrobat, a man who with glittering and persuasive rhetoric could make the worse appear the better reason.
 - ii) They thought not what they were saying, but of how they were saying it.
 - c) The Greeks were intoxicated with fine words; to them the Christian preacher with his blunt message seemed a crude and uncultured figure, to be laughed at and ridiculed rather than to be listened to and respected.

Foolish Things to Confound the Wise

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

- 1) End of 2nd Century: Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, wrote to Trajan the Emperor, saying that the Christians came from every rank in society. But it remains true that the great mass of Christians were simple and humble folk.
- 2) 178 A.D. Celsus wrote a bitter attack upon Christianity.
 - a) He declared that the Christian point of view was, "Let no cultured person draw near, no wise, none sensible; for all that kind of thing we count evil; but if any man is ignorant, if any is wanting in sense and culture, if any is a fool let him come boldly."
 - b) "We see them in their own houses, wool dressers, cobblers and fullers, the most uneducated and vulgar persons."
- 3) In the Empire there were 60 million slaves. In the eyes of the law a slave was a thing not a person at all.
- 4) Christianity brought dignity to men.
 - a) Made people who were things into real men and women; into sons and daughters of God.
 - b) Gave those who had no respect, their self-respect.
 - c) Gave those who had no life, life eternal.
 - d) Told men that even if they did not matter to other men, they still mattered intensely to God.
 - e) Told men who, in the eyes of the world were worthless, that, in the eyes of God they were worth the death of his only Son.
 - f) Christianity was, and still is the most uplifting thing in the whole universe.

Preaching with Power

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- 1) When Paul came to Corinth, three things stand out:
 - a) He came speaking in simplicity.
 - i) In Athens, he had attempted to reduce Christianity to philosophic terms.
 - ii) His sermon in terms of philosophy had had very little effect.
 - iii) Concluded that he would know nothing but Jesus Christ and him upon his Cross.
 - b) He came with results and not with words alone.
 - i) Result of Paul's preaching was that things happened.
 - ii) Demonstrated to be true by the Spirit and by power.
 - iii) He had the proof of changed lives.
 - iv) "The man with knowledge is at the mercy of the man with experience."
 - v) "Whether he turned water into wine or not, I do not know; but in my own house I have seen him turn beer into furniture."

The Wisdom of God

1 Corinthians 2:6-9

- 1) A distinction between different kinds of Christian instruction and different stages of the Christian life.
 - a) *Kerygma* means *a herald's announcement from a king*—this was the plain announcement of the basic facts of Christianity; the announcement of the facts of life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - b) *Didache* means *teaching*; and this was the explanation of the meaning of the facts, which had already been announced.
- 2) Teach not only the facts of Christianity, but the meaning of the facts.
 - a) This is done amongst those who are *teleioi*.
 - b) The KJV translates this word as *perfect*.
 - c) Yet, *teleios* has a physical meaning and a mental meaning.
 - d) It refers to those who are mature.
- 3) To those who are just come into the Church, we talk about the basic elements of Christianity; but, when people are a little more mature we give them deeper teaching about what these basic facts mean.
- 4) “We speak the wisdom of God in mystery.”
 - a) The Greek word *musterion* means something whose meaning is hidden from those who have not been initiated but clear to those who have.
 - b) We go on to explain things which only the man who has already given his heart to Christ can understand.
 - c) Mat. 13. The purpose of parables: Revealed to the disciples, but a mystery to the world.
 - d) Our discoveries are not so much what our minds have found out as what God has told us.
 - e) The more we strive to understand, the more God can tell us.

Spiritual Understanding

1 Corinthians 2:10-16

- 1) The only person who can tell us about God is the Spirit of God.
- 2) Paul distinguishes two kinds of men.
 - a) The man who are *pneumatikoi*.
 - i) *Pneuma* is the word for Spirit.
 - ii) The man who is *pneumatikos* is the man who is sensitive to the Spirit and is guided by the Spirit.
 - b) There is a man who is *psuchikos*.
 - i) *Psuche* in the Greek often is translated *soul*.
 - ii) *Psuche* is that physical life which man shares with every living thing.
 - iii) *Pneuma* is that which makes man different from the rest of creation and kin to God.

I Speaking to Babes

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

- 1) Paul speaks to the Christians at Corinth as being infants or immature ones because of divisions.
- 2) In verse 1, he calls them *ssarkinoi*, which means *flesh*.
 - a) Because a man is a man, he is flesh; but he should not stay that way; he should not be dominated by the flesh.
 - b) Here, flesh means human nature apart from God.
 - c) Men have allowed their lower side of their nature to dominate all their outlook and all their actions.
- 3) The man who plants and waters are the same; it is God who gives the increase.

The Foundation and the Builders

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

- 1) Christ is the only foundation. In him:
 - a) We find forgiveness for past sins.
 - b) We find strength for the present.
 - c) We find hope for the future.
- 2) The foundation of gold, silver, costly stones.
- 3) A foundation of wood, hay, stubble.
- 4) Every man's work will be tried as by fire; if works be destroyed, spirits will be saved.

The Temple of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 3:16-22

- 1) The Church is the temple of God because that is where the Spirit of God dwells.
- 2) The root cause of dissension and consequent destruction of the Church is the worship of intellectual, worldly wisdom.
- 3) It is the pride in the human mind which makes them evaluate and criticize the way in which the message is delivered, the correctness of the rhetoric, the weight of the oratory, the subtleties of the arguments, rather than think only of the content of the message itself.
- 4) The problem with intellectual pride is that it is always two things:
 - a) It is always disputatious.
 - i) Cannot keep silent and admire.
 - ii) It must talk and criticize.
 - iii) Cannot bear to have its opinions contradicted.
 - iv) It must prove that it and it alone is right.
 - v) It is never humble enough to learn.
 - vi) It must always be laying down the law.
 - b) Intellectual pride is characteristically exclusive.

- i) Have a tendency to look down on others rather than to sit down beside them.
Its outlook is that all who do not agree with it are wrong.
- 5) Paul urges the man who would be wise to become a fool.
 - a) A way of urging him to be humble enough to learn.
 - b) No one can teach a man who thinks that he knows it all already.

Stewards and Judgments

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

- 1) Stewards of the secrets which God desires to reveal to his own people.
- 2) Three judgments.
 - a) The judgment of his fellow men.
 - i) In spite of its occasional radical mistakes, the judgment of our fellow men is often right.
 - ii) Every man instinctively admires the basic qualities of honour, honesty, reliability, generosity, sacrifice and love.
 - iii) The judgment of men is often more accurate than we would like to think.
 - b) The judgment of himself.
 - i) A man's judgment of himself can be clouded by self-satisfaction, by pride and by conceit.
 - ii) A man cannot get away from himself and if he loses his self-respect, life becomes an intolerable thing.
 - c) The judgment of God.
 - i) God is the final judge.
 - (1) He knows all the circumstances.
 - (2) God knows all the motives. Man sees the deed but God sees the intention.

Humility of the Apostle

1 Corinthians 4:6-13

- 1) The true preacher seldom uses the word *you* and always uses the word *we*.
 - a) He does not speak down to men.
 - b) He speaks as one who sits where they sit and who is a man of like passions with them.
 - c) Our accent must not be that of criticism and condemnation, but of compassion.
- 2) "What do you possess that you did not receive?"
 - a) In this single sentence Augustine saw the whole doctrine of grace.
 - i) No man could ever have known God unless God had revealed himself.
 - ii) No man could ever have won his own salvation; a man does not save himself, he is saved.
 - b) When we think of what we have done and think of what God has done for us, pride is ruled out and only humble gratitude remains.
- 3) Paul compares the Corinthians' pride, their self-satisfaction, their feeling of superiority with the life that an apostle lives.

- 4) To the Corinthians the Christian life meant flaunting their privileges and reckoning up their achievement; to Paul it meant humble service and a readiness to die for Christ.
- 5) To the ancient world Christian humility was a virtue altogether new.

