

Life-Sharing Lesson 1—The Authority Of The Bible

Proverbs 2:1:1-15 Timothy 3:16 1

Commentary

1:1 In the beginning. When John wrote of *the beginning*, he was paralleling the words of the creation account. He stressed that "the Word" already existed at the time of creation (as is translated in the NEB). More likely, John was thinking of a beginning before "the beginning" in [Genesis 1:1](#), a timeless beginning. Thus, we could translate the first part of the verse as "in eternity the Word existed."

LIFE APPLICATION

BEGINNINGS

Each of the Gospel writers chose a different starting point for their accounts of the life of Jesus. Matthew began with Abraham, showing how Jesus came from Abraham's family and was the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. Mark skipped most of the preliminaries and moved right to the action, beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist. Luke began with a review of his research method and rooted Jesus' life in the wider historical events of his time. But John presented the largest perspective of all, describing Jesus as the very source of everything we understand as beginning. His purpose was to record, in outline form, the biography of the Son of God, who even in becoming a human being accomplished so much that "if every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" ([21:25](#) NIV).

The Word. John called the Son of God, who was with God his Father in the beginning, *the Word*. John did not identify this person immediately, but described his nature and purpose before revealing his name (see [vv. 14, 17](#)). As the Word, the Son of God fully conveys and communicates God. What does John mean by "the Word"? Theologians and philosophers, both Jews and Greeks, used the term *word* in a variety of ways. The Greek term is *logos*. In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, "the Word" is described as an agent of creation ([Psalm 33:6](#)), the source of God's message to his people through the prophets ([Hosea 1:2](#)), and God's law, his standard of holiness ([Psalm 119:11](#)).

The Greeks used "the Word" in two ways. It could mean a person's thoughts or reason, or it might refer to a person's speech, the expression of thoughts. As a

philosophical term, *logos* conveyed the rational principle that governed the universe, even the creative energy that generated the universe.

In both the Jewish and Greek conceptions, *logos* conveyed the idea of beginnings—the world began through the Word (see [Genesis 1:3ff.](#), where the expression "God said" occurs repeatedly). John may have had these ideas in mind, but his description shows clearly that he spoke of Jesus as a human being he knew and loved (see especially [1:14](#)), who was at the same time the Creator of the universe, the ultimate revelation of God, and also the living picture of God's holiness, the one in whom "all things hold together" ([Colossians 1:17](#) NIV). Jesus as the *logos* reveals God's mind to us.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – John.

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 (NIV)

¹ Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ² The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.

³ But the man who loves God is known by God.

⁴ So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), ⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. ⁷ But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

⁸ But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

⁹ Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

¹⁰ For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols?

¹¹ So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge.

¹² When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

¹³ Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

[8:1](#) Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ^{NRSV} The Corinthian believers had sent another question to Paul (see [7:1](#))—this one regarding *food sacrificed to idols*. Their question pertains to the idolatry with its sacrifices that permeated the Greek

and Roman cultures of the day. (Paul also dealt with this issue in his letter to the Roman believers—see [Romans 14](#).) One might think that believers should obviously not have contact with idolatry in any form. Paul had prohibited such contact in [5:9-11](#), and the Jerusalem council had forbidden the Christians to eat meat offered to idols ([Acts 15:29](#)). For believers in Corinth, however, staying clear of any contact with idolatry was nearly impossible for two main reasons. First, people often ate meals in temples or in places associated with idols. This was accepted social practice for public or private gatherings. To cut oneself off from such gatherings would be like not attending weddings or other social celebrations today. So this caused much concern for the believers. At such gatherings, a sacrifice was made to the idol. When such meat was sacrificed, the priest would divide it into three portions: One would be burned up, one would be given to the priest, and one would be given to the offerer. If the priest did not use his portion, it would be sent to the marketplace. This caused the second concern for the believers.

The meat, after being sacrificed to an idol and sold in the market, would then be bought and served in private homes. So the Corinthian believers wondered if the meat had been contaminated by its having been offered on a pagan altar, and, if by eating it, they would be participating in idol worship. Paul answered both of these concerns; most likely, the advice in 8:1-13 deals with temple-sponsored meals, while 10:23–11:1 deals with meat sold in the marketplace.

Knowledge, or at least a high conceit of it, is very apt to swell the mind, to fill it with wind, and so puff it up. This tends to do no good to ourselves, but in many instances is much to the hurt of others. But true love, and tender regard to our brethren, will put us upon consulting their interest, and acting as may be for their edification.

Matthew Henry

The words "all of us possess knowledge" may have been a quote from the Corinthians' letter to Paul. This "knowledge" probably refers to knowledge that there is one true God and knowledge that idols are worthless and have no power. The conclusion, then, is that believers can eat anything because God created it, so a ceremony offering food to an idol could do nothing to contaminate the food. Since they didn't believe in idols, and God doesn't regard idols, Corinthian believers could eat with their friends without problems. Some believers understood this fact. Others, however, felt very strongly that to eat such meat would be wrong; their consciences bothered them. This must have become a divisive issue, because the question had come to Paul.

In our salutary emphasis on truth and knowledge, we must never succumb to an intellectual arrogance that assigns small importance to self-denying love for those who do not know as much.

Paul took the opportunity to tell them that *knowledge puffs up, but love builds up*. While these believers had a certain amount of knowledge leading to freedom, it would be of no value if they did not deal with their fellow believers in a spirit of love. Those who might be taking pride in their knowledge of Christ would only be "puffed up" and could end up dividing the church. Those who took their knowledge and used it lovingly among the believers were "building up" the church. In this situation, acting on knowledge alone—even accurate knowledge—without love for other believers, would harm the church.

Paul maintained his stance that eating meat sacrificed to idols was wrong. He upheld the decision of the Jerusalem council. But he would go on to explain (what the Corinthians probably observed) why he would eat meat in private homes with Gentiles.

LIFE APPLICATION

KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE

Love outranks knowledge. Knowledge can make us look good and feel important, but it can also give us an arrogant, know-it-all attitude. Apparently, the Corinthians were treating one another based on the "it's who and what you know that matters" philosophy. Paul saw that they were actually lacking love for God and each other. Their specific problems and questions formed a veneer over their failure to love (see [chapter 13](#) for Paul's beautiful answer).

Knowledge places the emphasis on the "knower;" love draws attention to the one who is loved. Knowledge attempts to define love; love makes use of knowledge to refine its actions. Knowledge serves love. This is not to say that Christians are lovingly ignorant. We do seek to know more, especially about God. We ought to hunger for the kind of knowledge that will help us love the Lord and our neighbor better.

[8:2-3](#) Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. But the person who loves God is the one God knows and cares for.^{NLT} Because "knowledge puffs up," people with knowledge might even claim *to know all the answers*. No one can know everything, however, and a person who claims to know it all shows that he or she *doesn't really know very much*. By contrast, *the person who loves God* has found the truth and also has discovered that he or she cannot be God and know all the answers. To love God is to submit to him. Love for God, then, naturally leads to love for other believers.

Knowledge without love leads to a pride that will eventually fall under its own weight. Love without knowledge, however, can lead to sentimentalism, wherein people love everyone without regard for truth. Knowledge of God goes hand in hand with love, for God is love ([1 John 4:8](#)). The following verses explain that true knowledge of God leads Christians to willingly support and help weaker believers so as not to cause them to stumble—in this context by not eating food sacrificed to idols. But the principle can apply to any situation in the modern world where some believers experience freedom in certain areas and others do not.

[8:4](#) So now, what about it? Should we eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols? Well, we all know that an idol is not really a god and that there is only one God and no other.^{NLT} After dealing with any root issue of pride in this matter ([8:1-3](#)), Paul returned to the question at hand, *Should we eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols?* The believers in Corinth had come to believe *that there is only one God and no other* out of a culture that embraced many gods. These gods had to be pleased and appeased—often their "power" would be used against those who displeased them or for those who did all that they wanted. These believers knew that *an idol was not really a god*. Not only are idols powerless, they are imaginary. They have no substance, authority, power, or ability to curse or bless. The believers' knowledge was the basis for this argument. They knew that the idols were worthless. Paul agreed with them, but this statement set the stage for what he would say about eating meat offered to idols.

LIFE APPLICATION

IDOL FOOD

Paul's counsel about food offered to idols may seem foreign today. Although the specific issues change, the underlying struggle remains. Nonbelievers are in and of the world. Believers, however, are no longer of the world but do remain in it (see [John 15:19](#); [17:14-16](#)). We are surrounded by the old ideas, habits, and values of life without Christ. We now look at even common things like food, entertainment, and friendships with a new set of priorities. All believers will experience the same ongoing enticement from the old life. Some may have to consciously avoid those things that had a particular hold on them in the past. Pagan addictions are not transformed into harmless hobbies when people become Christians.

Paul pointed out that freedom in Christ does not work itself out in the same way for everyone. Those differences should not cause jealousy or insensitivity toward other Christians. As we love others, we must think about how our words and actions will affect them. Be patient with other Christians.

8:5-6 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.^{NIV} The idols themselves were phony, but they represented *so-called gods* to the many people who worshiped them, whether their abode was thought to be *in heaven or on earth*. Paul acknowledged that many people believed the gods to be real. Idolatry takes away from God the worship he is due. Satan is behind all attempts to thwart God; therefore, the "power" behind idolatry is the demons, the "*gods*" and "*lords*" of the spirit world ([Ephesians 6:12](#)). Demons exist, but they are subordinate to the *one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live*. God created everything—even the metal, wood, and stone from which people fashion their idols. The pagans divided creation up among the various gods who ruled their own spheres, but the one true God created everything. Those who believe in God live their lives *for* him and his glory.

