



*united*

1 CORINTHIANS



# family devotions

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# contents

UNITED IN FOOLISHNESS	4
UNITED IN THE MIND OF CHRIST	6
UNITED UNDER LEADERSHIP	8
UNITED IN GODLY LIVING	10
UNITED IN OUR BODIES	12
UNITED IN FREEDOM	14
UNITED IN OUR GATHERINGS	16
UNITED AS ONE BODY	18
UNITED IN LOVE	20

## BIBLE STUDY

### **DISCUSSION STARTERS**

Think back over the last week - who are 5 prominent people from the news or media? Why did they draw the attention of the media?

What are the qualities in people that this world values?

Was there anything from last week's sermon that stood out for you?

### **READ 1 Corinthians 1:10-17**

1. Why do you think the Corinthians were divided over leaders?

2. What is Paul's answer to their divisions? (We will look at this some more in our next study)

### **READ 1 Corinthians 1:17-31**

3. What is the contrast that runs right the way through this passage?

How does it relate to the question of divided leadership and the reasons for that?

4. How is Christ crucified 'a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles'?

5. Why did God choose to work his plan of salvation this way (26-31)?

6. What does this way of God working mean for the attitudes of those who are saved by Him (29,31)?

### **RUBBER HITS THE ROAD**

How does this passage encourage us in the task of owning and sharing our faith in Jesus with others in our matrix of relationships?

Think of the 5 people you spoke of at the beginning of this study - what does this passage say to the values that the world around us esteems? What does it look like in our lives to be different to that?

## BIBLE STUDY

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

Share with your Small Group something that you found particularly challenging and something you found encouraging from the Sunday sermon.

How would you describe 'a wise man'? Perhaps draw a picture and explain it to the Group.

What makes someone 'spiritual' in your mind? What things will characterise them?

### READ 1 Corinthians 2

1. (i) How did Paul describe himself when he visited Corinth?

(ii) How would this have challenged the Corinthians, part of a culture that "spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas" Acts 17:21?

(ii) Humanly speaking, why did it make sense that the resurrected Lord Jesus had to appear to Paul to convince him not to be afraid (read Acts 17:31-18:17)?

(iv) How does this challenge your perceptions of the missionary apostle Paul (see 1 Cor 2:3)?



2. (i) What reasons did Paul give for his unimpressive method and preaching?

(ii) Why do the worldly not understand Paul's message?

(iii) How are we able to understand the things of God?

(iv) How does Paul describe a wise man? What does he understand a spiritual person to be?

## **DISCUSS**

What then does it mean that "we have the mind of Christ"?

## **RUBBER HITS THE ROAD**

How should this passage shape the way we do our personal devotions?

How should this passage shape the way we do outreach as a Small Group or church?

It has been said "The church in Corinth had too much Corinth in the church". In what ways do you feel St Paul's exhibits too much of our worldly culture? Invite someone from another culture to comment!

### BIBLE STUDY

#### **DISCUSSION STARTERS**

Share with your Small Group something that you found particularly challenging and something you found encouraging from the Sunday sermon.

What do you admire in people that makes you want to follow them or their advice? What do you value in a leader?

Share with your Small Group who has been instrumental in shaping your Christian life lately and over the years.

#### **READ 1 Corinthians 3-4**

1.(i) Why did Paul accuse the Corinthians of acting like babies?

(ii) How should the Corinthians have viewed their leaders?

(iii) How should we view our church leaders?

2. (i) How should the Corinthians have viewed themselves as a church?

(ii) How should this have affected the way they were acting towards one another?

(iii) How should this affect the way we view and treat each other in our Small Group and church?

(i) How should the Corinthians have viewed the apostles?

(ii) How should this have affected their own attitudes?

(iii) How should it have affected the way they related to Paul in particular?

### **RUBBER HITS THE ROAD**

How does this passage challenge you as to how you talk about our church when with outsiders?

How does this passage shape the way you lead others in your family, at work or at church?

How does this passage inform the way we understand, choose and assess our spiritual leaders?

## BIBLE STUDY

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

Is there anything from Sunday's sermon that caught your attention?

What sort of issues do you think would be serious enough to ask someone to leave the church?

What sort of things do we use to mark out our identity in our minds?