Not Many Fathers

1 Corinthians 4:14-21

- 1) Paul writes to the Corinthians as a father; many teachers but few fathers.
- 2) He calls upon his children to follow the example of their father.
- 3) Paul moves on to a challenge.
 - a) The Corinthians can talk enough; but it is not their high-sounding words that matter.
 - b) It is their deeds.
 - c) “By their fruits you’ll know them.”
- 4) After dealing with the problem of strife and divisions within the Corinthian Church, Paul goes on to deal with certain very practical questions and certain very grave situations within the Church.
- 5) The next lesson, chapters 5 and 6:
 - a) A case of incest.
 - b) Discipline for the unchaste.
 - c) Dealing with the tendency of the Corinthians to go to law with each other.
 - d) Stresses the need for purity.

LESSON THREE

“Incest and Lawsuits”

Issues of Chapters 5 and 6

- 1) Incest
- 2) Discipline for the unchaste.
- 3) Law Suits against believers.
- 4) Bought with a price.

A Case of Incest

1 Corinthians 5:1-8

- 1) Paul deals with a recurring problem.
 - a) In sexual matters the heathen did not know the meaning of chastity.
 - b) They took their pleasure when and where they wanted it.
 - c) Many converts had just come into the Church.
 - d) It was difficult to unlearn the practices which generations of loose-living had made part of their lives.
- 2) A man had been committing fornication with his step-mother.
- 3) The man was to be excommunicated.
 - a) Punishment was not to be vindictive but was designed to bring humility and repentance from the man.
 - b) It was discipline, not exercised solely to punish, but rather to awaken.
 - c) Always at the back of punishment and discipline in the early Church there is the conviction that they must seek not to break but to make the man who has sinned.
 - d) Discipline should never be exercised for the satisfaction of the person who exercises it, but always for the mending of the person who has sinned and for the sake of the church.
 - e) Discipline must never be vengeful; it must always be curative and prophylactic.

Dealing with Wayward Church Members

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

- 1) The Church was only to separate itself from those within; to separate themselves from the world would mean to go outside the world.
- 2) Paul addresses three sins typical of the world: three classes of people.
 - a) Fornicators, those guilty of lax morality.
 - i) The root cause of sexual immorality is a wrong view of men.
 - ii) In the end it views men as beasts.

- iii) It declares that the passions and instincts which they share with the beasts must be shamelessly gratified and regards the other person merely as an instrument through which that gratification may be obtained.
- iv) If men regarded themselves and others as the sons and daughters of God, moral laxity would be banished from life.
- b) There are those greedy for this world's goods.
 - i) Christianity makes love the highest value in life and service the greatest honor.
 - ii) When the love of God is in a man's heart, he will find his joy not in getting but in giving.
- c) There are the idolaters.
 - i) Ancient idolatry is paralleled in modern superstition.
 - ii) Unless man worships the true God he will worship the god of luck.
 - iii) Whenever religion grows weak, superstition grows strong.
- 3) These three basic sins are representative of the three directions in which a man sins.
 - a) Fornication is a sin against a man's own self.
 - i) By falling to it, man reduces himself to the level of an animal.
 - ii) He has allowed his lower nature to defeat his higher and made himself less than a man.
 - b) Greediness is a sin against our neighbors and our fellowmen.
 - i) It regards human beings as persons to be exploited rather than as brothers to be helped.
 - ii) It forgets the only proof that we do love God is based on whether we love our neighbors as ourselves.
 - c) Idolatry is a sin against God.
 - i) It allows things to usurp God's place.
 - ii) It is the failure to give God the first and only place in life.

Going to Court Against a Brother

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

- 1) Paul is dealing with a problem which specially effected the Greeks.
 - a) The Greeks were characteristically a litigious people.
 - b) The law courts were one of their chief entertainments.
 - i) First, would go to arbitrations.
 - ii) If arbitration fails, a case goes to jury.
 - (1) The Forty: A jury of all Athenian citizens in their sixtieth year.
 - (2) If not settled, referred to a jury court which consisted of two hundred and one citizens for cases involving less than about 50 pounds.
 - (3) Four hundred one for cases involving more than that figure.
 - (4) Cases where there would be from 1000 to 6000 jurists.
- 2) The Jews did not ordinarily go to law in the public law courts at all.
 - a) They settled things before the elders of the village or the elders of the synagogue.
 - b) To them justice was far more a thing to be settled in a family spirit than in a legal spirit.

- 3) Certain of the Greeks had brought their litigious tendencies into the Christian Church.
- 4) The saints shall judge the world.

Such Were Some of You

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

- 1) A catalog of those who would not enter the kingdom of God.
 - a) Fornicators and adulterers.
 - b) Idolaters.
 - i) The Temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love; immorality flourished.
 - ii) An idol does not begin as a god, but as a symbol of a god.
 - iii) To make worship easier by having something to see.
 - iv) Becomes a worship of the object, not the god behind the object.
 - c) Sensualists.
 - i) Those who are soft and effeminate; those who live for the luxuries of pleasures.
 - ii) A wallowing in luxury in which a man has lost all resistance to pleasure.
 - d) Thieves and robbers.
 - i) Two places were vulnerable.
 - (1) Gymnasiums.
 - (2) Bath houses.
 - ii) Could lead to a death penalty.
 - e) Drunkards.
 - i) Signifies uncontrolled drinking.
 - ii) In luxury-loving Corinth uncontrolled drunkenness abounded.
 - f) Rapacious men and robbers.
 - i) Rapacious:
 - (1) The spirit which is always reaching after more and grabbing that to which it has no right.
 - (2) It is aggressive getting.
 - (3) It cared not over whom it took advantage so long as it could get.
 - ii) Robbers. Means *grasping*.
 - g) Homosexuality.
 - i) Swept through Greek life and from Greece, invaded Rome.
 - ii) Socrates practiced it.
 - iii) Fourteen out of the first fifteen Roman Emperors practiced unnatural vice.
 - iv) Nero took a boy called Sporus and had him castrated.
 - (1) He then married him with a full marriage ceremony and took him home in procession to his palace and lived with him as a wife.
 - (2) Nero also married a man called Pythagoras and called him his husband.
- 2) And such were some of you!
 - a) The power of Christianity lay in its power.
 - i) It could take the dregs of humanity and make them into men.
 - ii) It could take men lost to shame and make them sons of God.
 - b) No man can change himself, but Christ can change him.

You Are Bought with a Price

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

- 1) The Greeks looked down on the body.
 - a) The important thing was the soul, the spirit of a man.
 - b) The body was a thing that did not matter.
 - c) Produced two attitudes:
 - i) Either it issued in asceticism in which everything was done to subject and humiliate the desires and instincts of the body.
 - ii) Since the body was of no importance, you could do what you liked with it; you could let it sate its appetites.
 - (1) Usually the practice of the Corinthians.
 - (2) This was complicated with the doctrine of Christian freedom which Paul preached.
 - d) The Corinthians argued, "Let the body have its way."
 - i) What was the body's way?
 - (1) The stomach was made for food and food for the stomach.
 - (2) Food and the stomach naturally and inevitably go together.
 - (3) In the same way, the body was made for its instincts; it is made for the sexual act and the sexual act is made for it.
 - (4) Therefore, let the desires of the body have their way.
 - ii) The food and stomach will pass away, but the body, the personality, the man as a whole will not pass away; he is made for union with Christ in this world and still closer union thereafter.
- 2) When a man commits fornication, he gives his body to a harlot. The body which rightly belongs to Christ has been prostituted to someone else.
- 3) Because God's Spirit dwells within us, our body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost.
 - a) Our whole being is sacred—body, soul, spirit.
 - b) The body is not our own—it is purchased with a price.
- 4) Though a Christian is free to do anything, he will let nothing master him.
 - a) When a man is saved, he becomes, not the slave of his body, but its master.
 - b) I will satisfy only the things that have me in their power.
- 5) Man can never do what he likes, because he never belongs to himself; he must always do what Christ likes, because Christ bought him at the cost of His life.

