



STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, June 21, 2026

Teaching: *The Essentials*

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:10-31

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 3:10-17

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 3:18-23

Friday: 1 Corinthians 4:1-13

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (The Bible), what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Last week, we looked at the opening greeting of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. He began by reminding them of their shared identity in Christ—they are holy and chosen because of what God has done for them through Jesus Christ. Now, Paul begins to address the problems in the church and how their behavior does not align with the position they share in Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 1:10-31, he confronts the divisions within the church. Even today, we can identify with this struggle. Paul reminds them that it is easy to drift into factions when personalities and preferences become more important than Jesus. The answer to division is unity around their shared commitment to the gospel. The cross levels the playing field, reminding us that we are all saved the same way—by God's grace through faith in Christ alone. When Jesus remains at the center, unity flourishes and the church stays focused on its mission. Hold firm to the essentials and hold loosely to the rest!

Questions:

Ice Breaker: If you're going out to dinner, which one are you picking? Mexican, Italian, pizza, Burgers, Asian, or something else?

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-31 together. According to verse 10, what did Paul want to see in the Corinthian church? Identify the positive components listed. What is he calling them to pursue?
2. What was causing division in the Corinthian church? Why do you think people were identifying themselves with a different leader?

CEDAR VALLEY

MEMORY VERSE:

1 Corinthians 1:10

I 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.

3. What is the difference between unity and uniformity? Why is that distinction important for the church today?
4. How does the cross help create unity among believers? What does it remind us about ourselves and our relationship with God?
5. Pastor Neal highlighted four essential truths that unite Christians: the authority of Scripture, one true God, the deity of Christ, and salvation by grace through faith. Why is it important to distinguish between essential doctrines and secondary issues?
6. What have you made central in your life that isn't Christ? How might that affect your relationships with other believers?

DIGGING DEEPER

The cross is a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to Gentiles. What does this mean? Here are some thoughts from Dr. Gordon Fee:

"...the 'Jews' and the 'Greeks' here illustrate the basic idolatries of humanity. God must function as the all-powerful or the all-wise, but always in terms of our best interests—power in our behalf, wisdom like ours!... Thus 'Jews demand miraculous signs.' This reflects Jewish messianic expectations. God had acted powerfully in their behalf in history; the promised Messiah would restore the former glory by acting powerfully on their behalf once again... 'Greeks look for wisdom.' This, too, was a national characteristic... To the seekers of signs and wisdom Paul now presents the ultimate divine contradiction: 'But we preach Christ crucified.' Rather than giving them the signs and wisdom they demand, they get weakness and folly... To the Jews the message of a crucified Messiah was the ultimate scandal... There is simply no way that 'Christ crucified' could be fitted into their understanding either of God or of Scripture. Hence, 'a stumbling block to Jews.'

To the 'Gentiles' the message of 'Christ crucified' was a 'pernicious superstition' and utter 'foolishness.' As Hengel notes, Paul's word for folly here 'does not denote either a purely intellectual defect nor a lack of transcendental wisdom. Something more is involved, something more closely akin to 'madness.' It is hard for those in the Christianized West, where the cross for almost nineteen centuries has been the primary symbol of the faith, to appreciate how utterly mad the message of a God who got himself crucified by his enemies must have seemed to the first-century Greek or Roman. But it is precisely the depth of this scandal and folly that we *must* appreciate...the crucified Messiah was in fact the ultimate expression of God's 'power' and 'wisdom' and it is available for those whom "God has called, both Jews and Greeks.'"

—Fee, Gordon. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1987.