

Life Group Discussion Guide

Stand Strong When the World Divides

(1 Corinthians – Ch. 1)
September 6 and 7, 2025

1 Corinthians 1:10-11 (NLT)

¹⁰I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. ¹¹For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters.

James 4:1,11-12 (ESV)

¹What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ¹¹Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹²There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

Matthew 18:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Question #1

It is apparent from **1 Corinthians** above, there were a lot of "divisions" and "quarrels" among Christians in the church at Corinth! *"What's normal in culture has a way of creeping into the church. What happens out there shows up in here"* (Pastor T.K. Anderson). In looking at the texts in both **James** and **Matthew**, what are some things that will prevent us from being "of one mind, united in thought and purpose?" (**1 Cor. 1:10**)

1 Corinthians 1:12-13 (NLT)

¹²Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ." ¹³Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not!

Matthew 23:8-12 (ESV)

⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹²Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Question #2

"The church doesn't belong to Paul, or Apollos, or Peter. It doesn't belong to a pastor, a denomination, or a worship style. The church belongs to Jesus...He is the head of the church" (Pastor T.K. Anderson). The factious nature of the Corinthian church can be seen today in today's Church as well. Some of us will die on theological hills like, 'I'm Catholic and will never accept Protestants' or 'I believe in speaking in tongues, and you don't, so you must not be saved'. What can you do to not fall into divisive talk? How much weight do you give to *certain* theological beliefs?

1 Corinthians 1:17 (NLT)

¹⁷For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News—and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power.

1 Corinthians 2:1,4,13 (ESV)

¹And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom...⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,..¹³And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

John 17:20-21 (NLT)

²⁰I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in Me through their message. ²¹I pray that they will all be one, just as You and I are one—as You are in Me, Father, and I am in You. And may they be in us so that the world will believe You sent Me.

John 13:34-35 (ESV)

³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Question #3

The power of God is not seen through how witty we can be with our language, but in the gospel message and the authentic love we show to each other. *"The credibility of our message is tied to our connection. Our relationships are evangelism"* (Pastor T.K. Anderson). Jesus prayed that His disciples would be and operate as one (**Jn. 17:20-21**), and this connection would be readily seen by those around them (**Jn. 13:34-35**). How can our unity be an effective tool of evangelism?

1 Corinthians 1:18,22-23 (NLT)

¹⁸The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God...²²It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from

heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. ²³So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV)

¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Peter 2:6-8 (ESV)

⁶For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame." ⁷So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," ⁸and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the Word, as they were destined to do.

Question #4

Explain how relying on signs to confirm the truth of the gospel (**1 Cor. 1:22**), is no better than trusting in one's intellect or human understanding. How does this expectation prevent us (is a stumbling block; **1 Pet. 2:8**) from believing?

1 Corinthians 1:25-26 (NLT)

²⁵This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength. ²⁶Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you.

2 Corinthians 13:4 (ESV)

⁴For He was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but in dealing with you we will live with Him by the power of God.

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Question #5

For the Corinthian church, influenced as it was by Greek philosophy and wisdom literature, intellectualism was seen as ideal and a thing to be desired. In **1 Cor.**, Paul uses the word *wisdom* (Gr. σοφία, *sophia*) sixteen times (more than any other book in the New Testament)! For us as the Church, the challenge is not to allow our pursuit of knowledge (college degrees, etc.) to dwarf our dependence on God. Why must our minds be renewed by God? How does the weakness and humiliation of the crucifixion show up as strength?

1 Corinthians 1:27-29 (NLT)

²⁷Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And He chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. ²⁸God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. ²⁹As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 (ESV)

²³Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, ²⁴but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

Question #6

"When God uses the weak, He gets the glory. If He only used the strong, we'd be tempted to boast in ourselves. But when God uses ordinary, humble people, there's no doubt who deserves the credit" (Pastor T.K. Anderson). Reflect upon the following four categories from **Jeremiah 9** above. In terms of percentages, indicate below where you place reliance and trust.

Wisdom _____ %
Riches _____ %

Might _____ %
God _____ %

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 (NLT)

³⁰God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made Him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; He made us pure and holy, and He freed us from sin.

³¹Therefore, as the Scriptures say, "If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD."

1 Corinthians 4:7 (ESV)

⁷For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

Romans 12:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

Question #7

"Everything we have, our wisdom, our righteousness, our holiness, our freedom, it all comes from Christ" (Pastor T.K. Anderson). Since all we have comes from God, what kinds of specific steps can you take this week to move even more away from self-focus, to being other-focused, and thus move away from potential factions and divisions in the Church?

Five-Day Devotional

Day 1: Division is the World's Default Setting

Scripture: Read **Matthew 12:25**

²⁵And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. (NASB)

The world's idea is to divide and conquer, for Christ (and His followers), the idea is to unify in one kingdom, under God. We are not called by our Maker to fight against one another. As Jesus told His disciples, "For he who is not against us is for us" (**Mk. 9:40**). Let us do our part to link up intentionally with other believers, even if they are not in our congregation. After all, they are still our brothers and sisters and belong to the same household of which we belong.

Reflection: Father, help me to not fall for the trap of the world. No matter what my preferences of worship might be, You are not selecting only Lutherans or Catholics, or Baptists or Presbyterians to enter Your kingdom; but everyone who has put their full trust and faith in You. Help me to remember this.

Day 2: Christ is the Source of True Unity

Scripture: Read **Galatians 3:27-29**

²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. (NASB)

Christ is the true Unifier. Not only are denominational differences meaningless in matters of faith, so are things like sex, status, race or ethnicity. These things may be prevalent in our society, lines of division, but they have no place in the church of the living God.

Reflection: Lord God, I see what is happening in the world around me, I see the political divide that exists in the nation, I see the tension between men and women. But more than anything else, help me to maintain razor focus on seeing You, and seeing how You are greater and above such things. Help me today to walk in such a way, loving everyone, regardless of differences.

Day 3: God's Wisdom is Foolishness to the World

Scripture: Read **1 Corinthians 1:22-24**

²²For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; ²³but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (NASB)

In the text above, the signs of the Jews and the wisdom of the Greeks is actually foolishness! The true wisdom only comes from God. Not only is Christ the power of God, He is also wisdom itself! As apostle James says, "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him." (**Js. 1:5**)

Reflection: *Today, Father, I ask for wisdom, but not like King Solomon (1 Ki. 3:9), who later was found unfaithful. No, Lord, in asking for wisdom, I am asking for Christ and more of Him day by day. Christ is the true Power, not my wisdom.*

Day 4: God Chooses the Humble to Display His Power

Scripture: Read **James 4:6**

⁶But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (NASB)

If there is to be any real power in me whatsoever, it must come from God. If we are proud, relying upon ourselves, God will not move in us as He would. There can be only one king at a time ruling any given heart. If this kingdom is governed by my power, God's power is not there.

Reflection: *Grace, that unmerited, undeserved favor, which only God can give, is granted to the heart that submits. So, today, Lord, I submit afresh. Let each and every day, beginning with today, be a time of giving over all my power back to You. And let me do it not grudgingly, but willingly.*

Day 5: God Alone Causes us to Stand

Scripture: Read **Psalms 62:1-2**

¹My soul *waits* in silence for God only; from Him is my salvation. ²He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken. (NASB)

Consider all that the Psalmist here says God is: my rock, my salvation, my stronghold. Because of these things, *I shall not be greatly shaken*. In other words, I will feel adversity, but it will not overtake me. He is my Sustainer.

Reflection: *Today, Lord Jesus, let my prayer be found in the words of the apostle Paul who said: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4:7-10)*