LESSON FOUR

“Marriage”

Issues of the Corinthian Church for Paul’s Advice

- 1) Vv. 1-2. Advice to those who think Christians should not marry at all.
- 2) Vv. 3-7 Advice to those who urge that even those who are married should abstain from all sexual relations with each other.
- 3) Vv. 8-9. Advice to the unmarried and to widows.
- 4) Vv. 10-11. Advice to those who think that married people should separate.
- 5) Vv. 12-17. Advice to those who think that, if the marriage is one in which one of the partners is a Christian and one a pagan, it should be broken up and dissolved.
- 6) Vv. 18-24. Instruction to live the Christian life in whatever state they happen to be.
- 7) V. 25 and verses 36-38. Advice regarding virgins.
- 8) Vv. 26-35. Exhortation that nothing should interfere with concentration upon serving Christ because the time is short.
- 9) Vv. 38-40. Advice to those who wish to remarry.

To Marry or Not to Marry?

1 Corinthians 7:1-2

- 1) Two Greek views of the body.
 - a) Since the body is utterly unimportant, we can do what we please and it makes no difference.
 - b) The body is evil; therefore, we must bring it into subjection.
 - i) Must completely obliterate all instincts and desires which are natural to it.
 - ii) If not possible, must completely deny them.
- 2) To many Corinthians, if a man was going to be a Christian in the fullest sense, he must be done with physical things and must refuse to marry altogether.
- 3) Paul’s advice:
 - a) Remember, you are living in Corinth where you cannot even walk along the street without temptation.
 - b) Remember your own physical constitution and the healthy instincts which nature has given you.
 - c) You will be far better to marry than to burn with lust.
- 4) No man should attempt a way of life for which he is naturally unfitted.
- 5) Choose that way of life in which you can best live the Christian life; don’t attempt an unnatural standard which is impossible and even wrong for you being such as you are.

The Partnership of Marriage

1 Corinthians 7:3-7

- 1) Marriage is a partnership.
 - a) The husband or wife cannot not function independently. They each belong to each other.
 - b) Marriage is the relationship in which each finds gratification in the other.
 - c) The whole marriage relationship, both physically as well as spiritually, is something in which both are to find their gratification and the highest satisfaction of all their desires.
 - d) Abstain when fasting, only by consent, and that for a season.
 - e) Come back together quickly lest you be tempted with incontinence.
- 2) Paul probably had been married at one time.
 - a) He was a Rabbi and it was his own claim that he had failed in none of the duties of the Jewish law and tradition.
 - i) Jewish belief that marriage was an obligation.
 - ii) If a man did not marry and have children, he is said to have slain his posterity.
 - b) Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin (Acts 26:10). It was a regulation that members of the Sanhedrin be married men, because it was held that married men were more merciful.
 - c) Either Paul's wife died, or she forsook him when he made total commitment to the Lord Jesus.

Marriage, a Permanent Bond

1 Corinthians 7:8-16

- 1) This passage deals with three different sets of people.
 - a) Those who are unmarried or who are widows.
 - i) Good to remain unmarried unless they could not restrain themselves.
 - ii) Depended on the person involved.
 - b) Those who are married.
 - i) Forbids divorce.
 - ii) If divorce, no remarriage.
 - iii) Strong stand, but in Corinth with its characteristic laxity, it was better to keep the standards so high that no taint of loose-living could enter the Church.
 - c) Marriages of believers and unbelievers.
 - i) One of the great heathen complaints against Christianity was that Christianity did break up families and was a disruptive influence in society.
 - ii) Undoubtedly mixed marriages produced problems.
 - iii) Paul has two things to say which are of permanent value.
 - (1) The unbelieving partner is consecrated by the believer.
 - (a) The two have become one flesh.
 - (b) Children are holy.
 - (2) This association may be the means of saving the soul of its unbelieving partner.
 - (3) Believing partner not so much affected by sin as the unbelieving partner is by grace.

Abiding Where You Are Called

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

- 1) Whether slave or free, a man is a slave of Christ because Christ bought him with a price.
 - a) A slave could buy his freedom through earning small wages on the side and taking the money to the temple of a god.
 - b) When the purchase price is met, the temple gives the money to the master, and the slave becomes slave to the god.
 - c) Whether we be bond or slave, we belong to Christ.
- 2) Seek for freedom is possible.
- 3) If free, don't be enslaved.

Concerning Virgins

1 Corinthians 7:25; 36-38

- 1) Four possible explanations.
 - a) Advice to fathers concerning the marriage of their unmarried daughters.
 - i) If he means daughter, probably would not refer to her as his virgin.
 - b) Simply two people who are in love and cannot contain themselves; okay to marry.
 - c) When two were living together and were not having physical relationships.
 - i) Idea was that if they could discipline themselves to share the spiritual life in such intimacy without allowing the body to enter into their relationship at all, it was a specially meritorious thing.
 - ii) Difficult to believe that it can be done.
 - iii) If you can retain this difficult situation, if your self-discipline and your self-control are sufficient to maintain it, then it is better to do so.
 - iv) If you have tried it and have found that it is too great a strain on human nature, then abandon it and marry.
 - d) Those who were married but chose to remain virgin.
 - i) Agreement to live in absolute continence so as to devote themselves entirely to the spiritual life.
 - ii) Discovered that this was too great a strain; marry.
- 2) Paul says three things.
 - a) Self-discipline is an excellent thing.
 - i) There is no part of Christian duty to eliminate the natural instincts of man.
 - ii) The Christian uses them to the glory of God.
 - b) Don't make an unnatural thing of your religion.
 - i) Monks, hermits, and nuns regarded it necessary to eliminate the natural feelings of mankind in order to be truly religious.
 - ii) Regarded it necessary to separate themselves from all the normal life of men and women in order to serve God.
 - iii) Christianity was never meant to abolish normal life; it was meant to glorify it.
 - c) Don't make an agony of your religion.

- i) No man should be ashamed of his body and his instincts.
- ii) Christianity will teach him, not how to eliminate them, but how to use them in such a way that passion is pure and human love the most ennobling thing in all God's world.

The Time Is Short

1 Corinthians 7:26-35

- 1) Probably would have been more accurate if this passage had preceded the beginning of the chapter.
- 2) It appears that Paul was casting marriage as second-best; that it was only to keep from committing fornication.
- 3) In actuality, Paul no doubt felt that the coming of the Lord was so close that all diligence was to be given to win as many people as possible.
- 4) Later, in the letter to the Ephesians, Paul uses the allegory of the husband as wife to typify the relationship between Christ and His Church.
- 5) The home is the place which does two things for us.
 - a) It is the place where we find the noblest opportunity to live the Christian life.
 - b) It is the place from whose rest and sweetness we draw strength to live more nearly as we ought within the world.

Marrying Again

. 1 Corinthians 7:39-40

- 1) A second marriage is allowable, but Paul would rather see the widow stay a widow.
- 2) The second marriage must be a marriage in the Lord.
- 3) A second marriage could be the highest compliment to pay to deceased.
 - a) Means without him or her life was so lonely as to be insupportable.
 - b) It means that with him or her the married state was so happy that it can fearlessly be entered into again.

