



ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

"Divisions in the Church" 1 Corinthians 1:1-4:21

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In his introduction, Paul outlines his high view of the church, (e.g. "church of God," "sanctified," "called," "brothers") but he knows all is not well at Corinth. Performance is falling short of profession. Divisiveness in the fellowship is a particular problem. How he deals with it is important.

I. Admit the Problem. 1:10-17

- A. The seriousness of the problem.
 - 1. "No doubt there have to be differences." 11:19; 12:4-6
 - 2. "There are quarrels." 1:11
 - 3. "That there be no divisions." 1:10
- B. The symptoms of the problem.
 - 1. The profession of principle. (Prejudice, preference?)
 - a. Traditionalism—Paul?
 - b. Intellectualism—Apollos?
 - c. Conservatism—Cephas?
 - d. Elitism—Christ?
 - 2. The promotion of personality.
 - 3. The possibility of parties. "I follow..."
- C. The sources of the problem.
 - 1. Attraction to "wisdom" rather than "gospel." 1:17-25
 - a. "Words of human wisdom" (content and style).
 - b. Wisdom that does not lead to knowing God.
 - c. Gospel that is "cross centered."
 - d. Gospel that is "power" that leads to salvation.
 - 2. Attitudes are "worldly" rather than "spiritual." 3:1-4
 - a. "Pneumatikoi" have the Spirit.
 - b. "Psychikoi" do not have the Spirit.
 - c. "Sarkikoi" have Spirit but behave as if they don't.

II. Appeal to the People. 1:10

- A. An appeal to "brothers."
- B. An appeal: "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."
- C. An appeal: "agree with one another" and avoid "divisions."

III. Apply the Principles.

- A. Focus on the Cross. 1:18-2:5
- B. Concentrate on the things of the Spirit. 2:6-16
- C. See people in the right perspective. 3:1-23
- D. Respond appropriately to godly leadership. 4:1-21

Focal Point: How am I handling my preferences, prejudices and principles?