There is one God and *there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live*. Paul's statement of "one God" and "one Lord" places the uniqueness and living reality of God the Father and Jesus Christ against the false Corinthian deities. This characterizes God the Father as the source and fulfillment (destiny) of all creation, and God the Son, Jesus Christ, as the mediator. God is "Father," signifying his love and desire to relate to his people. God is creator. He is not himself part of the cosmos but is the source of everything created. God is also every believer's fulfillment or destiny. Their existence meets his purposes. Next Paul wrote of the nature and work of Christ. He called Christ "Lord," a name that the Old Testament uses only in reference to God. Through Jesus Christ, God created and redeemed the world.

8:7 However, not all Christians realize this. Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated.^{NLT} Basic Christian theology focuses on the fact that there is one God, who created everything, and that idols are nothing. *However*, wrote Paul, *not all Christians realize this*. They believe in the all-powerful God of the Christian faith but are not thoroughly convinced that the other gods do not exist at all. In their hearts and consciences, they have difficulty because they are *accustomed to thinking of idols as being real*. Therefore, when they eat meat that had been sacrificed as part of a religious ceremony, they cannot separate the meat from the ceremony. Eating such meat causes them to *think of it as the worship of real gods*. This brought pangs of conscience. Paul said they had *weak consciences*. A "weak" conscience regards as wrong an act that is not wrong, or is still unclear about whether it is wrong or not. The possibility exists for new converts to fall back into old obsessions by seeing other believers exercise their freedom. Old patterns may link the activity (such as playing cards) with an old obsession (such as gambling). The Corinthians' weak consciences

could not discriminate between right and wrong regarding food offered to idols, so when they ate such meat, they *violated* their consciences and so believed that they were sinning against God.

8:8-9 But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.^{NIV} Food is neutral—neither good nor evil, regardless of whether or not it has been sacrificed in a pagan temple to an idol. There would be nothing inherently wrong with eating such meat because food has nothing to do with one's relationship with God—it cannot *bring us near to God*, nor can it take us farther away. Therefore, it is really a matter of indifference. Yet because it is merely a matter of indifference, Paul said that the strong believers should not push the weak but, instead, be willing to love the weak. These "strong" believers (as opposed to those whom Paul described as "weak") knew Scripture and stood strong on God's commands and prohibitions but were free from minor, legalistic constraints. Yet, they must *be careful . . . that the exercise of [their] freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak*. Since it really doesn't matter what kind of food believers eat, the strong believers should live on the side of love for the sake of the weaker believers.

A "stumbling block" refers to something that might cause someone to trip or fall into sin. The strong but insensitive Christian may flaunt his or her freedom, be a harmful example, and thus offend the consciences of others. The overscrupulous but weak Christian may try to fence others in with petty rules and regulations, thus causing dissension. Paul wanted his readers to be both strong in the faith and sensitive to others' needs. Because all believers are strong in certain areas and weak in others, they constantly need to monitor the effects of their behavior on others.

LIFE APPLICATION

DESTRUCTIVE FREEDOM

Freedom without boundaries or direction quickly takes on the form of slavery. A distraught mental patient who had completely wrecked her life in the exercise of "freedom" expressed a life-changing principle when she asked her counselor, "You mean I don't have to do what I want to do?"

Superficial freedom insists we can do anything we want to do. True freedom understands that personal desires don't rule wisely. We don't always want what is best.

Paul reminded his friends in Corinth that if the practice of their freedom hurt others, they ought to reconsider their actions. The three central controls over our freedom in Christ are (1) Christ's commands and example; (2) our awareness of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and (3) our commitment to love others.

See Also:

[Chart: Stronger and Weaker Believers](#)

8:10 You see, this is what can happen: Weak Christians who think it is wrong to eat this food will see you eating in the temple of an idol. You know there's nothing wrong with it, but they will be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been dedicated to the idol.^{NLT} Paul offered an example of what might happen. The *weak Christians* (those with "weak consciences" as explained in [8:7](#)) think that *it is wrong to eat* food that has been sacrificed to an idol. Strong Christians *know there's nothing wrong with* eating such food, so they go to *the temple of an idol* and eat there. As noted in [8:1](#), this would not have been an uncommon occurrence, for most social and cultural events happened in the temples. When weak believers see their fellow Christians eating in the idol temple, the weak believers would *be encouraged to violate their conscience* by doing the same. If a weak believer does something that he or she is not sure is right or wrong, that action will bring condemnation. As Paul wrote to the Romans, "Those who have doubts are condemned if they eat, because they do not act from faith" ([Romans 14:23](#) NRSV).

If one believer has no scruples about where meat comes from or how it is prepared but flaunts his or her belief in order to cause one who is concerned to be distressed, then that stronger individual is not acting in love. The conduct of stronger believers is not to be decided by what they feel is their better insight into the Scriptures or what they feel would "strengthen" those weaker ones. Rather, it is to be decided by love and sensitivity. Paul was pointing out how the strong believers ought to use their freedom in public—the situation he described here was very public. If these strong believers ate meat that had been offered to idols in the privacy of their homes because they knew such meat was not tainted in any way, they could do so with liberty and without concern for the scruples of the weaker believers. Strong Christians ought to, at times, restrain their freedom for the sake of the weak, but they need not come into bondage to the consciences of weak believers.

LIFE APPLICATION

BOUNDARIES

Christian freedom does not mean that "anything goes." It means that salvation is not determined by good deeds or legalistic rules but by the free gift of God ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). Christian freedom, then, is inseparably tied to Christian responsibility. New believers are often very sensitive to what is right or wrong, what they should or shouldn't do. Some actions may be perfectly all right for us to do but may harm a Christian brother or sister who is still young in the faith

and learning what the Christian life is all about. If someone came out of alcoholism, it would be unwise to use or offer alcoholic beverages around him or her. We must be careful not to offend a sensitive or younger Christian or, by our example, to cause him or her to sin. When we love others, our freedom should be less important to us than disturbing the faith of a brother or sister in Christ.

8:11 So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed.^{NRSV} The stronger believer must not let what he or she wants to do (when it is a minor matter such as whether to eat meat or not) become a stumbling block that could destroy a weaker brother or sister. The strong believers know they are free from concern about meat offered to idols, but that *knowledge* must not cause them to harm other believers. The Greek verb translated "destroyed" (*apollumi*) often means "to bring about destruction." It could also mean a "ruin" of one's conscience if the weaker believer goes against his or her scruples. To ruin a person's conscience would be total destruction. Therefore, strong Christians are to act in love. That other person, no matter how much the strong believer disagrees with him or her, is still someone for whom Christ died. If Christ willingly gave up his life, Christians ought to be willing to give up their freedoms occasionally so as not to harm another.

Mature Christians shouldn't flaunt their freedom. They should be sensitive to younger converts whose faith can be destroyed by such freedom. For example, a young Christian addicted to gambling may be damaged by the strong Christian's freedom to play cards. Some activities may be all right in and of themselves but not around weaker new converts. Weak believers ought not do anything against their consciences, but they must grow in the faith and, at the same time, not pass judgment on their stronger brothers and sisters.

LIFE APPLICATION

CLEAR CONSCIENCE

All believers try to steer clear of actions forbidden by Scripture. But what do we do when Scripture has nothing to say about a particular issue? We should follow our conscience. To go against a conviction will leave a person with a guilty or uneasy conscience. When God shows us that something is wrong for us, we should avoid it. But we should not look down on other Christians who exercise their freedom in those areas.

3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.^{NKJV} Timothy had known the Scriptures from childhood, so he knew that all Scripture was inspired by God. When Paul spoke of *all Scripture*, he was primarily referring to the Old Testament, since it was complete at that time. But the scope of Paul's assertion would include any writing that was considered authoritative enough to be read in church meetings, which by the end of the first century would have included the four Gospels and Paul's writings. According to [2 Peter 3:15-16](#), Paul's writings were classified as "Scriptures."

LIFE APPLICATION

LET THE CHILDREN COME

Jewish families began their moral and religious training when children reached age five. The original teaching was given by mothers until about age ten, when fathers were expected to take over. The role of the family was essential in Jewish tradition and developed from God's own instruction (see [Deuteronomy 6:1-25](#)).

God-designed parental roles cannot be easily replaced or eliminated. At home and in church, we should realize that teaching small children is both an opportunity and a responsibility. Jesus wanted little children to come to him ([Matthew 19:13-15](#)). Like Timothy's mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, do your part in leading children to Christ.

The Scriptures, affirmed Paul, were God-inspired. A translation closer to the original Greek would be, "All Scripture is God-breathed." This tells us that every word of the Bible was breathed out from God. The words of the Bible came from God and were written by men. The apostle Peter affirmed this when he said that "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" ([2 Peter 1:21](#)).

Paul's words here reminded Timothy that because Scripture is inspired and infallible, it is also profitable. The Bible is not a collection of stories, fables, myths, or merely human ideas about God. It is not a human book. Through the Holy Spirit, God revealed his person and plan to certain believers, who wrote down his message for his people. This process is known as *inspiration*. The writers wrote from their own personal, historical, and cultural contexts. Although they used their own minds, talents, language, and style, they wrote what God wanted them to write. Scripture is completely trustworthy because God was in control of its writing. Its words are entirely

authoritative for our faith and lives. (See the discussion under [3:15](#) for the extent of the Scripture canon Paul may have had in mind.)

Scripture was profitable to every aspect of Timothy's ministry:

- *doctrine*—the content and teaching of truth, which must flow from and be consistent with Scripture. By calling the Bible "God-breathed," Paul was identifying its divine source; by making it the source of doctrine, he was reminding Timothy of its authority. Doctrine that contradicted biblical doctrine was to be rejected, corrected, or replaced by accurate teaching.
- *reproof*—rebuking those in sin. The initial impact of true doctrine involves the confrontation of false teaching and understanding. The offensiveness of some who teach biblical truth may have to be excused, but the offensiveness of biblical truth to error and evil requires no apology.
- *correction*—helping people straighten out errors. In the area of correction, the Scriptures have two roles: (1) they provide a complete presentation of the teaching, where only part of the truth has been present; and (2) they provide for a right understanding and application where true doctrine may have been taught but has not taken effect.
- *instruction in righteousness* (training in righteousness)—showing people how to please and glorify God. The ideal setting for doctrine includes the kind of preparation that minimizes the need for later reproof and correction. The nature of Scripture allows us to teach it confidently to our children and to learn from it ourselves.