### READ 1 Corinthians 5:1-12

1. What is the issue at hand that Paul brings before the Corinthians in this section of the letter, and how does he indicate the extreme nature of this issue (vv1-5)?

2. What do you think Paul means by the expression 'hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his Spirit might be saved on the day of the Lord' (v5)?

3. What do you think the Corinthian church was boasting about in relation to this matter (v6)?

4. What is the principle at stake here that calls for such action from the church? How do you think that might play out today in church?

5. How do verses 6-8 show us that this issue is about unity and the church's corporate welfare?

6. What is the distinction drawn in verses 9-11?

### **READ 1 Corinthians 6:1-11**

7. What is the issue in verses 1-9?

8. How does this issue relate to the unity the church is called to in Christ?

9. 'That is what some of you were.' (v11). What do verses 9-11 say to the issue of where we find our identity, and the possibility of changing from one type of behaviour to another?

10. How does verse 11 underpin the theme of unity throughout 1 Cor 5:1-6:11?

### **RUBBER HITS THE ROAD**

How seriously do we take sin in our own lives, and in the life of our church? Why do you think we have that attitude? What would it look like to take sin seriously in your own life and in the life of our church? What is at stake in this issue?

We can tend to identify ourselves with either our vocation, or our relationships, or other things. What difference would it make if we identified with Christ and his church as our primary identity? How would it change your attitude to church and godly living?

### BIBLE STUDY

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS

Is there anything from Sunday's sermon that caught your attention?

Write down 5 words that you would use to describe your body. Share one of these with the group.

#### READ 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

1. What are the Corinthian attitudes towards their physical bodies that Paul quotes in these verses, and what behaviours have they led to?
2. What is the basis for Paul's high view of the physical body (vv14,15,19-20)?
3. What makes sexual sin different from other types of sin in terms of its consequences for us (vv15-20)?

#### READ 2 Corinthians 7:1-24

4. What is the teaching about sex within married relationships presented in verses 1-5? (How does this differ from the common outsiders understanding of the Christian view of sex?)
5. How do verses 8 and 9 reflect Paul's high view of the body, and his view of the Christian being at the end of the ages? (see vv29-31)

6. Why should a believing wife not leave her unbelieving husband (v12-14)? What does this say about the children of at least one Christian parent?

7. What is the guiding principle behind the instructions in vv17-24?

### **READ 1 Corinthians 7:25-40**

8. How do verses 29-31 underly all of Paul's instructions in vv25-40? How do they give equal value to the state of being unmarried and the state of being married?

### **RUBBER HITS THE ROAD**

How does this teaching on the significance of the body (and what we do with it) challenge the prevailing view of our culture, which says that our bodies are ours to do with as we like?

How do these verses tell us that a correct view of sin is more important than we think, both outside of marriage and inside of marriage? (If you are married, you may want to take some time to reflect on your physical intimacy with your spouse, and whether it reflects 1 Cor 7:2-5)

Take some time to reflect on the relationships you are currently involved in - does what you do in them reflect that your identity is in Christ and that "the time is short...this world in its present form is passing away" (v29,31)?

### BIBLE STUDY

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS

Is there anything from Sunday's sermon that caught your attention?

Think of the first 5 words that come to you when you hear the word 'freedom' - share these with the group.

What is the image that comes to mind when you hear the word 'freedom'?

#### READ 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

1. What does Paul establish first about 'idols' (vv1-6)? On what basis does he make his conclusion about idols?

2. What does Paul say about whether or not food affects our relationship with God (8)?

3. What is the heart of the issue that Paul is addressing here (v7)?

4. What is the principle that Paul lays down about exercising 'freedom' here (vv9-13)? How does Paul underline the seriousness of doing something that in itself is not sinful, but causes someone to seriously stumble in their faith?



### **READ 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

5. How does Paul illustrate the correct use of freedom using the example of his own life?

6. What is the principle that guided his use (or non-use) of his freedom?

### **READ 1 Corinthians 10: 23-33**

7. How does Paul critique the attitude of 'entitlement', or 'insisting on one's rights' in these verses?

8. What are the principles that Paul lays out here for looking after those with a weaker conscience?

### **RUBBER HITS THE ROAD**

Discuss with your group a modern scenario where we might be free to participate in a behaviour, but where we might choose to refrain for the sake of caring for those with a weaker conscience.

How does the desire for unity interplay with individual freedom in these verses?