LESSON 5

“Meat Offered to Idols and Christian Liberty”

Introduction

- 1) Chapters 8, 9, and 10 deal with the problem of whether or not to eat meat offered to idols.
- 2) Sacrifice to the gods was an integral part of ancient life.
- 3) Two kinds of sacrifices.
 - a) Private.
 - i) The animal was divided into three parts.
 - (1) A token part was burned on the altar.
 - (2) The priests received a portion.
 - (3) The worshiper received the rest.
 - ii) With the meat, the worshiper prepared a banquet.
 - iii) The question for the Christian was, “Could he partake of such a feast?”
 - b) Public.
 - i) After an amount of the meat was burned and the priest had received his share, the rest fell to the magistrates and others.
 - ii) What the magistrates did not need, they sold to the shops and markets.
 - iii) A man never knew when he might be eating meat that had been part of a sacrifice to an idol.
- 4) During this period of time, people strongly and fearfully believed in demons and devils.
 - a) One of the ways the spirits entered a person was through the food.
 - b) A way to avoid this was to dedicate the meat to some good god whose presence in the meat put up a barrier against the spirit.
 - c) For that reason, nearly all animals were dedicated to a god before being slaughtered.
 - d) A man could hardly eat meat at all which was not in some way connected with a heathen god.
- 5) In chapter 8, Paul preaches the principle that regardless how strong and enlightened a Christian may feel, he must do nothing which will hurt or bewilder a brother whose conscience is neither so enlightened nor so strong as his.
- 6) In chapter 9, Paul deals with those who invoke the principle of Christian freedom.
- 7) In chapter 10:1-14, he deals with those who declare that their Christian knowledge and privileged position make them quite safe from any infection. He cites the example of the Israelites, who had all the privileges of God’s chosen people and yet fell into sin.
- 8) In chapter 10:14-22, he uses the argument that any man who has sat at the table of the Lord cannot sit at the table of a heathen god, even if that god be nothing.
- 9) In chapter 10:23-26, he advises against over-fussiness. A man can buy what is offered in the shops and ask no questions.
- 10) In chapter 10:27, 28 he deals with the problem of what to do in a private house.

- a) Eat what is before you and ask no questions.
 - b) If it is mentioned that it was offered to idols, refuse to eat it.
- 11) In chapter 10:29-11:1, Paul lays down the principle that the conduct of the Christian must be so far above reproach that it gives no possible offence either to the Jew or non-Jew. He is better to sacrifice his rights than to allow these rights to become an offence.

Advice to the Wise

1 Corinthians 8

- 1) There were certain Corinthian Christians who held that their superior knowledge had taught them that the heathen gods simply did not exist, and therefore it was possible for a Christian to eat meat that had been offered to idols without a qualm.
- 2) Paul argued that even if a thing is harmless for you, when it hurts someone else, it must be given up, for a Christian must never do anything which causes his brother to stumble.
- 3) Three principles which are eternally valid.
 - a) What is safe for one man may be quite unsafe for another.
 - b) Nothing ought to be judged solely from the point of view of knowledge; everything ought to be judged from the point of view of love.
 - c) No man has any right to indulge in a pleasure or to demand a liberty which may be the ruination of someone else.

Unclaimed Privileges

1 Corinthians 9:1-14

- 1) The Corinthians who considered themselves mature Christians have been claiming that they are in such a privileged position that they are free to eat meat offered to idols if they like.
- 2) Paul answers by calling attention to privileges that he as an apostle had a right to claim but did not lest it would be a stumbling block and make the preaching of the gospel ineffective.
- 3) His claims as an apostle.
 - a) He has seen the Lord.
 - b) His ministry has been effective.
 - i) The Corinthians themselves are the proof of that.
 - ii) He calls them his seal, or guarantee of genuineness.
- 4) The privilege Paul might have claimed was support from the Church.
- 5) Paul uses ordinary human analogies to establish his point.
 - a) No soldier has to provide his own rations.
 - b) The man who plants a vineyard shares in the fruits.
 - c) The shepherd of the flock gets his food from the flock.
 - d) The ox who works the threshing machine is not to be muzzled but is to be allowed to eat of the grain.

- 6) The priest who serves in the Temple receives his share of the offerings.
 - a) The Burnt-offering.
 - i) All was burnt except the stomach, the entrails and the sinew of the thigh.
 - ii) The priests received the hides, and did a flourishing trade with them.
 - b) The Sin-offering.
 - i) Only the fat was burned on the altar and the priests received all the flesh.
 - c) The Trespass-offering.
 - i) The fat alone was burned and the priests received all the flesh.
 - d) The Meat-offering.
 - i) This consisted of flour and wine and oil.
 - ii) Only a token part was offered on the altar.
 - iii) By far the greater part was the perquisite of the priests.
 - e) The Peace-offering.
 - i) The fat and the entrails were burned on the altar.
 - ii) The priest received the breast and the right shoulder.
 - iii) The rest was given back to the worshipper.
- 7) The priests enjoyed still further privileges.
 - a) They received the first-fruits of the seven kinds—wheat, barley, the vine, the fig-tree, the pomegranate, the olive and honey.
 - b) The *Terumah*.
 - i) This was the offering of the choicest fruits of every growing things.
 - ii) The priest had the right to an average of one fiftieth of any crop.
 - c) The *Challah*.
 - i) This was the offering of kneaded dough.
 - ii) If dough was made with wheat, barley, spelt, oats or rye, a private individual had to give to the priests one twenty-fourth part, a public baker one forty-eighth part.
- 8) Paul refused support for two reasons.
 - a) The priests were a byword.
 - i) While ordinary Jewish people had little, the priests ate lavishly.
 - ii) He knew how they used religion as a means to grow fat, and he was determined that he would go to the other extreme and take nothing.
 - b) Paul was fiercely independent.
- 9) Paul would do nothing that would bring discredit on the gospel or hinder it.

The Privilege and the Responsibility

1 Corinthians 9:15-23

- 1) In this passage there is a kind of outline of Paul's whole conception of his ministry.
 - a) He regarded it as a privilege.
 - i) He will not take money for working for Christ.
 - ii) A person should regard his work not as a career of accumulation but as an opportunity of service.
 - b) He regarded it as a duty.

- i) If he had chosen to be a minister, he could have demanded payment for his work.
- ii) He had not chosen the work; it had chosen him.
- c) Although Paul did not take payment, he knew that he received daily a great reward.
 - i) He had the satisfaction of a job well done.
 - ii) In life, one should not choose the job with the biggest pay but the one in which he will find the greatest satisfaction.
- d) Paul speaks of the method of his ministry—to become all things to all men.
 - i) This is the ability to get along with all men.
 - ii) The man who can never see anything but his own point of view and who never makes any attempt to understand the mind and heart of others, will never make a pastor or an evangelist or even a friend.
 - iii) We can never attain to any kind of evangelism or friendship without speaking the same language and thinking the same thoughts as the other man.
 - iv) One of our greatest necessities is to learn the art of getting alongside people.

Running a Race

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

- 1) Life is a battle to be won.
- 2) To win the fight and to be victorious in the race demands discipline.
 - a) Must discipline our bodies.
 - b) Discipline our minds.
 - c) Discipline our souls—face life’s sorrows with calm endurance.
- 3) We need to know our goal.
 - a) Many are just going.
 - b) To go just anywhere is the certain way to arrive nowhere.
- 4) We need to know the worth of our goal.
 - a) The goal is life and it is worth anything to win that.
- 5) We cannot save others unless we master ourselves.
 - a) We cannot serve others until we have mastered ourselves.
 - b) We cannot teach what we do not know.
 - c) We cannot bring others to Christ until we ourselves have found him.

Over-Confidence of Those Who Claimed Superior Knowledge

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

- 1) This is still dealing with the question of eating meat which has been offered to idols.
 - a) Some of the Corinthian Christians felt they were quite safe because of their superior knowledge.
 - b) Paul warns of the danger of over-confidence.
- 2) Warnings against temptations and failures.
 - a) There is the temptation to idolatry.

- b) There is the temptation to fornication.
- c) There is a temptation to grumble.
- 3) Paul concludes this section by saying three things about temptation.
 - a) He is quite sure that temptations will come. That is a part of life.
 - b) Any temptation that comes is not unique. Others have endured it and others have come through it.
 - c) With the temptation there is always a way of escape.
 - i) No man need to fall to temptation, but there is a way out.
 - ii) The way of conquest is in the power of the grace of God.