The Bible is not purely a record of the past—the history of the Jews and then of the church. Rather, every story, every prophecy, every teaching, every admonition, and every command points beyond to the author, God, who came to us in Jesus Christ. God confronts us in the pages of his Word—telling us how much he loves us, how we can become his children, and how we should live to please him.

LIFE APPLICATION

INSPIRATION AND APPLICATION

Verse [3:16](#), known for its affirmation of inspiration also serves as a basic pattern for application of the Scriptures. We can approach every passage with the assumption that it accomplishes one or more of the four purposes of Scripture:

1. *Doctrine*—What basic truth that God wants me to know does this passage teach?
2. *Reproof*—What error in judgment, understanding, or behavior might this passage be reproofing in my life?

3. *Correction*—How might this passage correct, balance, or direct me?
 4. *Training*—What does this passage present to prepare me for some future spiritual challenge?
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Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus.

Life-Sharing Lesson 1—The Authority Of The Bible
Proverbs 2:1:1-15 Timothy 3:16

1. What was your first memory of the bible and how was it used?

I remember the bible sitting on the coffee table. It had its own spot but I don't ever remember our parents reading it to us or reading it themselves.

2. The Bible is called the “word of God.” Is that the same thing as what we find in John 1:1-2 **John 1:1-2 (NIV)** ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

No these are not the same thing. In John 1:1, we are talking about the creative Power of God that speaks things into existence. The Word in John 1:1 actually refers to Jesus Christ. The Word is inseparable from God because the Word is God. It does not refer to the bible. The Bible was not in existence in the beginning of time and the Bible is never to be equated with God. Keep in mind, for the first 200 years, the Church did not have all of the books of the Bible that we have today.

3. Is everything in the bible of equal importance today?

Although we refer to the Bible as God's word, not everything in the bible is as relevant today as it once was. It is much more important for us to read and know the verses in 2 John than it is for us to know this passage from Leviticus.

2 John 1:1-13 (NIV)

¹ The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth--and not I only, but also all who know the truth--

² because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: ³ Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.

⁴ It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. ⁵ And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. ⁶ And this is love:

that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. ⁷ Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

⁸ Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

⁹ Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. ¹¹ Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work. ¹² I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. ¹³ The children of your chosen sister send their greetings.

Leviticus 13:1-11 (NIV)

¹ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ² "When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a bright spot on his skin that may become an infectious skin disease, he must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who is a priest. ³ The priest is to examine the sore on his skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep, it is an infectious skin disease. When the priest examines him, he shall pronounce him ceremonially unclean.

⁴ If the spot on his skin is white but does not appear to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest is to put the infected person in isolation for seven days.

⁵ On the seventh day the priest is to examine him, and if he sees that the sore is unchanged and has not spread in the skin, he is to keep him in isolation another seven days.

⁶ On the seventh day the priest is to examine him again, and if the sore has faded and has not spread in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a rash. The man must wash his clothes, and he will be clean.

⁷ But if the rash does spread in his skin after he has shown himself to the priest to be pronounced clean, he must appear before the priest again. ⁸ The priest is to examine him, and if the rash has spread in the skin, he shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infectious disease. ⁹ "When anyone has an infectious skin disease, he must be brought to the priest. ¹⁰ The priest is to examine him, and if there is a white swelling in the skin that has turned the hair white and if there is raw flesh in the swelling, ¹¹ it is a chronic skin disease and the priest shall pronounce him unclean. He is not to put him in isolation, because he is already unclean.

4. Is everything in the Bible true?

The teachings about God in the Bible are true. However, the Bible contains many statements by people who are being deceitful and telling lies. If you look at a verse out of context, it is being accurately reported, but the statement itself is not necessarily true. For instance we have a true account of the Satan speaking to Adam and Eve, but the statement Genesis 3:4-5 (NIV) ⁴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Is not a true statement.

5. If a person had just given their hearts to the Lord, where is the best place to have them start reading the Bible?

The Bible is not written in chronological order. The best place to have a person start reading the bible is the gospel of Luke. It is going to tell the story of Jesus's birth, life, death, and resurrection in the order of the way things happened. This will allow the person to get to know who Jesus is with the least amount of confusion about what is being said. You do not have to know the Bible to understand the gospel of Luke. Remember that in the OT trying to start with Genesis is going to give the person exposure to a lot of things that are not a part of the Christian faith and will leave them confused about marrying several wives, lying to get out of jam, and superstitions. The people in Genesis did not have a bible to know how they were suppose to be living.

6. How do we handle things that seem to contradict each other in the Bible?

Luke 18:35-38 (NIV)

³⁵ As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." ³⁸ He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Matthew 20:29-30 (NIV)

²⁹ As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him.

³⁰ Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Most of the times when people say the bible is full of contradictions, they cannot tell you one. Ask them which contradiction do they mean. In the above case, you have a story in which Luke says there was one man begging. Matthew says there were two men sitting by the road. It may be that Luke was aware of both men, but from his perspective it only appeared that one person was talking, so he only reports on the one. Matthew may have been in front of the two men, so he could see both of them speaking. They are not trying to prove how many people were there, they are simply reporting that as Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem for the final time, he still took time out for people, whom other people had cast aside. There are other instances in the Bible like this. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are all gospels, but record events in different orders. Remember, that Luke is the only gospel that says he tries to put everything in order. John's gospels tells us that there are a lot more things that Jesus did, that he did not put in his book.

7. How do you respond to the person who says, "the Bible is too hard to understand, especially Revelations, so I don't read it."

Point out to them that Revelations is hard to understand because it is prophecy and has a lot of allegorical language, but most of the bible is pretty straightforward in what it says. It's not that hard to understand the 4 gospels. It's not that hard to understand most of the New Testament. Romans and Galatians are the only books in the New Testament that you need to understand a lot from the Old Testament to know what's going on. If we pray, God's Spirit will help us to understand the Bible. That is also why we have Bible Study Groups and Life-Sharing groups. Many bibles today come with background information to help you understand a passage if you really want to know what it is saying. You can also get translations that are modern and easy to read. The New International Version, Good News Bible, The Message, New Living Translation, and Today's New International Version are all good for easier reading.

8. How do we handle the situation where one person says something is wrong, and another thinks its okay, and the Bible does not clearly state it one way or the other? (Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-11)

Read the earlier commentary on this passage. Both sides should admit when the Bible speaks directly on a subject and when the Bible is silent on a subject. We are to look at Biblical Principles involved in dealing with new situations. But there will be areas in which we can legitimately disagree as Christians as to whether a behavior is sinful or not. When we do, both sides are called to walk in mutual love and respect for each other. Neither side is to hit the other over the head in judgment. Sometimes we choose not to do something, to keep from offending a fellow believer. Other times, we may not do the behavior, but we do not put down or look down upon the person who does. When we have disputable matters, this is how we handle the situation. If the scripture says a behavior is sin, then it is no longer a disputable matter.

We receive further insight into this in Romans 14:5-23 (NIV)

⁵ One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.

⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹ It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" ¹² So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. ¹⁴ As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.

¹⁵ If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting

in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.¹⁶ Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.

¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,¹⁸ because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.²¹ It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.²² So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves.

²³ But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

9. How do we handle the situation in which the Bible says a behavior is wrong, but the society approves it? Does society's approval by the majority override a biblical prohibition? For instance sexual immorality, where people choose to live together, but the passage is clear on sexual immorality. **1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (NIV)**

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Our goal should be to still love the people who are involved in the behaviors. We are not to approve of what the person or persons are doing, but that should not stop us from trying to love them into the kingdom. We can't expect people to live up to Christian expectations when they have never made a decision to follow Christ. We need to do more than simply say, that's wrong so I want nothing to do with them. The bible is tool to bring forth light in a situation, not a club to beat upon people.

10. Does our love for another person, gives us the right to over rule the teachings of the Bible?

No. If we love people. We will tell them the truth about what is taught in the scripture.

11. What is the purpose of the Scriptures according to itself? **2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)**¹⁶
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. Which of the four purposes do we have the most problem with today?

Teaching, Rebuking, Correcting & Training Righteousness.

12. How does a Christian balance loving a person, without approving of their sin. For instance, how do you love your neighbor who you know is a drug dealer in the community?

When you know the person has a need you try to assist the person. You pray for the person and you treat the person as though Jesus loves him/her, died for him/her and may want to use you to reach him/her.

13. How do you feel God wants you to consider the authority of the Bible for your life?

Life-Sharing Lesson 2—40 Days Of Community 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Why We Need Each Other.

Commentary

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

BELIEVERS ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST / [12:12-31](#)

Using the analogy of the body, Paul emphasized the importance of each church member. If a seemingly insignificant part is taken away, the whole body becomes less effective. Thinking that one's gift is more important than someone else's is an expression of spiritual pride. Devaluing the gift offends the Giver. We should not look down on those who seem unimportant, and we should not be jealous of others who have impressive gifts. Instead, we should use the gifts we have been given and encourage others to use theirs. If we don't, the body of believers will be less effective.

[12:12](#) The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.^{NIV} Paul followed his section describing the diversity of gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to the church by providing an analogy of a *body* (see also [10:17](#)). Some take this following section to be an argument for unity despite diversity (and so it could be), but the context reveals Paul's more pressing concern in the Corinthian church—that they accept diversity in their *one body*. Just as a body *is made up of many parts*, so the church is made up of many people with different gifts. It seems that the Corinthians all wanted to speak in tongues or desired more spectacular manifestations of the Spirit's power. Paul explained, however, that while not everyone has the same gift, they still *form one body*—the body of Christ.

