



First Corinthians

Week 1

Hi Amazing Leaders! Thanks so much for the texts and Facebook messages regarding my mom going to heaven on Friday. It is hard right now, but we will all be okay. I will be at study on Wednesday morning. Here are notes for the first three days- I will get caught up this week and upload a full set for all five days. Praying that your first meetings with your groups went well. Love you guys.

1 Corinthians- Living Love When We Disagree

Week 1 Notes

There is SO MUCH in these three days- do not worry if you cannot get to all of it. Whatever you hit on will be exactly what the ladies need to hear ☺ It may be helpful to read the passage of Scripture that you will be talking about, before you enter into each day, if you have time.

Day 1 Our Spiritual Identity

Melissa takes the first few pages to give us a background on Corinth and the Corinthian church. It is always good to establish some historical and cultural context to a book before diving in. We have to consider first, what Paul's teachings would have meant to the original audience (that church at that time), secondly identify the timeless biblical principle that undergirds Paul's point, then drop that biblical principle into our current life and circumstances in order to finally apply it to our lives to see how it impacts our thoughts and behavior. We cannot just read a passage and say, "this is what this Scripture means to me", like we can with poetry or a song. The bible is different- in order to correctly interpret it, we must consider the author's intent, the original audience, and the historical and theological context.

The second half of this day, we focus in on 1 Corinthians 1:1-9. Melissa points out how much Christ is mentioned, and how those who call on the name of the Lord are holy. As Melissa stated in the introductory video, this book is less theological and more relational in nature. A great starting point when we consider how we interact with others within our church is to remember that we have all been called and saved by God to be His beloved children and to accomplish His mission here on Earth. In other words, we are all on the same team. We are all imperfect people trying to serve, obey and become more perfect. We all have personality deficiencies, strengths, insecurities, ways of handling stress, and tendencies to how we navigate life. Given all of these differences, we must ask ourselves, how are we going to choose to identify ourselves and others? By how we feel, what we accomplish, our appearance, how others view us, OR as holy disciples of Christ?

One of the first steps in interacting with others is seeing them and loving them the way that Christ sees and loves them. We need to pray to be able to do that, even when we are hurt or the world says we are justified to act sinfully towards others.



Day 2 Dealing With Division

When we do disagree in the church, do we ask God to impart wisdom as to what is a preference and what is an absolute? It takes some prayer and time to determine that! It also takes great maturity and self-control to how we interact with our church family when we have disagreements. The world is watching how Christ followers love each other when things are difficult. We can be a witness or an obstacle in non-believer's spiritual journey.

Melissa brings up two specific dangers that Paul talks about in this next passage of scripture: relational idolatry and arguments about outward signs of inward change.

Relational Idolatry- I love Melissa's concise definition- anything that captures our attention more than God can become an idol. It does not have to be a bad thing to be an idol. Good things take our heart away from God all the time.

1 Corinthians 1:12 Paul indicates that one source of division related to who the individual people followed. I like the way Melissa sorts out the leaders at the bottom of page 16- Paul the father or shepherd, Apollos the academic, Peter the bold authoritative leader. Isn't there room for all of these types of leaders? God has gifted us individually, and we all serve a purpose in the body of Christ. Our pastors and bible teachers and leaders are not perfect. They cannot be expected to everything well- just as no one should expect you to do everything well. Ultimately all Christian leaders are on the same team, using their specific gifts in their own individual way to turn people's eyes, hearts and minds toward Christ.

We are to honor our leaders, not idolize them. When we accidentally idolize them or others in the church, and our leaders or people in the church disappoint us (which will always happen at some point) many ladies give up on Christ and Christianity altogether- which is a devastating mistake. We follow Jesus who was and is perfect, not any one person- who will inevitably let us down at some point. We must differentiate between the two.

Outward signs of Inward Change- this used to be things like worship style, baptism, dress, teaching styles. Now- we have a whole new set of things to divide on: masks at church, vaccinations, how much we speak on politics in church. These, and other topics, are affecting our church more than ever.

I thought Melissa made a good point at the bottom of page 20. Often when we argue over outward expressions of faith- pride and self-righteousness tend to creep into our hearts. We need to defend sound doctrine, but before we dive into those conversations, we need to approach the topic and/or people involved from the perspective of the cross.



Day 3

I had a hard time organizing this day in my head. All of the content is awesome, but I was struggling to anchor it to where we are in 1 Corinthians. I think Melissa summed it up well on page 29, at the end of Day 3. It might be easier to start there, by summarizing the day, and then go back and discussing the three key points Paul is talking about in this passage.

From page 29, before giving answers, Paul wanted to make sure that everyone was on the same page before discussion or disagreements began:

We need to understand the message of the Cross

We need to understand the futility of human wisdom

We need to understand that the only thing we can “boast” about is that we know God.

We get right to the gospel in this day. Some ladies may have never heard it. They may want to sit and think on it for a few weeks- it is good to bring it up now and get them thinking about it. If there are any ladies that want to ask Jesus into their heart, we will definitely celebrate that! I will be praying that hearts are opened to the gospel.

Day 4 Beyond Imagination

I don't know about you, but I had a hard time organizing this day as well. The passage for the day is 1 Corinthians 2:1-9. In my mind, this passage hits on three key points (in bold) and then from here, I would fit Melissa's insight from the day into this framework (in bullet points below the bold key points).

- The power of the gospel message is not dependent on the speaker/teacher.
 - The believers in Corinth were prone to attaching themselves to a particular teacher- are we?
 - How can we pray for and help Bible teachers- as Priscilla and Aquilla did?
 - We can share the gospel in our own personal way, the best we can, and God's grace and power will work within our weakness.
- Spiritual truths cannot be discerned without the work of the Holy Spirit. - it is mystery unveiled through the Holy Spirit.
 - When people reject the gospel, they are not rejecting us personally. Their heart does not understand spiritual truths.
- God has things planned for us, and this world, that we cannot imagine.
 - Our job is to remain faithful to what God has called us to do. God's job is to orchestrate how life will turn out. -We can live life with an attitude of expectancy because God has things planned for us that we cannot imagine!



Day 5: A Spiritual Mind

This passage, 1 Cor 2:10-16 is so powerful to read and understand. It describes how the natural man cannot understand the things of God. Yet, when we believe, we are given the mind of Christ. Wow! A bible teacher explained it to me this way once: Both Christians and non-Christians are walking around in the natural world. As Christians, we have a special antenna that can pick up spiritual discernment from God, when we were baptized with the Holy Spirit upon becoming Christians. Unbelievers cannot sense spiritual things because they do not have the Holy Spirit within them (the antennae) making sense of spiritual truths for them. Don't expect non-Christians to act and think like Christians. We would not be able to act and think like Christians without the Holy Spirit.

It would be great to go through Paul's list with your group of all the things the Holy Spirit has done for us. Maybe some ladies would be open to share about how the Holy Spirit has helped guide and direct them in a particular moment in their own lives. A good tip to point out is that the Holy Spirit of God will never direct us in a way that is contradictory to His written word- the Bible. What a gift the Holy Spirit is to us!