## BIBLE STUDY

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

Is there anything from Sunday's sermon that caught your attention?

In what ways does our Sunday gathering express its unity in Christ?

### READ 1 Corinthians 11:17-33

1. What is the root problem that Paul is addressing here (vv18-19)?

2. How is this problem being expressed in the church in Corinth? (vv20-22)  
Where else have we seen this in our journey through 1 Corinthians?

3. What does Paul say the Lord's Supper is all about (vv23-26)? (Compare Luke 22:7-23)

4. In what ways throughout this passage does Paul express the solemnity of participating in the 'Lord's Supper'?

5. How would the correct observation of the Lord's Supper in the gatherings of Christians help express and foster unity?

6. In light of all of the above, why does Paul say to the Corinthian church "your meetings do more harm than good" (v17)?

7. What do you think it looks like to 'eat the bread or drink the cup in an unworthy manner', in the Corinthian context, and in today's context? (v27)

8. What do you think it looks like today to be 'more discerning with regard to ourselves' when it comes to sharing in the Lord's Supper (v31)?

### **RUBBER HITS THE ROAD**

What practices in our church gatherings help or hinder unity in Christ? What can we do to improve this?

What sorts of things could you do to make sure you do not 'eat the bread or drink the cup in an unworthy manner'?

## SUNDAY SERVICE NOTES

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

Share with your Small Group something that you found particularly challenging and something you found encouraging from the Sunday sermon.

What do you think the marks of the Spirit are? If someone has the Spirit of God what would show this?

### READ 1 Corinthians 12

(i) Why do you think that when Paul begins by talking about spiritual things he begins as he does (v1-13)? In light of the problems in the Corinthian church (1:10) what do you think he is trying to emphasise?

(ii) How does reminding yourself that all of God's people have his Holy Spirit working in them affect the way you practically relate to them?

(iii) How should the unity we have in the Spirit shape and challenge our experience of worship in church?

2. (i) The divisions amongst the Corinthian church affected their view of the use of gifts. Do you struggle more with the problem in vv14-20 ("My gifts are not needed here at St Paul's) or with that in vv21-26 ("We don't need that sort of gift around here!")?

(ii) Which of these two problems do you think most afflicts our church?

(iii) How can your Small Group help us with this?

### **RUBBER HITS THE ROAD**

Where do you intend to serve in 2017? Share this with your group so they can pray for you in this; alternatively, if you don't know, perhaps do the Spiritual Gifts assessment found on our website.

Where can your Small Group serve in 2017? Come up with a project that you can all be involved in, or ask a staff member for an opportunity to do so.

'The Spirit gives each of these gifts to each one, just as he determines' (paraphrase of v11). How does this challenge you in any frustrations you may have with the services at St Paul's?

## BIBLE STUDY

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

Share with your Small Group something that you found particularly challenging and something you found encouraging from the Sunday sermon.

What do you feel is the most important criteria someone must meet if they want to get involved in ministry?

How many songs can you think of that include the word 'love' in their title? Have some fun working together to name as many as you can.

### READ 1 Corinthians 13

(i) Paul has just said that the Corinthians are 'eagerly desiring the greater gifts'. How does this link to what he says in 13:1-3?

(ii) Which of the gifts that he mentions do you consider the greatest? Do you believe that love truly is 'the most excellent way' or do you rate it below any of these? Why / why not?

(iii) How does Paul's statement 'I am nothing' (not 'my gifts are worth nothing') challenge you? How can you serve others in a more loving way?

2. (i) Paul's description of love critiqued the Corinthians' behaviour as perhaps it does our own. Replace your name with the word 'love' and move into a time of confession as you recognise how the Spirit must continue to work in your lives.

(ii) Now replace the word 'love' with the name of Jesus. Move into a time of praise because our Lord truly is love and epitomises every virtue listed here.

(iii) Paul's main point is that the church must represent Christ by showing love to one another. Now replace the word 'love' with either your Small Group or 'St Paul's'. In which areas do you feel we need to do better in relating to one another?

### **RUBBER HITS THE ROAD**

All spiritual gifts will pass away, but 'love never fails' (v8). In what areas do you, like the Corinthians, need to grow up (v11)? How are you investing in eternity by practicing love (v13)? In what ways can you better show love to your family, those at your work, in our church community or in the community generally?



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