LIFE APPLICATION

BODY LANGUAGE

Paul compares the body of Christ to a human body. Each part has a specific function that is necessary to the body as a whole. The parts are different for a purpose, and in their differences they must work together. Diversity can maintain unity as long as all submit to one Lord. Christians must avoid two common errors: (1) being too proud of their abilities; and (2) thinking they have nothing to give to the body of believers. Instead of comparing ourselves to one another, we should use our different gifts, together, to spread the Good News of salvation. We speak Christ's "body language" when we practice our unique gifts under his sole authority.

12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.^{NIV} What gives believers their unity is the *one Spirit*—the very same Spirit who also gives their diversity through the many and varied gifts. As believers live out their diversity through the gifts, they must never forget the basic fact that unites them—they *were all baptized by one Spirit into one body*. All believers receive the same Holy Spirit at the time of their conversion. This distinguishes them from nonbelievers and unites them with one another. This "receiving" of the Spirit is here called being "baptized by" the Spirit. The metaphor pictures baptism and compares believers' experience of water baptism (see [1:13-16](#)) to being set apart by the Holy Spirit. Not only that, but the Holy Spirit also lives within believers ([6:19](#)). The phrase "we were all given the one Spirit to drink" means that the same Holy Spirit completely fills all believers' innermost beings ([Ephesians 5:18-20](#)). The indwelling Holy Spirit unites all believers who might otherwise be as different as *Jews* from *Greeks* (Gentiles) or as a *slave* from a *free* person (see also [Galatians 3:23](#); [Colossians 3:11](#)).

LIFE APPLICATION

BASIS FOR UNITY

The church is composed of many types of people from a variety of backgrounds with a multitude of gifts and abilities. It is easy for these differences to divide people, as was the case in Corinth. Despite the differences, however, all believers have one thing in common—faith in Christ. On this essential truth the church finds unity. All believers are baptized by one Holy Spirit into one body of believers, the church. We don't lose our individual identities, but we have an overriding oneness in Christ. When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit takes up residence, and that person is born into God's family. As members of God's family, we may have different interests and gifts, but let us pursue a common goal—deep unity in Christ.

12:14-15 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.^{NRSV} Having established that the church, the worldwide community of believers, is indeed one body—the body of Christ—Paul went on to show the necessary diversity in that body. A human body *does not consist of one member but of many*. For a body to function, such diversity is essential. Individual members cannot separate themselves without harming the body. Just as a *foot* cannot decide to leave the body because it is not a *hand*, so a believer who does not have a particular gift cannot decide that he or she is not a part of the church. Not having a particular gift would *not make [that person] any less a part of the body*. Apparently, some believers in Corinth were discouraged that they did not have a particular gift—probably one of the more spectacular gifts, such as the gift of tongues—so they believed that they could not truly be a part of the body unless they experienced that particular gift. But

Paul explains, through this metaphor, that all the different gifts given by the Spirit to believers must be utilized in order for the church to function well. Likewise, the gifts are interdependent. Like the body, they cannot function without each other.

12:16 And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.^{NRSV} As with the foot and the hand (12:15), so it is with the ear and the eye. The parts of the body should desire to perform only the functions for which they were made, not seeking other parts. The *ear* may prefer to be able to see, like the *eye*, but that does not mean that the ear is *any less a part of the body*. The ear will no more be changed into an eye or given the ability to see than a believer will be able to exchange one gift for another. Instead, each believer should discover his or her spiritual gift and then use it to its fullest capacity for the Lord.

12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?^{NIV} Every spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit is vital to the functioning of the body. Thus, the gifts are not given at whim and will not be changed according to people's preferences. If everyone wanted to be *an eye*, then the body might see very well, but it would not be able to hear. *If the whole body were an ear*, there would be no *sense of smell*.

LIFE APPLICATION

EYE REVOLT

Those who conclude that the New Testament has little humor actually are admitting they have little imagination. We respond to the mental picture of an eyeball's declaration of independence from the rest of the body with a chuckle. A conference between body parts would make one thing laughably clear: As important as any one part might be to the whole, their reliance on the rest, even to accomplish their vital role, is far more crucial.

The idea that Christians can somehow function and flourish outside of the body of Christ sounds as ludicrous as a rebellious ear or foot. Solitary Christianity has no basis in God's Word. We need the church, and we are needed by other Christians.

12:18-20 But God made our bodies with many parts, and he has put each part just where he wants it. What a strange thing a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body.^{NLT} As God created human bodies to function with their *many parts* working together, so the body of Christ—the church—needs all the various gifts working in harmony. The picture of a body with *only one part* illustrates the absurdity of a church with everyone trying to have the same gift. It would not be a body at all, and it would be unable to function. While *there are many parts*, there is *only one body*, because God ordained it that way,

putting *each part just where he wants it*. All believers—those with the spectacular gifts and those with the quieter gifts—are placed right where God wants them so that they might serve effectively together. They are one body with many parts, because God made it that way.

12:21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"^{NIV} Not only should each individual part realize its own importance, but all the other parts should realize their interdependence as well. One part of the body *cannot say* it doesn't need another part. Those in the church who have the more spectacular gifts should not look down on or dismiss those with other gifts because, in reality, all are needed.

12:22 On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.^{NRSV} The more honored members must not look down on the more humble members (12:21); in fact, those who *seem to be weaker are indispensable*. These "weaker" members are those who appear to be less important in the body. These people may not be always visible, always up front exercising their gifts, but they are in the background. If they are using their God-given gifts, they are actually indispensable to the body. Those with the visible gifts could not function to their full capacity without the other indispensable members utilizing their gifts. The pastor in a church may be well versed and eloquent, but he will not be effective if the other members are not utilizing their gifts to greet newcomers warmly, to make sure the building is maintained and clean, to plan the worship service, to make sure equipment is working properly, to follow up on people with needs, or to pray faithfully for the ministry. The church needs the visible members, but it needs everyone. In reality, the less-visible members are the "indispensable" ones.

LIFE APPLICATION

DISCOUNTS

Paul argued for diversity of gifts and acceptance of the full range of gifts that God gives to his people. No one should feel superior about his or her gift; instead, all should use their gifts to willingly serve. Too often the "up-front" gifts, like speaking or teaching, are more highly regarded than the "behind-the-scenes" gifts, like helping and serving. No one should discount the contribution of another person, no matter how insignificant it may seem. We should not be dissatisfied with the gift God has given us but be eager to serve. Nor should we envy those who seem to have more gifts than we do. In love, treat everyone's gift, yours included, as valuable to God.

12:23-24 And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect from the eyes of others those parts that should not be seen, while other parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together in such a way that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity.^{NLT}

The play on words in this verse is difficult to bring out from the Greek to the English. "The parts we regard as less honorable" refers to the sexual parts of the body, the parts that *we carefully protect from the eyes of others*. The point of this verse is that appearances are deceiving; all parts of the body are necessary, even the ones that *should not be seen* and the *parts that have less dignity*. No one should dismiss anyone else as unimportant in the body of Christ; neither should undue prominence be given to anyone. The reason for this is explained in [12:25](#).

LIFE APPLICATION

CONNECTED

What is your response when a fellow Christian is honored? How do you respond when someone is suffering? We are called to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep ([Romans 12:15](#)). Too often, unfortunately, we are jealous of those who rejoice and apathetic toward those who weep. When that happens, we have overlooked our connection with them in Christ.

Believers are in the world together—there is no such thing as private Christianity. Christ makes us one, even when we wish otherwise. When we follow Christ, we find ourselves in mixed company. We shouldn't stop with enjoying only our own relationship with God; we need to get involved in the lives of others. That's also the best way to break through our mere human reactions to them.

[12:25-26](#) This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other equally. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.^{NLT} The *harmony* Paul wanted *among the members* had already been discussed in [1:10](#): "Now, dear brothers and sisters, I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to stop arguing among yourselves. Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose" (NLT). Such harmony happens only when all the members—the weak and the strong, the flamboyant and the quiet, the up-front and the behind-the-scenes—use their gifts, appreciate one another, and *care for each other equally*. Such caring is demonstrated as they share in one another's joys and sorrows. As with the physical, human body, one part's suffering causes every part to suffer. When the head aches, the whole body suffers. When a thumb is hit with a hammer, the whole body knows it. In the body of believers, therefore, *if one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it*. Believers should share one another's burdens in order to help lighten them. Likewise, *if one part is honored, all the parts are glad*. There is no room for jealousy or strife when one person receives praise; instead, all should be glad.

Believers need to be able to empathize with others—to join in with their feelings as if they were experiencing the feelings themselves. Christians should rejoice with others, with no hint of jealousy; and they should suffer with them, offering kindness, concern, compassion, and a

shoulder to cry on if needed. Following Jesus will mean that believers will have a wide variety of experiences. Christianity neither denies life's hardships nor dulls life's excitements. Both laughter and tears are appropriate before God. Identifying with the joys and heartaches of others is an important way for believers to show love and unity.

12:27 Now all of you together are Christ's body, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it.^{NLT} The words "all of you together" refer to all believers across the world. All believers together *are Christ's body*. As new believers come to salvation in Jesus Christ, they join that body, receive a gift from the Holy Spirit, and are used by God. Therefore, each and every believer in the body of Christ *is a separate and necessary part of* that body. No believer is unimportant—each one has a gift to share in order to make the body function that much more effectively.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – 1 & 2 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 12:28-29

12:28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.^{NIV} Having established believers' unity in their diversity, Paul went on to describe this diversity by a list (not complete) of various offices and gifts. These gifts are given to *the church by God*, who *has appointed* those whom he has chosen to serve in various capacities. The order of these gifts in this verse is important. The first three gifted people listed are those who proclaim the gospel and teach the truth—apostles, prophets, and teachers (see also [Ephesians 4:11](#)). These are important gifts, for there would be no church without those who bring the message and teach the truth. Thus Paul specifically ranked them as *first, second, third* to show their prime importance above all the other gifts.