The Sacrifice to gods

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

- 1) Behind this passage are three ideas.
 - a) When sacrifice was offered, part of the meat was given back to the worshipper to hold a feast.
 - i) It was always held that the god himself was a guest.
 - ii) After the meat had been offered, the god himself was in it and he entered into everyone who ate it.
 - iii) A sacrificial meal formed a real communion between the god and his worshipper; he had a mystic communion with the god.
 - b) At this time the whole world believed in demons. There were demons everywhere, in everything.
 - c) Out of this ancient set of beliefs comes one permanent principle—a man who has sat at the table of Jesus Christ cannot go on to sit at the table which is the instrument of demons. If a man has handled the body and blood of Christ there are things he cannot touch.

The Limits of Christian Freedom

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

- 1) Some Christian liberties which are limited.
 - a) All things are allowed, but all things are not good for me.
 - b) All things are allowed, but all things do not build up.
 - c) Don't think of your own good, think of the good of the other man.
- 2) Paul concludes this long discussion of the question of meat offered to idols with some very practical advice.
 - a) A Christian can buy anything that is sold in the shops and ask no questions; all things are God's.
 - b) If the Christian accepts an invitation to dinner in the house of a pagan, let him eat what is put before him and ask no questions.
 - i) If he is deliberately informed that the meat is part of a sacrifice, he must not eat it.
 - ii) This is for the other's conscience, not your own.

- c) Many a thing that a man may do with perfect safety as far as he himself is concerned, he must not do if it is going to be a stumbling-block to someone else.
 - i) Christian freedom must be used to help others and not to shock or hurt them.
 - ii) A man has a duty to himself but a still greater duty to others.
- 3) To whom the duty extends:
 - a) A Corinthian Christian had a duty to the Jews.
 - b) The Corinthian Christian had a duty to the Greeks; that is to say he had to show a good example to those who were quite indifferent to Christianity.
- 4) The Corinthian Christian had a duty to his fellow Church member.
 - a) A younger or weaker brother may be looking to us for a lead.
 - b) It is our duty to give that lead which will strengthen the weak and confirm the waverer and save the tempted from sin.

LESSON SIX

“Covering, Authority, and Public Worship”

Public Worship

- 1) Chapter 11:2-11 deals with the problem of whether or not women should worship with their heads uncovered.
- 2) Chapter 11:17-23 deals with problems which have arisen in connection with the Agape or Love Feast—the weekly common meal which the Christian congregation held.
- 3) Chapter 11:24-34 deals with the correct observance of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.
- 4) Chapter 12 discusses the problem of welding into one harmonious whole those who possess all kinds of different gifts.
- 5) Chapter 13 is the great hymn of love which shows men the more excellent way.
- 6) Chapter 14:1-23 deals with the problem of speaking with tongues.
- 7) Chapter 14:24-33 insists on the necessity of orderliness in public worship and seeks to bring under necessary discipline the overflowing enthusiasm of the newly born Church.
- 8) Chapter 14:24-36 discusses the place of women in the public worship of God in the Church in Corinth.

Covering of Women

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

- 1) One of those passages which has a purely local and temporary significance.
- 2) The problem was whether or not in the Christian Church a woman had the right to take part in the service unveiled.
 - a) The veil is always a symbol of subjection, worn by an inferior in the presence of a superior.
 - b) Improbable that in the twentieth century we will accept the view of the inferiority and subordination of women.
 - c) Must read this passage in light of the first century.
- 3) Three things to keep in mind.
 - a) The place of the veil in the East
 - i) A sign of inferiority.
 - ii) Also represented a great protection.
 - (1) In Oriental lands the veil is the power and honour and dignity of the woman.
 - (2) With the veil she can go anywhere in security and profound respect.
 - (3) Without the veil the woman is a thing of naught, whom anyone may insult.
 - b) The place of the veil among the Jews.
 - i) Under Jewish law woman is vastly inferior to man.

- ii) In Jewish law a woman was a thing and was part of the property of her husband over which he had complete rights of disposal.
- iii) In the synagogue women had no share in the worship; were segregated completely from the men.
- iv) In Jewish law and custom it was unthinkable that women should claim any kind of equality with men.
- c) This situation arose in Corinth, probably the most licentious city in the world.
 - i) In this situation, Paul probably thought it would be better to err on the side of being too modest and too strict rather than to do anything that might give a heathen a chance to criticize Christians as being too lax.
- 4) Three great permanent truths.
 - a) Better to err on the side of being too strict than on the side of being too lax.
 - b) Paul stresses the essential partnership of man and woman. Neither can live without the other.
 - c) Paul finished this passage with a rebuke to the man who argues for the sake of argument.
 - i) There is no place in the church for the deliberately contentious man or woman.
 - ii) There is a time to stand on principle; but there is never a time to be contentiously argumentative.
 - iii) There is no reason why people should not differ and yet remain at peace.

Feasting at Church

1 Corinthians 11:17-22

- 1) The ancient world was in many ways much more social than ours.
 - a) Regular custom to meet for meals.
 - b) The early Church had such a feast called the Agape or Love Feast.
 - c) It was a way of producing and nourishing real Christian fellowship.
- 2) In Corinth, the rich did not share their food with the poor but ate it in little exclusive groups by themselves.
- 3) In the world, there were many barriers.
 - a) Free men and the slaves.
 - b) Greeks and the barbarians.
 - c) Jews and Gentiles.
 - d) Roman citizens and the lesser breeds with the law.
 - e) Cultured and the ignorant.
- 4) The early Church was a place where all men could and did come together.
- 5) A church where social and class distinctions exist is no true church at all.
 - a) A real church is a body of men and women united to each other because all are united to Christ.
 - b) A church is no true church if the art of sharing is forgotten.

The Table of the Lord

1 Corinthians 11:23-34

- 1) This passage gives us the description of the most sacred act of worship in the Church.
- 2) His body.
 - a) The bread represents the body of Christ.
 - b) It represents not only a meaning but a living contact with Jesus Christ.
- 3) The Cup.
 - a) The new covenant of Jesus' blood.
 - b) With Jesus a new relationship is opened to man.
 - i) Dependent not on law but on love.
 - ii) Dependent not on man's ability to keep the law—for no man can do that—but on the free grace of God's love offered to men.
 - (1) Under the old covenant, a man could do nothing other than fear God for he was ever in default since he could never perfectly keep the law.
 - (2) Under the new covenant he comes to God as a child to a father.
 - (a) It cost the life of Jesus to make this new relationship possible.
 - (b) The wine of the sacrament stands for the life-blood of Christ without which the new covenant, the new relationship of man to God, could never have been possible.
- 4) Eating unworthily consisted of the fact that the man who did so did “not discern the Lord's body.”
 - a) Can eat unworthily if do not realize what the sacred symbols mean.
 - b) Can eat unworthily if don't realize that the whole Church is the body of Christ, but is at variance with his brother.
- 5) If the Table of the Lord were only for perfect people none might ever approach it.
 - a) The way would be closed to the penitent sinner.
 - b) To the man who loves God and his fellow man the way is ever open.

LESSON SEVEN

The Many-Membered Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:1-6; 12-27

- 1) Amazing things were happening in the Church through the Holy Spirit, but with excitement and enthusiasm there can be hysterical excitement and self-delusion as well as the real thing.
- 2) By the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)
 - a) Paul is stressing the essential unity of the Church.
 - i) The Church is the Body of Christ; the characteristics of a healthy body is that every part in it performs its own function for the good of the whole.
 - ii) Unity does not mean uniformity; in the Church there were differing gifts and differing functions.
 - iii) Every one of them is a gift of the same Spirit and designed for the good of the whole
 - b) Through the examination of the special gifts, we learn much about the character and work of the early Church.

The Church as the Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

- 1) A picture of the unity of the Church.
- 2) The Church body is likened to the human body.
 - a) The body consists of many parts but there is in it an essential unity.
 - b) All have need of the other.
- 3) Man represents Christ in the earth.
- 4) From this picture, certain things ought to exist in the Church, the body of Christ.
 - a) We need each other.
 - b) We ought to respect each other.
 - c) We ought to sympathize with each other.
- 5) Christ is a many-membered body.
 - a) As the body is one but has many members, so is Christ.
 - b) *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. (1 Cor. 12:12-14).*
 - c) Each member is significant.
 - i) Ear and eye.
 - ii) Smelling.
 - iii) Hand.
 - iv) Feet.
 - d) The feeble members are necessary.

