

Discussion Questions Set #1

“For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:5-9)

1. When you think of the church – either universally or locally – do you generally see it as “enriched” and “not lacking any spiritual gift” or “poor” and “lacking”?
2. Why do you think there might be a cultural trend in the church to expect that things will be lacking in one way or another? What kinds of things might develop in a church through a focus or preoccupation with that which is lacking?
3. Paul begins his address by forcing a not so subtle shift to a God-oriented, Christ-centered starting point for this “conversation” with the Corinthians. Why might it be important for us to not only recognize this in our passage, but also to apply within our own following of Jesus?

Discussion Questions Set #2

“My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:11-12)

In service, it was suggested that a false understanding of leadership in the church was functioning in the Corinthians church, namely that it was specific men who were to be looked to for guidance and adherence to the “right” school of thought would offer the church strength, stability and effectiveness. Just get the right “expert” in place and the church will flourish was the thinking.

1. Does similar thinking exist in the church today? What outcomes might develop from such thinking? Discuss any instances of this thinking that you are aware of.
2. In service, it was suggested that an ability to stand firm in one’s faith depends upon God’s intimate presence and His abundant God-given gifts to the community, requiring the pursuit of the teaching of Christ crucified. How is this different than the Corinthian understanding of leadership with in the church and what difference might applying this make within a given church?

Discussion Questions Set #3

“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

In service, we discussed the idea that Paul’s encouragement to the Corinthians Christians was that they permit no tears to exist among them, instead allowing God to restore or knit together any tears that do exist. We cannot create unity in the church but are to keep a unity already given to us by the Spirit of God; we are to simply refuse to be those who tear.

1. Why is it an important understanding that we cannot create unity, only maintain that which is given to us by the Spirit? What practical difference might it make if a community were focussed on “not tearing” rather than creating unity?
2. Paul points us towards four understandings that can assist us in the practice of maintaining unity. Discuss the importance of each. We make strides towards becoming a unified community when:
 - a. we refuse to believe in a divided Christ, but come to appreciate His fullness as revealed through an entire community committed to Him
 - b. we reserve all glory and praise for Jesus and refuse to engage in fruitless arguments.
 - c. we have together, given ourselves fully to Jesus and not even partially to other individuals.
 - d. we admit that power is only found in the message of Christ crucified and when we ensure that this is the message we together declare.