The *apostles* include the eleven men Jesus called (without Judas Iscariot), plus others who are called apostles—such as Paul himself ([Romans 1:1](#)), Matthias ([Acts 1:26](#)), Barnabas ([Acts 14:14](#)), Jesus' brother James ([Galatians 1:19](#)), Silas ([1 Thessalonians 2:6](#)), and Andronicus and Junias ([Romans 16:7](#)). It seems that the qualifications for being an apostle were to have seen the risen Christ, to have been sent out by Christ to preach the gospel, and to work on behalf of the kingdom, building its foundation. Paul also noted "signs, wonders and miracles" as marks of a true apostle ([2 Corinthians 12:12](#) NIV). There were only a few apostles who brought the gospel message to the world.

God also appointed *prophets* to the church. These people had special gifts in ministering God's messages to his people. At times they would foretell the future ([Acts 11:28](#); [21:9, 11](#)), but more often they exhorted, encouraged, and strengthened God's people ([Acts 15:32](#); [1 Corinthians 14:29](#)). God spoke through prophets, inspiring them with specific messages for particular times and places.

While the apostles and prophets had a universal sphere of function (the church as a whole), the *teachers* probably served in the local churches. They needed to be trustworthy and faithful

stewards of the truth of the gospel. People in that day did not have their own Bibles to read, so the teachers in the local congregations continued to teach the believers in the truth after the apostles had moved on to other cities.

The rest of this list reveals other gifts. Some of these have been noted earlier in this chapter. Some are appointed as *workers of miracles* ([12:10](#)), some have *gifts of healing* ([12:9](#)), some are *able to help others* (perhaps unusual compassion and caring), and others have *gifts of administration* to help the church run smoothly. It is significant that Paul places last the gift of *speaking in different kinds of tongues*. This was the one gift that seemed to have caused so much consternation and division in the Corinthian church ([12:1-3](#), [10](#)). Paul placed it as a relatively unimportant gift when compared with those who share the gospel or serve in more tangible ways.

[12:29-30](#) Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?^{NIV} These rhetorical questions demand a "no" answer. Not everyone in any church falls into one of these categories. Not *all* were *apostles*; in fact, only a few could ever claim that office. Not *all* were *prophets* or *teachers* either, for God gifted some for those offices while he gave others the various other gifts, some of which are listed here. [Chapter 14](#) discusses the subject of speaking in and interpreting tongues in more detail. Not everyone in the church has the same gift, nor can anyone claim to have all the gifts. Believers in the church must see themselves, not as individual plants, but as an entire garden under the cultivation of God's Spirit. His purpose involves not simply the production of a single gift but all the gifts, each becoming ripe as it is needed. No one person can perfectly exemplify all the gifts. Each person depends on the faithful ministry of everyone else.

This list of gifts is representative, not exhaustive. It would be difficult for one person to embody all these gifts. A prophet might not make a good administrator, and a helper might fail as a teacher. When people identify their own gifts and their unique combination of gifts (this list is far from complete), they should then discover how they can use their gifts to build up Christ's body, the church. At the same time, they should realize that one or two gifts can't do all the work of the church. Believers should be thankful for each other, thankful that others have gifts that are completely different. In the church, believers' strengths and weaknesses can balance each other. Some people's abilities compensate for other people's deficiencies. Together all believers can build Christ's church. But all these gifts will be worthless if they are used begrudgingly, out of duty, or if they are exercised without love (see also [13:1-3](#)).

LIFE APPLICATION

ADVENTURE

The "most helpful" gifts are those that are more beneficial to the body of Christ. Paul has already made it clear that one gift is not superior to another, but he urges believers

to discover how they can serve Christ's body with the gifts God has given them. Your spiritual gifts are not for your own self-advancement. Discovering them can be an adventure in service. Those gifts were given to you for serving God and enhancing the spiritual growth of the whole body.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – 1 & 2 Corinthians.

Colossians 2:6-7

2:6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.^{NKJV} The Colossians had not merely received the doctrines of Christ, they had *received Christ* himself. The verb "received" (in Greek, *parelabete*) means more than the moment a person asks Christ into his or her heart. Paul most likely used the word, taken from Judaism, to describe the transmitting and safeguarding of traditions and teachings from one person or generation to another. Thus when Paul reminded the Colossians of when they received Christ Jesus, he was reminding them of their receiving the proclamation and teaching, and their confession of faith, their baptism, and their new status as members of Christ's body.

Because Christ dwells within all believers through the Holy Spirit, they should *walk* (conduct their lives) in union with the indwelling Christ. The word "walk" refers to ethical conduct and behavior appropriate for those who claim Christ. The verb indicates continuous action: "continue to live" (NIV). The past event of receiving Christ should be a present reality in the believers' daily lives.

2:7 Rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.^{NIV} Paul used several metaphors in these verses, first telling believers to walk, then to be rooted like a plant, built like a building, and established like a legal document. Each metaphor has a specific and profound point for Christian living.

First, the Colossians were to be *rooted* in Christ. Just as plants draw nourishment from the soil through their roots, so the believers should draw life-giving strength from Christ. The more they would draw strength from Christ, the less they would be fooled by those who falsely claimed to have life's answers. Paul used the perfect tense of the word, describing a present state that had resulted from a past action. A better translation would be "having been rooted." The Colossians were still rooted in Christ because they had received him.

The first act of the Christian life is to receive Christ, and every moment afterward we must continue receiving him. The act must become an attitude. Breathe in the love and power of Jesus. Take deep breaths. Then we shall be rooted in him in secret, and built up in him in our outward walk and behavior. If we have Christ, we have all God's fullness. . . . What need have we for celestial beings, like those invented by the Gnostics, or for the rite of circumcision, as insisted on by the Jews? We have everything in Jesus.

F. B. Meyer

Second, the Colossians were to be *built up*. This word is in the present tense, describing continuous action. Like a plant, they were "rooted" once and for all, but they had to grow continuously ([1:28](#)). Or like a building, they had a solid foundation, but had to keep on building with solid materials in order to be strong.

Third, the Colossians were to be *strengthened in the faith*. This can also be translated "established in the faith" (NKJV). "Established" was a legal term, often used for a binding contract. This too is continuous action, an ongoing process. In these words, Paul might have meant any of three things: (1) that they should become more established (stronger) in their personal faith, (2) that their faith should establish and strengthen them for daily living, or (3) that they should become more established (stronger) in *the* faith, Christianity. The words *as you were taught* indicate that the third option is probably closest to Paul's meaning. Paul wanted the Colossians to be built up and established in order to continue to stand firmly against any false teaching.

The faith in which these Colossian believers were rooted, built up, and established should be a source of abundant thanksgiving. True understanding of what Christ has done on behalf of believers can lead to no other response than gratefulness. This too ought to characterize believers' faith and walk.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Philippians, Colossians, & Philemon.

B. The futility of human labor empirically demonstrated ([2:18-6:9](#))

Having discussed the futility of human achievements in general ([1:12-15](#)) and the futility of his own achievements ([2:1-11](#)) in view of death ([2:12-17](#)), Solomon then turned to consider the value of the toil he had expended in accomplishing them ([2:18-20](#)) and the value of human toil in general ([2:21-6:9](#)). He shifted from using "I" and "my" in [2:1-18](#) to using "he," "a man," and "his" in [2:19-20](#). Twenty-three of the 34 occurrences of the Hebrew word for "toil" and "labor" in Ecclesiastes appear in this section, which may be divided into four paragraphs ([2:18-26](#); [3:1-4:3](#); [4:4-16](#); [5:1-6:9](#)) on the basis of the recurring formula "meaningless, a chasing after the wind."

ECCLESIASTES 2:18-26

1. LABOR'S FRUITS MAY BE SQUANDERED BY SOMEONE ELSE ([2:18-26](#))

a. Labor's fruits may be squandered by one's heir ([2:18-21](#))

[2:18-21](#). Life was not the only thing Solomon found to be ultimately repugnant; he also viewed all his labor with distaste. **I hated all the things I had toiled for** is literally, "I hated all my toil." Thus he viewed his work **under the sun** ([vv. 18-20](#); cf. [comments](#) on [1:3](#)) with **despair** ([2:20](#)) because there was no permanence to its fruits, to the things he accomplished through it. Though what he accomplished ([vv. 4-6](#)) and accumulated ([vv. 7-8](#)) might survive

him, he would have no **control** over how it would be used after his death ([v. 19](#); cf. [Ps. 49:10](#)). A person who inherited it, who had **not** had to work **for it** ([Ecc. 2:21](#)), and who consequently had no real appreciation for it, might be a **fool** ([v. 19](#)) who would squander it. So Solomon declared toil to be futile or **meaningless** ([vv. 19, 21](#)) and the loss of its fruits a **great misfortune** ([v. 21](#)).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

[14:26](#) Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize what I am saying. When you meet, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in an unknown language, while another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must be useful to all and build them up in the Lord.^{NLT} When believers meet, *one will sing* (an ability not mentioned in [chapter 12](#) but a large part of worship going back to the Old Testament and the psalms; see also [Ephesians 5:19](#); [Colossians 3:16](#)), *another will teach* ([12:29](#); [Romans 12:7](#); [Colossians 3:16](#)), *another will tell some special revelation God has given* (this could be an aspect of the gift of prophecy—[12:10, 29](#); [13:2](#); [14:1](#)), *one will speak in an unknown language* ([12:10, 28, 30](#)), *while another will interpret* ([12:30](#)).

LIFE APPLICATION

PARTICIPATION

Everything done in worship services must be beneficial to the worshipers. Every worshiper ought to consider herself or himself a contributor. These principles touch every aspect—singing, preaching, and the exercise of spiritual gifts. Contributions to the service (by singing, speaking, reading, praying, playing instruments, giving) must have love as their chief motivation. As you prepare and participate in worship, seek to strengthen the faith of other believers.

This verse is not to be taken as Paul's recommendation of an order of service; his point is that various activities can happen in corporate worship. While all of this occurs, however, *everything that is done must be useful to all and build them up in the Lord*. Also, all believers should show love ([chapter 13](#)), and everything should edify ([14:1-25](#)).