- e) God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked.
- f) There should be no schism in the body—the members should have the same care one for another.
- g) If one suffers, all suffer; if one is honored, all are honored.
- 6) Ephesians 1:19-23. *“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”*
 - a) The Body of Christ, or the Church, is the extension of Christ in the earth.
 - b) We are seated with Christ in heavenly places, above principality, and power, and might, and dominion.
 - i) Eph. 6:12. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*
 - ii) In this world and the world to come.
 - iii) Philippians 2:9-10. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth.”*
 - c) The Body of Christ is the fullness of Christ.
- 7) Growing up into Christ. (Eph. 4:15-16). *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, accord to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*
- 8) Many sons unto glory.
 - a) Reproduction of Christ in the earth.
 - b) Corn of wheat falls into the ground to die to bring forth many.
- 9) At the end of the passage Paul speaks of various forms of service in the Church.
 - a) Apostles.
 - b) Prophets.
 - c) Teachers.
 - i) Men who had to build up the converts won by the preaching of the evangelists and the apostles.
 - ii) Instructed men and women who knew literally nothing about Christianity.
 - d) Helpers.
 - i) Those who succoured the poor, the orphan, the widow and the stranger.
 - ii) Open to help.
 - e) Administrators.
 - i) Those who carry out the administration of the Church.
 - ii) Day to day operations.

LESSON EIGHT

“Gifts of the Holy Spirit”

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

- 1) Gifts are *charismas* of God.
- 2) Categories of gifts.
 - a) Knowing Gifts.
 - i) Word of knowledge.
 - ii) Word of wisdom.
 - iii) Discerning of spirits.
 - b) The Power Gifts.
 - i) Faith.
 - ii) Working of miracles.
 - iii) Gifts of healing.
 - c) Vocal Gifts.
 - i) Gift of tongues.
 - ii) Interpretation of tongues.
 - iii) Prophecy.
- 3) The Word of Knowledge.
 - a) From Greek word *gnosis*.
 - i) Earthly knowledge.
 - ii) Spiritual or revealed knowledge.
 - b) Knowledge that can not be known to the natural mind.
- 4) The Word of Wisdom.
 - a) Greek word for wisdom is *sophia*.
 - b) This is the wisdom which knows God.
 - c) This is applied knowledge to know what to do in a particular situation.
 - d) Sometimes confused with the gift of prophecy.
- 5) Discerning of spirits.
 - a) A supernatural knowledge and understanding of various spirits.
 - b) To determine what is God’s Spirit, man’s spirit, or the spirit of darkness.
- 6) Faith.
 - a) More than ordinary faith.
 - i) Measure of faith.
 - ii) Saving faith.
 - iii) God-kind of faith.
 - b) Faith which really produces results.
 - c) Not just the intellectual conviction that a thing is true but a passionate belief in a thing which makes a man spend all that he is and has on it..
 - d) It is a faith that turns the vision into deeds.
- 7) Gifts of healings.
 - a) Come to the elders of the Church.

- b) For too long the Church has split man into a soul and a body, and accepted responsibility for his soul but not for his body.
 - c) Must realize that we must treat man as a whole.
- 8) Miracles.
- a) Usually instantaneous.
 - b) Different from healing; often refers to something created.
 - c) Various examples.
- 9) Tongues.
- a) A channel through God speaks which requires a spiritual interpretation.
 - b) Different from prayer language (a means by which man communicates with God).
 - c) Not necessarily a language.
- 10) Interpretation of tongues.
- a) Required when a message in tongues is given in the assembly.
 - b) If no interpreter, keep silent.
- 11) Prophecy.
- a) Not necessarily foretelling as much as it is forthtelling.
 - b) Various levels of prophecy.
 - i) Spirit of prophecy.
 - ii) Gift of prophecy.
 - iii) Office of a prophet.

LESSON NINE

Faith, Hope, and Charity

1 Corinthians 13

- 1) May have the gift of tongues.
 - a) Heathen worship was the clanging of cymbals and the braying of trumpets.
 - b) Even the gift of tongues is no better than the uproar of heathen worship if love is absent.
- 2) May have the gift of prophecy.
 - a) Some preachers joy in dangling hearers over the flames of hell.
 - b) The preaching which is all threat and no love may terrify but it will not save.
- 3) May have the gift of intellectual knowledge.
 - a) Danger of intellectual knowledge is the spirit of snobbery.
 - b) Only knowledge motivated by the spirit of love can really save men.
- 4) May have passionate faith.
 - a) There are times when faith can be cruel.
 - b) “Just have faith and press on.”
- 5) May practice what men call charity.
 - a) Can give as a grim duty; give with a contempt.
 - b) Give and accompany the giving with a smug moral lecture or a crushing rebuke.
 - c) Not real charity—it is pride, and pride is always cruel for it knows no love.
- 6) May give body to be burned.
 - a) Can have a martyr’s complex.
 - b) Some court persecution.
 - c) If give life because of pride and self-display, then even martyrdom becomes valueless.
 - d) Example of those who are willing to die for their religion which may be a religion of hate and prejudice.
- 7) Fifteen characteristics of Christian love.
 - a) Love is patient.
 - i) Patient with people not circumstances.
 - ii) Describes a man who is slow to anger.
 - iii) Patience is a sign of strength not weakness.
 - b) Love is kind.
 - i) Much Christianity is good but is unkind.
 - ii) Philip the Second of Spain massacred those who disagreed with him and thought he was doing God a favor.
 - iii) The Crusades.
 - c) Love knows no envy.
 - i) Two classes of people in the world.
 - (1) Those who are millionaires.
 - (2) Those who would like to be.
 - ii) Two kinds of envy.
 - (1) One that covets the possessions of other people.

- (2) The other is that which begrudges the fact that others should have what it has not.
- d) Love is no braggart.
 - (1) Some confer their love with the idea that they are conferring a favor.
 - (2) Love is kept humble by the consciousness that it can never offer its loved one a gift which is good enough.
- e) Love is not inflated with its own importance.
 - i) Some think of themselves as not being subject to the same laws or constraints of others.
 - ii) Great men are truly humble.
 - iii) The really great man never thinks of his own importance.
 - iv) No one likes the “important” person.
- f) Love does not behave gracelessly.
 - i) There is a kind of Christianity which takes a delight in being blunt and almost brutal.
 - ii) There is a graciousness in Christian love which never forgets that courtesy and tact and politeness are lovely things.
- g) Love does not insist upon its rights.
 - i) There are those who insist on their rights.
 - ii) Others insist on their responsibility and duty.
- h) Love never flies into a temper.
 - i) Real Christian love never becomes exasperated with people.
 - ii) Exasperation is a sign of defeat.
 - iii) When we lose our temper we lose everything.
 - iv) The man who is master of his temper can be master of anything.
- i) Love does not store up the memory of any wrong it has received.
 - i) One of the great arts in life is to learn what to forget.
 - ii) Many people nurse their wrath to keep it warm; they brood over their wrongs until it is impossible to forget them.
 - iii) Christian love has learned the great lesson of forgetting.
- j) Love finds no pleasure in evil-doing.
 - i) There is a human trait that we prefer to hear of the misfortune of others rather than their good fortune.
 - ii) It is much easier to weep with them that weep than to rejoice with those who rejoice.
- k) Love rejoices with the truth.
 - i) Christian love has no wish to veil the truth; it has nothing to conceal.
 - ii) It is glad when the truth prevails.
- l) Love can endure anything.
 - i) “Love can cover anything.”
 - ii) It will never drag into the light of day the faults and mistakes of others.
 - iii) It would rather set about quietly mending things than publicly displaying and rebuking them.
 - iv) Love can bear insult, injury, disappointment.
- m) Love is completely trusting.
 - i) Twofold aspect.