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – 1 & 2 Corinthians.

Philippians 2:3-4

[2:3](#) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard

others as better than yourselves.^{NRSV} Here Paul identifies the problems grating on the Philippian church. The words *do nothing* could just as easily be rendered "think nothing." Both actions and thoughts need to be guarded against ambition and conceit.

Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance. Where there is patience and humility, there is no greed.
St. Francis of Assisi

Members in the Philippian church were causing discord by their attitudes or actions. They desired recognition or distinction, not from pure motives, but merely from *selfish ambition* (see also [1:17](#)). They were creating factions based on personal prestige, drawing away members and creating parties. Their *conceit*, that is, their excessively favorable opinion of themselves or their abilities, caused them to place themselves above others. They were conceited about their own opinions, without reason or basis. When a group of such people gets together, looking down on everyone else for one reason or another, factions form and divisions occur. The result is an absence of any encouragement, comfort, fellowship in the Spirit, or tenderness and compassion ([2:1](#)). Those kind of people cannot work with others in the church in

LIFE APPLICATION

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Many people—even Christians—live only to make a good impression on others or to please themselves. But self-centered living, selfish ambition, or conceit brings discord. Paul therefore stressed spiritual unity, asking the Philippians to love one another and to be one in spirit and purpose. When we work together, caring for the problems of others as if they were our problems, we demonstrate Christ's example of putting others first, and we experience unity. Don't be so concerned about making a good impression or meeting your own needs that you strain relationships in God's family. Let the Spirit of God work through you to attract others to himself.

like-mindedness and love ([2:2](#)). When people are conceited and selfishly ambitious, they ruin a church's unity. We should not tolerate arrogant leaders who are willing to split a church into factions in order to gain power and followers.

While selfish ambition and conceit can ruin unity, genuine *humility* can build it. Being humble involves having a true perspective about ourselves in relation to God (see [Romans 12:3](#)), which in turn gives us a correct perspective on our relationships with others. Being

humble does not mean that we should put ourselves down, tell everyone how bad we are at everything, and refuse to acknowledge any good in ourselves. Instead, humility is a healthy respect for who God is, and then a healthy respect for ourselves because of what God did on our behalf. We are sinners, saved only by God's grace, but we *are* saved and therefore have great worth in God's kingdom. We are to lay aside selfishness and treat others with respect and common courtesy.

Regarding others as better than ourselves means that we are aware of our own failings and are thus willing to accept failings in others without looking down on them. It means that we can look for and point out the good in others, rather than just looking for and pointing out our own good qualities. It also means that we consider others' interests as more important than our own. This selfless attitude links us with Christ, who was a true example of humility. It is the very opposite of conceit and selfish ambition, and it allows believers to work together, to have tenderness and compassion, and to have the attitude and love of Christ Jesus himself.

LIFE APPLICATION

COMPARISONS

People often compare themselves to others to excuse their behavior or to bolster their pride. They may think, for example, "What I did wasn't so bad. After all, look at what she did." They may look at people who are worse off and think that they are pretty good in comparison. Or they may think the worst of people and quickly judge them. Those kinds of comparisons can only lead to pride and self-centeredness. Paul wrote that instead we should assume that others are better than we are, giving them the benefit of the doubt. In so doing, we will build others up and develop humility. We need to show consideration to others.

Paul wrote to the Romans, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment. . . . Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" ([Romans 12:3, 10](#) NIV). Selfish conceit has no place in a believer's life. Such pride undermines the oneness vital to the church. Instead, we ought to give other believers the value and respect they deserve. While people are different, and although we may really dislike some other believers, there is no room for pride. We must acknowledge fellow believers as valuable members of God's kingdom.

Like Paul, Peter also counseled humility. Peter had been greatly humbled in his experience of denying his Lord. He wrote: "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" ([1 Peter 5:5-6](#) NIV, see also [1 Peter 3:8](#)).

[2:4](#) Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.^{NRSV} The word translated *look* is *skopein*, used by Paul to mean "regard as your aim." Each believer should not be completely absorbed in his or her own concerns and spiritual growth, but should also look at others, noting their good points and qualities. A sure cure for conceit and ambition is appreciative recognition of others' good qualities and their walk with the Lord.

In [2:21](#), Paul pointed out that people look to their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. It is easy to get caught up in competition, aggressive acquiring, and vying for our own rights and needs. But compared to knowing Christ, those interests seem shallow. We need Christ's attitude of self-sacrifice to look beyond ourselves to the needs of others. Ultimately, all believers must look to the one supreme Example and follow in his footsteps, which Paul will describe in [2:5-11](#). Paul wrote to the Romans, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. . . . For even Christ did not please himself" ([Romans 15:1, 3](#) NIV).

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Philipppians, Colossians, & Philemon.

Romans 12:15

[12:15](#) Rejoice with those who rejoice. Believers need to be able to empathize with others—to join in with the feelings of others as if we were experiencing it ourselves. Christians should rejoice with others, with no hint of jealousy; and they should **mourn with those who mourn** (NIV), offering kindness, concern, compassion, and a shoulder to cry on if needed. The believers needed to have this as they dealt with the ups and downs of daily life in their surroundings.

Following Jesus will mean that believers will pass through a kaleidoscope of experiences in life. Christianity is neither denying life's hardships, nor dulling life's excitements. Our perspective of eternity in Christ can free us to enter into the full variety of living. Both laughter and tears are appropriate before God. Each has an important place in representing our feelings. Identifying with the joys and heartaches of others is also an important way to show them our love.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Romans.

Life-Sharing Lesson 2—40 Days Of Community 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Why We Need Each Other.

1. When was there a time in your life when you were glad that you were not by yourself?

When we as a church lost four of our kids in a fire, I was glad that I was not alone in trying to minister to the community. We came together as a church and demonstrated what faith in Christ was in the midst of a tragedy.

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 (NIV)

¹² The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴ Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

¹⁸ But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be?

²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it,

²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

1. Why do you think we are referred to as the body of Christ?

The picture of a body stresses that we are dependent on each other for our very life. The body also indicates that all of us have something to offer for the good of the rest of the body. We get the most out of life, when we serve in the place that we were created to be. Any part of the body that is cut off from the body dies, and some parts of the body are so critical that they can cause tremendous damage to the body at large. When the body is functioning as it should, every single part of the body is blessed by it, and all the needs of the body are taken care of. The body is really a single unit. It is not easy to replace parts.

2. What comes to mind when you hear the word community?

Community indicates a group of people who come together for a particular purpose. The members are independent units that can come and go and are interchangeable.

3. How is body language more intimate than community language?

Body language requires a greater degree of interdependence of the various parts of its members than does community language. In the body, each part was pre-ordained for a specific task and the body was created with that part in mind. In a community, the members volunteer to become a part of the group. There is not the same kind of instantaneous connection between the members as there are between the parts of a body.

. Colossians 2:6-7 says “Just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in Him.”

4. Why do we need others to walk with us in our journey?

None of us know what is ahead for us in our walk with the Lord. We do know where God may send us or what circumstances may await us. It is safer to walk with others because they may have already been there before and can help us

avoid pitfalls. It is supportive in that if we become discouraged, they can encourage us to continue on the journey. It makes us smarter, because we can learn from others along the way. Other people see things around us that we do not see, simply because they are looking at things from a different perspective.

1 Corinthians 12:27-30 (NIV)

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

5. What are some of the positive benefits of walking together in the church?

When we walk together, we get to experience the gifts that God has put into other people. We actually need other people in the body of Christ. There is a reason God gave us prophets, teachers, apostles, healers, and workers of miracles along with all the other spiritual gifts. We cannot carry out the work that God has called us to do on our own. We discover that when we walk together, a lot more gets done for others, with a lot less work and stress on ourselves than when we try to do things by ourselves. Even something as simple as feeding the meal to the community, requires a combination of gifts if it is to be a successful witness of the love of Christ.

6. What do you think God meant when he said, “it was not good for man to be alone.”

God created humanity to be a social being. Adam was a single entity and knew what loneliness was. God was one, but God had fellowship between the Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit. When God created Eve, Eve was a division of Adam into another part that corresponded to Adam. God specifically said, he would create a help suitable for Adam. The word help is the same Hebrew word which refers to God as a help in God rescuing Israel from her enemies.

God decided to make a helper suitable (lit., “a helper corresponding to him,” or “a corresponding helper”) for the man (v. 18). “Helper” is not a demeaning term; it is often used in Scripture to describe God Almighty (e.g., [Pss. 33:20](#); [70:5](#); [115:9](#), where it is trans. “help” in the NIV). The description of her as “corresponding to him” means basically that what was said about him in [Genesis 2:7](#) was also true of her. They both had the same nature. But what man lacked (his aloneness was not good) she supplied, and what she lacked he supplied. The culmination was one flesh (v. 24)—The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

Ecclesiastes 2:18-20 (NLT)

¹⁸ I came to hate all my hard work here on earth, for I must leave to others everything I have earned. ¹⁹ And who can tell whether my successors will be wise or foolish? Yet they will control everything I have gained by my skill and hard work under the sun. How meaningless!

²⁰ So I gave up in despair, questioning the value of all my hard work in this world.

7. What do you think is going to be the difference for the person who seeks to base life on achievement rather than relationships?

Well according to Solomon in Ecclesiastes 2:18, having a lot of achievements can cause an empty feeling at the end of life, because you recognize how quickly those achievements vanish, and how little control you have over what is done with achievements you may have sacrificed your life for. Relationships however are meaningful right up to the point of death. You can find comfort from others in a way that you will not be comforted by things at the time of your death. The ultimate relationship in life is to be in a relationship with God. Our lives should be based on that relationship. Remember, the two commandments are to love God and to love people.

1 Corinthians 14:26-28 (NIV)

²⁶ What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, two--or at the most three--should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. ²⁸ If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.

8. Why is small group something that should be done in conjunction with the larger church?

In the book of Acts, the church often met in the homes of each other breaking bread. They were able to carry out the instructions found in 1 Corinthians 14:26-28. Can you imagine how long church would be if everyone came with a hymn for us to sing, or a teaching, or a new revelation, or a tongue. Small groups allow us to put these things into practice on a regular basis as we teach and share with one another what God is doing in our lives. In a large worship service, we do not get to interact with the message or the teachings in the same way as we do in small groups. In Acts the people came together as a large group in the temple and then in smaller groups in each other's homes. Acts 2:46-47 (NIV)

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others

better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

9. How do we look out for one another's interest in a world that teaches, "stay out of my business."?

We look out for each other's interest by choosing to love each other, through support and encouragement. Our goal in life should not be, is that best for me, but rather is this best for us. We have to be willing to be real with people about ourselves and about life. We gain nothing by pretending to be we are more spiritual than others or that we are somehow better than others. In the body of Christ, we are to be driven by seeking the interest of Christ in a situation, rather than seeking to exalt ourselves or getting our own way.

10. How do we look out for the best interest for the church in the way we choose to make decisions for our lives?

Many of the decisions we make in life, impact the ministries of the church of which we are part. The decision to take certain jobs, may mean we can no longer serve on a regular basis in the life of the church. The place to which we decide to move, may be further away from the church than we will be willing to come so our attendance in worship or bible study may greatly reduce. The choice to live at a certain lifestyle may mean a reduction in our giving which means less resources the church may have to carry out its mission. The choice to sin, may bring shame and a bad report on the church depending on who we are and how visible we are in the body. The choice to better our education may help the church to expand its ministries. The choice to open our homes for a small group, may be a means by which the church grows. Even the choice to put a bumper sticker on our car, can encourage others to come to the church, which may lead to a stronger church.

11. When was a time you were glad to have someone to cry with you?

When my brother committed suicide, it was so helpful to have others around me who could share my pain and loss. Somehow sharing my hurt with others, helped to reduce some of the hurt I was feeling. I had two other brothers, and the moment I saw each of them, the loss became real all over again. But crying in each other's embrace, brought about a healing that crying alone did not bring.

Romans 12:15 (NLT) ¹⁵ Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

12. Why do we all need someone to be happy with us and to cry with us?

God created us to be a source of strength and encouragement to each other. The Word of God is clear that we shall have both victories and defeat in this life and it is good to have someone to share both of them with us. Even in a football game, if your team comes from behind and wins in the final seconds, you want to rejoice with the strangers around you. Your feeling of joy is increased when others around you are happy with you. The same is true when we have a loss. When others around us hurt for us, somehow the hurt is diminished.

Proverbs 27:10 lets us know it is better to have a neighbor nearby, than a brother far away. We are going to need others, so it is better to build relationships with those nearby.

13. What steps can you take to make yourself more open to community life in the church?

I could choose to be less busy.

Life-Sharing Lesson 3 40 Days Of Community Reaching Out Together

Matthew 28:18-20

Commentary

28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."^{NRSV} When someone is dying or leaving us, we pay close attention to his or her last words. Jesus left the disciples with these last words of instruction:

- They were under his authority.
- They were to make more disciples.
- They were to baptize and teach these new disciples to obey Christ.
- They would have Christ with them always.

God gave Jesus authority over heaven and earth, a sweeping concept that implies divine status. He has "all authority"—that is, nothing is outside of his sovereign control. The major message here and in [28:20](#) is that Jesus, the one raised from the dead, has the authority of God himself. During Satan's temptation of Jesus, Satan had offered "all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor" ([4:8](#) NRSV). Jesus resisted the tempter, obeyed God to the point of horrible death, and was raised again in victory to receive *all* authority over heaven and earth—something Satan could never have given because it was never his in the first place.

See Also

[Chart: Jesus' Appearances after His Resurrection](#)

28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.^{NKJV} On the basis of his authority, Jesus told his disciples to *go* and *make disciples* as they preached, baptized, and taught. "Making disciples" means instructing new believers on how to follow Jesus, to submit to Jesus' lordship, and to take up his mission of compassionate service. To be a disciple means entering a relationship of learner to Master (Teacher) with Jesus. The church must not merely evangelize, but it also must show new converts how to obey Jesus' commands. Discipleship must be stressed without neglecting evangelism. "Baptism" is important because it unites a believer with Jesus Christ in his or her death to sin and resurrection to new life. Baptism symbolizes submission to Christ, a willingness to live God's way, and identification with God's covenant people. To baptize *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* affirms the reality of the Trinity, the concept coming directly from Jesus himself. He did not say baptize them into the "names," but into the "name" of the

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While the word "Trinity" does not occur in Scripture, it well describes the three-in-one existence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (See also [Romans 8:11](#); [1 Corinthians 12:4-6](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#); [Galatians 4:6](#); [Ephesians 4:4-6](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:13](#).)

Whereas in previous missions Jesus had sent his disciples only to the Jews ([10:5-6](#)), their mission from here forward would be to go to *all the nations*. This is called the Great Commission. The disciples had been trained well, and they had seen the risen Lord. They were ready to teach people all over the world *to observe all things* that Jesus had *commanded* them. This also showed the disciples that there would be a lapse of time between Jesus' resurrection and his second coming. During that time, Jesus' followers had jobs to do—evangelize, baptize, and teach people about Jesus so that they, in turn, could do the same. The good news of the gospel was to go forth to all the nations.

With this same authority, Jesus still commands us to tell others the Good News and make them disciples for the kingdom. We are to go—whether it is next door or to another country—and make disciples. It is not an option, but a command to all who call Jesus "Lord." We are not all evangelists in the formal sense, but we have all received gifts that we can use to help fulfill the Great Commission. As we obey, we have comfort in the knowledge that Jesus is *always* with us. "Always" literally means "all the days" and refers to the presence of Christ with each believer every moment. This would occur through the Holy Spirit's presence in believers' lives. The Holy Spirit would be Jesus' presence that would never leave them ([John 14:26](#); [Acts 1:4-5](#)). Jesus continues to be with us today through his Spirit. As this Gospel began, so it ends—Immanuel, "God with us" ([1:23](#)).

The Old Testament prophecies and genealogies in the book of Matthew present Jesus' credentials for being King of the world—not a military or political leader, as the disciples had originally hoped, but a spiritual King who can overcome all evil and rule in the heart of every person. If we refuse to serve the King faithfully, we are disloyal subjects. We must make Jesus King of our lives and worship him as our Savior, King, and Lord.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Matthew.

2 Corinthians 8:23

[8:23](#) As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ.^{NIV} The last two verses of this chapter summarize Paul's recommendation of Titus and his two traveling companions. Although Paul called Titus his son in the faith in [Titus 1:4](#), here he called Titus a *partner and fellow worker* in the preaching of the gospel. Paul did this in order to emphasize Titus's authority among the Corinthians. Titus was Paul's official representative to the Corinthians to collect the money for the relief of the Jerusalem Christians ([8:6](#)).

The two *representatives of the churches* who accompanied Titus were also recommended by Paul to the Corinthians (the complete list of representatives is given in [Acts 20:4](#)). The Greek for "representatives" is *apostoloi*—literally, apostles. In the Gospels, this Greek word is only used for the Twelve. Paul in his letters, however, used the term for any representative of a

church commissioned for some special task (Barnabas in [1 Corinthians 9:5](#); James in [Galatians 1:19](#)). Apostolos literally means "the one sent forth."

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – 1 & 2 Corinthians.

Romans 5:10-11

5:10 Enemies . . . reconciled to him through the death of his Son. Alongside the theme of justification, Paul introduces the theme of reconciliation. Our peace with God has legal as well as relational aspects. We were enemies because we were rebels against God. "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight without blemish and free from accusation" ([Colossians 1:21-22](#) NIV). Because of Christ's death, we are reconciled—our proper relationship with God has been restored.

Much more. As in [verse 9](#), Paul is using a comparison of wonder. He holds up one wonderful idea for consideration (our reconciliation with God through Christ's death) and immediately follows with an even *more* wonderful thought of what Christ's life accomplishes for us and in us.

Reconciled. Those who are reconciled (katallasso) are those who were once enemies of God but have now been brought into a relationship of peace with God. There are two steps in the reconciliation process: (1) God made the first move toward reconciliation by sending his Son to die on the cross (see [2 Corinthians 5:19](#)), and (2) believers then accept the work Christ has done for them and thereby become reconciled to God (see [2 Corinthians 5:20](#)). Reconciliation removes the hostility and establishes unity between believers and God.

Saved by his life.^{NKJV} Because Christ's death accomplished our reconciliation with God, *so his life*—his present resurrection life in which he intercedes for us (see [Hebrews 7:25](#))—insures our complete and final salvation. The reality of Christ's *life* was the source of some of Paul's most memorable words, as in [Galatians 2:20](#), "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (NIV).

LIFE APPLICATION

POWER RESERVES

The love that caused Christ to die is the same love that sends the Holy Spirit to live in us and guide us every day. The power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power that saved us and is available to us in our daily lives. We can be assured that having begun a life with Christ, we have a reserve of power and love to call on each

day for help to meet every challenge or trial. We can pray for God's power and love as we need it.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Romans.

1 Peter 3:15

3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.^{NIV} Instead of being afraid of people, believers are to focus on Christ himself. This is also translated "reverence Christ as Lord" or "sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts." The "heart" was considered a place of deep emotions—that's where fear would dwell. But Peter wanted these believers to replace fear with faith and reverence. By acknowledging Christ as Lord and Savior, they would recognize his holiness and be able to rest in him. There would be no room in their hearts for fear. This alludes to words from the prophet Isaiah: "But the Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" ([Isaiah 8:13](#) NRSV). When believers have *set apart Christ as Lord*, regarding him as holy and reverencing him in their hearts, they know that he is in control of events, that he is the reigning king, and that all powers and authorities ultimately must answer to him.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.^{NIV} When believers have Christ set apart in their hearts, the courage he gives them ought to make them *always* ready to testify about him. Peter called upon the believers not to fear, but he didn't stop there. Their faith should be active, ready to speak out—*prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks*. While Peter may have been thinking about believers speaking in a court, he seems also to have had in mind the everyday informal inquiries that might be directed at the believers—from either hostile or friendly neighbors. The words "an answer" can also be translated "a defense" and usually refer to responding to an accusation (see, for example, [Acts 22:1](#); [25:16](#); [1 Corinthians 9:3](#); [Philippians 1:7, 16](#)).