- (1) In relation to God, it means that love takes God at his word.
- (2) In relation to our fellow men it means that love always believes the best about other people.
- ii) We make people what we believe them to be.
 - (1) If we show that we do not trust people, we may make them untrustworthy.
 - (2) If we show people that we trust them absolutely, we may make them trustworthy.
 - (3) Love can ennoble even the ignoble by believing the best.
- n) Love never ceases to hope.
 - i) Jesus believed that no man was hopeless.
 - ii) Encouraging others may well be the thing that pushes them over the top.
- o) Love bears everything with triumphant fortitude.
 - i) Not passively bearing things, but the spirit which, in bearing them, can conquer and transmute them.
 - ii) Love bears things not merely with passive resignation, but with triumphant fortitude.
- 8) In verses 8-13, Paul has three final things to say of this Christian love.
 - a) Its absolute permanency.
 - i) When all the things that men glory in have passed away love will still stand.
 - ii) One unconquerable thing is love.
 - b) Its absolute completeness.
 - i) Corinth was famous for its mirrors.
 - (1) Made of highly polished metal that gave an imperfect reflection.
 - (2) All you could see through it was a dim and shadowy outline.
 - ii) Even if we had perfect revelation, our finite minds can only grasp it in part.
 - iii) Our knowledge is still like the knowledge of a child.
 - iv) Cannot reach completeness without love.
 - c) Its absolute supremacy.
 - i) As great as faith and hope are, love is still greater.
 - ii) Faith without love is cold, and hope without love is grim.
 - iii) Love is the fire which kindles faith and it is the light which turns hope into certainty.

LESSON TEN

The Order of Worship in the Assembly

1 Corinthians 14

- 1) Two spiritual gifts are compared with each other.
 - a) Speaking with tongues.
 - b) Prophecy.
- 2) Speaking with tongues.
 - a) A highly coveted gift.
 - b) It was greatly admired and the person who possessed it was very liable to develop a certain spiritual pride.
 - c) The very desire to possess it produced in some a kind of self-hypnotism and deliberately induced hysteria which issued in a completely false and synthetic speaking with tongues.
 - d) Tongues are addressed to God and not to man.
- 3) The gift of prophecy.
 - a) Prophecy is a gift that others can understand.
 - b) Prophecy is more for the edification of the church.
 - c) Prophecy is a certain sound.
 - d) Prophecy is threefold.
 - i) Exhortation.
 - ii) Edification.
 - iii) Comfort.
- 4) From the whole passage two broad principles regarding worship emerge.
 - a) Worship must never be selfish.
 - b) Worship must be intelligible.
- 5) First Corinthians 14:20-25.
 - a) Still dealing with the question of speaking with tongues.
 - b) Paul appeals to the Corinthians to not be childish.

Practical Advice for Worship in the Assembly

1 Corinthians 14:26-33

- 1) Any one who possesses a gift should receive every chance to exercise it; but the worship service should not become a kind of competitive disorder.
- 2) The service of the Early Church.
 - a) One has a psalm.
 - b) One has teaching.
 - c) One has tongues; another interpretation of tongues.
 - d) Two or three prophecies.
 - i) Let others judge.
 - ii) The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet.

- e) Let all things be done in decency and in order. God is not a God of confusion.
- 3) Two issues.
 - a) In the early Church there was no professional ministry.
 - i) Open to anyone who had a gift to use it.
 - ii) When a man becomes a professional preacher he may sometimes be in the position of having to say something when he has really nothing to say.
 - b) There was obviously a flexibility about the order of the service of the early Church.
 - i) Almost everyone came feeling that he had both the privilege and the obligation of contributing something to it.
 - ii) Did not come with the sole intention of being a passive listener; came not only to receive but to give.
 - iii) There was a danger because many love the sound of their own voice.

Quote: (P. 135, "The Letters to the Corinthians, William Barclay).

"It may well be that the Church lost something when she delegated so much to the professional ministry and left so little to the ordinary Church member; and it may well be that the blame lies not with the ministry for annexing those rights but with the laity for abandoning them, certainly it is all too true that many Church members think far more of what the Church can do for them than of what they can do for the Church, and are very ready to criticize what is done but very unready to take any share in doing the Church's work themselves."

Women's Place in the Church

1 Corinthians 14:34-40

- 1) No man ever completely rose above the background of the age in which he lived and the society in which he grew up.
- 2) Paul, in his conception of the place of women within the church, was unable to rise above the ideas which he had known all his life.
- 3) In the ancient world the place of women was low.
- 4) Women, unless they were very poor or very loose in their morals, led a very secluded life in Greece.
- 5) The Jews had an even lower idea of women.
 - a) Amongst the Rabbinic sayings there are many which belittle their place.
 - b) To teach the law to a woman was "to cast pearls before swine."
 - c) The Talmud lists among the plagues of the world "the talkative and the inquisitive widow and the virgin who wastes her time in prayers."
 - d) It was even forbidden to speak to a woman on the street.
 - e) One must not ask a service from a woman, or salute her.
- 6) It would be wrong to take these words out of their context and make them a universal rule for the Church.
- 7) We must discern eternal principles.

- a) Perhaps what makes the latter day church different from the early Church is that we have progressed in our understanding of God and His eternal principles.
- b) Perhaps it would be well to know that the whole concept of authority and submission is one that is the result of the curse, which should be lifted in Christ Jesus.
- c) There is no difference between Jew and Greek; bond and free; male and female.

LESSON ELEVEN

“The Resurrection”

- 1) The main issue the Corinthians were concerned about was not the resurrection of Jesus, but the resurrection of the body.
 - a) If one denies the resurrection of the body, he denies the Resurrection of Jesus.
 - b) The Christian message would be void.
- 2) There were two backgrounds in the early Christian Church.
 - a) The Jewish background.
 - i) Sadducees denied that there was any life after death.
 - ii) In the Old Testament there is very little hope of anything that can be called life after death (Ps. 6:5; 30:9; 88:10-12; 115:17; Is. 38:18; Ps 39:13; Eccl. 9:4,5,10; 17:27).
 - iii) Job spoke of a resurrection (Job 19:25-27).
 - iv) There was a concept that God dealt not with individuals but with nations.
 - v) As time went on, people began to realize that God was a personal God by which we can develop such an intimate relationship that this relationship could not be broken, even by death.
 - b) The Greek background.
 - i) Greeks had an instinctive fear of death.
 - ii) For the Greek immortality lay in getting rid of the body.
 - (1) For him the resurrection of the body was unthinkable.
 - (2) Personal immortality did not really exist because that which gave life was absorbed again in God the source of all life.
 - c) Paul's view.
 - i) The Christian belief is that after death individuality will survive, that you will still be you and I will still be I.
 - (1) To the Greek, the body could not be consecrated; it was matter, the source of all evil, the prison-house of the soul.
 - (2) To the Christian the body is not evil; Jesus, the Son of God, took on a human body.
 - ii) Paul insisted that we would have a spiritual body which would be quite different from the earthly body.

Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

- 1) The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus was the gospel that the Corinthians had received.
 - a) All of this was according to the Scriptures.
 - b) It was through this gospel that they stood.
 - c) It was through this gospel that they were being saved.
 - i) This speaks of a process.

- ii) Salvation is for the whole man—spirit, soul, and body.
- 2) Those who witnessed the resurrection.
 - a) Peter.
 - i) Mark 16:7. “Go tell his disciples and Peter.”
 - ii) One of the first appearances by Jesus was to the disciple who had denied Him.
 - b) The twelve.
 - c) 500 brethren.
 - d) James.
 - i) According to the Gospel according to the Hebrews, James swore that he would not eat or drink from the Last Supper until he should see him risen again.
 - ii) According to this account, Jesus appeared to James and set a table to eat and drink.
 - e) Last of all, seen by Paul, as a man born out of due season.

If Christ Be Not Raised

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

- 1) The Greek stated that dead men do not rise again.
- 2) Paul is saying that if this was true, Jesus is not raised.
- 3) If Jesus be not raised, then all our preaching is vanity.
- 4) What the Resurrection proves:
 - a) Truth is stronger than falsehood.
 - b) Good is stronger than evil.
 - c) Love is stronger than hatred.
 - d) Life is stronger than death.

Jesus Was the First-fruits of Those That Sleep

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

- 1) The Feast of Passover was twofold.
 - a) Commemorated the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt.
 - b) Was also a great harvest festival.
 - i) Fell at the time when the barley harvest was due to be ingathered.
 - ii) “You shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest; and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, that you may find acceptance (Lev. 23:10-11).
 - c) The First-fruits were a sign of the harvest to come; the Resurrection of Jesus was a sign of the resurrection of all believers which was to come.
- 2) The Jewish belief held that all men sinned in Adam and died.
 - a) The coming of Christ broke that chain.
 - b) Just as all men died in Adam, so all men conquered death in Christ.
 - c) Our unity with Christ is just as real as our unity with Adam and this destroys the evil effect of the old.

- 3) Two contrasting sets of facts.
 - a) First there was Adam—sin—death.
 - b) Second there was Christ—goodness—life.
- 4) Just as we were all involved in the sin of him who was first created, we are all involved in the victory of him who re-created mankind.
- 5) Everyone man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.
 - a) Not all resurrected at the same time?
 - b) They that are Christ's at His coming? Which coming?

Then Comes the End

1 Corinthians 15:24-28

- 1) Jesus delivers up the kingdom to the Father.
 - a) After all rule and authority is put down.
 - b) He (Christ) must reign until every enemy is put under feet.
 - c) The last enemy is death.
 - d) For he has put all things under his feet (as well as the Body of Christ).
- 2) When all things are subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.
 - a) Jesus defeated satan at Calvary; every enemy was under His feet; the seed of the woman had bruised the head of the seed of the serpent.
 - b) The Body of Christ was put all things its feet and destroy every enemy, including the enemy of death.

Quote:

“...it is a case of one who, having accomplished the work that was given him to do, returns with the glory of complete obedience as his crown. As God sent forth his Son to redeem the world, so in the end he will receive back a world redeemed; and then there will be nothing in heaven or in earth outside his love and power.” (p. 152, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, William Barclay)

If There Is No Resurrection of the Dead

1 Corinthians 15:29-34

Baptized for the Dead

- 1) Being baptized for the dead would be in vain.
 - a) The phrase for the word dead is the Greek *huper*, which can have two main meanings.
 - i) When used of place, it can mean *above* or *over*.
 - ii) When used of persons or things it means *instead of* or *on behalf of*.

- 2) From the meaning of “over” or “above,” some scholars have suggested that it refers to those who get themselves baptized over the graves of the martyrs.
 - a) There was something special about being baptized on sacred ground.
 - b) Believing that the cloud of witnesses were all around.
- 3) In the sense of “instead of” or “on behalf of”:
 - a) It refers to those who get themselves baptized in order to fill up the vacant places in the Church which the dead have left.
 - b) Suggested that the phrase means those who get themselves baptized out of respect for and affection for the dead.
 - c) In the early Church there was vicarious baptism.
 - i) If a person died who had intended to become a member of the Church and was actually under instruction, sometimes someone else underwent baptism for him.
 - ii) This view came from a superstitious view of baptism that without it a person was necessarily barred from heaven.
 - iii) Paul does not approve nor disapprove of that practice; he is simply asking that is this was the custom, and there is no resurrection of the dead, then all is vain.

Fighting with Beasts at Ephesus

- 1) Why specifically “at Ephesus?”
 - a) Legends tell us that Paul actually fought in an arena with beasts; to this day in Ephesus there is a building known as Paul’s prison.
 - b) Paul spoke of the perils he fought at Ephesus when he despaired even of his life (2 Corinthians 1:8-10).
 - c) The beasts could well have been evil spirits or evil circumstances.
- 2) If the dead be not raised, then all this fighting is in vain.
- 3) If the dead be not raised, eat, drink, and be merry.
 - a) Because tomorrow we die and there is no hope of life hereafter.
 - b) A man who believes that this is the only world tends to live as if the things of this world are all that matter.

The Physical Body and the Spiritual Body

1 Corinthians 15:35-49

- 1) Paul is not talking about that which can be verifiable matters of fact, but about matters of faith.
- 2) He does the best he can with human ideas and human words to express the inexpressible and to describe the indescribable.
- 3) Paul answers the question concerning the form of the body resurrected by considering three basic principles.
 - a) The analogy of a seed.
 - i) The seed falls into the ground and dies.
 - ii) The seed is dissolved.

- (1) When it rises again, there is a vast difference in its body; yet in spite of its dissolution, it is the same seed.
- (2) So our earthly body will dissolve and will rise again in very different form, but it is the same person who rises.
- (3) Dissolved by death, changed by resurrection, it is still we who exist.
 - b) In the world, God gives a body suitable for its part in creation; it is only reasonable to expect that he will give us a body fitted for the resurrection life.
- 4) In verses 42-44, Paul draws four contrasts which shed light on our future state.
 - a) The present body is corruptible; the future body will be incorruptible.
 - b) The present body is in dishonor, but the future body will be in glory.
 - c) The present body is in weakness, but it will be raised in power.
 - d) The present body is a natural body; the future body will be a spiritual body.

Death Conquered

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

- 1) Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption; but we shall be changed.
- 2) In a moment in the twinkling of an eye.
- 3) Not all will sleep.
- 4) Why people fear death.
 - a) Fear of the unknown.
 - b) From the sense of sin, which comes from being under the law.

Quote:

He (Jesus) came to tell us that God is not law, but love, that the center of God's being is not legalism but grace, that we go out, not to a judge, but to a Father who awaits his children coming home. Because of that Jesus gave us the victory over death, its fear banished in the wonder of God's love." (p. 160, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, William Barclay).

Paul Deals with Practical Matters

1 Corinthians 16:1-12

- 1) A very abrupt change from chapter 15 to chapter 16; from highly theological to the practical.
- 2) He begins by dealing with the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem.
 - a) A way of demonstrating the unity of the Church.
 - b) It was a way of putting into effect the practical teaching of Christianity; an opportunity of translating into action the teaching of Christ on the virtue of love.

LESSON TWELVE

Closing Words

1 Corinthians 16:13-21

- 1) Paul begins with a series of five imperatives like a commander's orders to his soldiers.
 - a) As a sentinel, be ever on the alert.
 - b) When under attack, stand fast in the faith and yield not an inch.
 - c) In time of battle, play a hero's part.
 - d) Like a well-equipped and well-trained soldier, be strong to fight for your King.
 - e) To those in the Church, be a comrade and a lover
- 2) In the Christian life there must be the courage which will never retreat and the love which will never fail.
- 3) Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus had brought Paul (in Ephesus) first-hand information from the Corinthian Church.
- 4) Stephanas was given respect because he had put himself at the service of the Church.
 - a) In the early Church willing and spontaneous service was the beginning of official office.
 - b) A man became a leader of the Church, not so much by man-made appointment, as by the fact that his life and work marked him out as one whom all men must respect.
- 5) Greetings are sent by Aquila and Priscilla who had a church in their home.
 - a) In those early days there were no church buildings.
 - b) It was not until the third century that we hear about a church building at all.
 - c) The little congregations met in private houses.
- 6) Greet each other with a holy kiss.
 - a) This custom was important at Corinth because of the strife and dissension.
 - b) This custom faded from the Church's life.
 - i) Liable to abuse; liable to misinterpretation by heathen slanderers.
 - ii) Faded because the Church became less and less of a fellowship.
 - iii) When the little house congregations became a vast congregation the intimacy went lost and the kiss of peace went lost with it.