Thus, these may refer to formal charges or informal accusations. Under any circumstances, the believers were to be ready to testify, explaining *the reason for the hope* that they had.

Only he who can say, "The Lord is the strength of my life" can go on to say, "Of whom shall I be afraid?"

Alexander MacLaren

The believers would be persecuted for their faith alone because unbelievers would have no charges to bring against them except to question them on their "hope." Unbelievers can see that Christians have something different; only "hope" gives us strength and joy in hardships and

persecutions. Unbelievers will ask about it; believers must be ready to tell them. Christians need not worry about what they should say if accused, for they could prepare their defense ahead of time! Even in a hostile situation, believers can witness for Christ; their words might cause an accuser to come to faith. Paul certainly took advantage of every situation, no matter how hostile (read [Acts 22:1-21](#); [24:10-24](#); [26:1-23](#)). All Christians must be ready and able to give a reasonable defense of their faith. They need not be apologists or theologians, but every Christian ought to be able to clearly explain his or her own reasons for being a Christian. Some Christians believe that faith is a personal matter that should be kept to oneself. It is true that we shouldn't be boisterous or obnoxious in sharing our faith, but we should always be prepared to give an answer, gently and respectfully, when asked about our belief, our lifestyle, or our Christian perspective. Christians' words and manner of speaking to an accusation should align with their lifestyle. Peter had already said they should be sympathetic, tender, loving, and humble ([3:8](#)); he had explained that they were not to return insult for insult ([3:9](#)). Thus, if the believers were called upon to testify for their faith, they must do so *with gentleness and respect*. Believers were not to be arrogant, rude, or overly aggressive. They were to trust God for the outcome of any hostile situation, and they were to trust the Holy Spirit to work quietly in the hearts of their listeners. Thus, their manner of speaking ought to reflect an attitude of meekness and gentleness (neither of which implies weakness), remembering their responsibility to always show respect (also translated "reverence") for God.

He who can tell men what God has done for his soul is the likeliest to bring their souls to God.

Robert Leighton

LIFE APPLICATION

GET READY

Here's how ordinary people can be ready to witness (make a defense for their hope) without needing to become theological scholars:

- Pray, read the Bible, and review God's promises every day. Then you'll be ready to explain why you're hopeful.
- Make praising Christ your daily practice. If you focus on his power and glory, you will be fortified and courageous to speak to others.
- Be as natural in witnessing as you are in conversation. Talk like you, not imitating anyone else. Find the clues in your life that help explain God's Good News to others. If you are a plumber, talk about God's love like running water. If you are a doctor, portray God's love as a healing force.
- Respond with care. Trust God to melt stony hearts. "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" ([Proverbs 15:1](#) NIV).
- Listen to your audience. Where are their heads and hearts? What burdens them?

Listen long and hard. Frame your witness in the words and at the level your audience will understand.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – 1 & 2 Peter and Jude.

Romans 12:9

12:9 Let love be genuine.^{NRSV} The key ingredient in interpersonal relationships is love—God's love (agape). This kind of love is a self-sacrificial love, a love that cares for the well-being of others. All the gifts that are exercised in the body should be expressed in this love. This love is the most accurate indicator of spiritual health in the body of Christ. To the Ephesians Paul wrote, "Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" ([Ephesians 4:15-16](#) NIV). Believers have God's love within because "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" ([5:5](#)). For our love to be different from most of what is called "love" in the world, it must be *genuine*—without hypocrisy, deceit, falseness. Sincere love is genuine love. Jesus was referring to this kind of love when he said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" ([John 13:34-35](#) NIV).

LIFE APPLICATION

GENUINE LOVE

Most people know how to pretend to love others—how to speak kindly, avoid hurting their feelings, and appear to take an interest in them. We may even be skilled in pretending to feel moved with compassion when we hear of others' needs, or to become indignant when we learn of injustice. But God calls us to real and sincere love that goes far beyond politeness. Sincere love requires concentration and effort. It means helping others become better people. It demands our time, money, and personal involvement. No individual has the capacity to express love to a whole community, but the body of Christ in your town does. Look for people who need your love, and look for ways you and your fellow believers can show your Christian love to others.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Romans.

Life-Sharing Lesson 3 40 Days Of Community Reaching Out Together

Matthew 28:18-20

1. When did having a partner of some kind make a big difference for you?

Having Pastor Toby and Pastor Kellie as partners in ministry has made a big difference in allowing me to do things that I would not have had the time to do. It allowed me to pursue areas of ministry in much greater detail.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

2. What feelings do you have about this verse? Eager To Do It, Reluctantly doing it, Wish it was not there?

I like carrying out this verse much better when I have a partner with me if I'm going to talk to people I do not know. I think at times we misunderstand the command to go, as though Jesus is saying just go and do this one thing. In reality, the verse is saying as you are going, which means as you are going about your every day life, do this. This verse is not just about knocking on doors, but on looking for opportunities in whatever situation you find yourself in.

3. What happens when we focus on the verse part of verse 19, while forgetting the last part of verse 20?

If we look at verse 19 as our focus, it appears as though everything is on us and we must make things happen, but if we look at verse 20, we recognize that Christ has promised to be with us as we are going. We are actually taking the presence of Jesus with us into whatever situation we are entering into.

2 Corinthians 8:23 (NIV)

²³ As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ.

4. What do you think it means for us to partner together in ministry?

I think it means we recognize that we can get things done together, that we cannot get done by ourselves. We can partner together to pray for each other, and to pray for what each other is doing. We can partner together by using our particular gifts in a given situation. Again using the illustration of the community meal. One person organizes the meal, one person cooks, one person serves, one person greets and welcomes, one person sits and talks, and one person sings song, another may share his or her testimony, one may set up tables, one may clean up afterwards, and still another may have provided the money for the food. All of them together are showing the love of Jesus and are evangelizing. They are partners together in ministry.

Romans 5:10-11 (NIV) ¹⁰ For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

5. Why should we care about people who are not saved? After all, aren't they enemies of God?

The truth is God cares about people who are not saved even though they are enemies of God. There was a time when we were enemies of God but God changed us. We are reminded in 1 Peter 2:9-10 (NIV)⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

No matter how awful, arrogant, or undeserving a person may appear to be of the grace of God, God still wants to extend mercy to that person. God desires that all of us should be saved. When God called us, God intended for us to share his love with everyone, not just the people we like.

6. How have we gotten a bad name as Christians in the eyes of non-believers?

We have often used the words and the name of Jesus, but we have not lived up to what we have said. We have been one thing in one situation, but something different in another. We have called Jesus Lord, while staying in charge of our lives and doing what we want to do. We have preferred to make Jesus our servant, rather than ruler of our lives.

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."¹⁵ But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

7. Why is it important to be willing to tell our story or what God has done for us?

Sharing our testimony of what Christ has done in our lives is not optional, but commanded by Scripture. None of us can live so holy, that people will know that God has changed us and who the God is. In 1 Peter 3:15, the Christians were

facing persecution and losing stuff unjustly. People needed to know why they were holding on to their God when others were simply switching to the gods of their oppressors. People wanted them to be willing to share the reason for the hope they had in God. All of us have a testimony of what the Lord has done. We need to be ready to share it when others ask us, why are we doing what we are doing.

Psalm 66:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.

8. Are you willing to tell your story for our services? Why or why not?

We would like to do three minute videos of our congregation members sharing their story of how and why they came to Christ. We want to show them in church, so that we can be aware of what God has done in each other's lives, and to reach people in the church who are not saved, or who have become discouraged. So often, people in the church seem embarrassed for others to know outside the church, that they have a relationship to God.

Romans 12:9 (NIV)

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

9. How long should a person work with a non-believer before moving on to someone else? Is it wrong to be kind to a person just to get them to come to church

I struggle with loving people just long enough to until they get in the church and loving people to the very end whether they come to church or not. I think I'm guilty of targeting people for evangelism as opposed to targeting them to just be a friend. When we speak of love being sincere, I think that love cannot have an ulterior motive. I think we need to be aware of how much time we do spend with individuals, but I'm not so sure we should entirely write people off in the sense of moving from one target to the next.

10. Is it possible to tell, which one of our contacts will be the most productive to the kingdom of God?

No. When Stephen, one of the first deacons in the church was stoned to death and possibly one of the last persons he saw guarding the items of those who were doing the stoning was Paul. He had no idea that his death was going to have an impact on Paul who became one of the most productive future saints in the kingdom of God. There are people we touch, who may not ever come to our church, yet they do great things for God in other areanas. One young man coming out of Glenville pastors a church of over 800 members today.

11. Why is it important for us to remember that reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ is a team experience?

Most people are not going to be changed by a single encounter with a Christian. Even when a Christian contacts a person, that person has been prayed for by others, perhaps even for years. How often have we prayed for family members and loved ones who are away from home at school or in the military, “And Lord lead some Christians to him/her to help him/her walk with you.” Sometimes we are the person the other person has been praying for.

12. Why do you think a person hears the gospel about seven times before making a decision to follow Christ?

People want to see that something is real before they give their lives over to it. They also may want to investigate some of the claims we make about Jesus by looking at the lives of others who claim to know God. We are to remember, that one person is to plant a seed, another may cover it with dirt, another may water it, and another may pull out the weeds, but it is God that is at work in causing the seed or the person to grow.

13. Are you willing to pray, Lord use me this week to make a difference in someone's life.

Yes