

Using God's Plan



Since January 2016, the 'Just A Minute' newsletter has centered most articles on Romans, because this epistle provides foundational doctrine (milk) for us, the Body of Christ, to be established in justification, sanctification, and godly service. (Rom. 1:11) I Corinthians will be our next focus, as it was placed second in Paul's epistles to build onto and fine-tune fundamental teachings contained in Romans to assist in application.

Books Romans through Philemon do not appear in the order they were written, but rather, books containing the 'milk of the Word' were placed first, then epistles with advanced 'meat teaching.' This helps us to construct a good doctrinal foundation. Therefore, articles will now focus on I Corinthians, as it supplies the doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction to mature saints in righteousness. (II Timothy 3:16)

Read all of the Bible, especially all of Paul's epistles, yet keep in mind that books are strategically laid out. Romans to Galatians contain the milk and Ephesians through Philemon provide meatier components of teaching. *"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."* (I Cor. 3:2)

The Corinthian and Galatian epistles address the same challenges we experience today when applying 'the milk.' The Corinthians were carnal, caught up in the flesh, and were making poor judgments. The Galatians had matured in Romans 1-12, but were hindered and regressed to live back under the law.

Just A Minute! With Scripture

The King James Bible is used for references. Verses may be underlined/made bold for emphasis.



I Corinthians teaches saints how to function on God's wisdom, rather than the wisdom of this world. This epistle is designed to educate saints to live their new spiritual life in order to please God. It also instructs them to be separate from the course of this world and unified in the Spirit to receive, by faith, the foundational doctrines already taught in Romans, to attain the mind of Christ.

God's goal for the Corinthians: *"Who shall confirm you unto the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."* (I Corinthians 1:8-9) In other words, being called unto fellowship, the Corinthians had a great opportunity to progress by faith in the doctrine to stand blameless before Christ. Specific objectives in Verses 10-11 enabled the Corinthians to accomplish the desires that God had for them and set the agenda for the epistle.

In great love, God writes I Corinthians to get saints on track spiritually to begin living as mature sons and daughters. I Corinthians is organized into three sections:

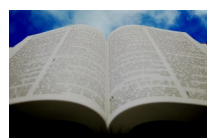
Chapter 1-4: These chapters relay Satan's effective attack against God's wisdom and power, affecting the Corinthians' view on two key issues: justification and their sanctified walk unto God.

Chapters 5-10: Paul addresses specific issues as corrective doctrine, helping saints to understand being dead to sin, dead to the law, & dead to the flesh, but alive unto God. This leads saints to begin to acquire godly thinking and living, foundational to their walk.

Chapters 11-16: This section teaches how to live a sanctified life, motivated in grace with selfless love to prefer others in the Body.

The book of I Corinthians addresses carnal thinking and judgments, corrects misunderstandings, & explains application of basic teachings from Romans. This enabled saints at Corinth, as well as you and I, to learn how to adjust ungodly thinking to God's way in order to make wise judgments to please Him.

I Corinthians can help Churches address similar issues of carnality, using Paul's approach in this epistle as a pattern. I.e.



Chapter 5 provides concrete help to address those living blatantly contrary to sound doctrine, like being in fornication. It teaches saints to receive reproof and corrective doctrine to live out their identity in Christ.



Spiritually, Where Were the Corinthians Functioning?



In the first chapter of each epistle (Romans-Philemon) the Lord Jesus Christ used Paul to unveil the general spiritual condition of the Church or person to whom he writes. I Corinthians 1:2-9 declares Corinth's status, validating the Church: Sanctified in Christ, called to be saints, enriched in all utterance and knowledge, the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them, and they came behind in no gift. Objectives deal with four concerns, which were specifically targeted so problems could be effectively addressed: *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1) that ye all speak the same thing, and that 2) there be no divisions among you; but that 3) ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me...of the house of Chloe, 4) that there are contentions among you."* (I Corinthians 1:10-11)

Paul spent a year and a half in Corinth and personally nurtured the Corinthian saints in fundamental doctrine, laying a spiritual foundation: *"After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth...And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."* (Acts 18:1, 11) Yet the Corinthians did not go on to 'make the teaching their own,' that is, to bring the data from their heads to acquire heart conviction to live it. They were not maturing.

Instead, functionally, the Corinthians remained carnal similar to and influenced by unbelievers. They still thought and lived after the flesh, actually regressing in their growth, unwilling to think and walk as saints. Many Corinthians were living contrary to their identity in Christ, made poor judgments, and had contentions within the Church, i.e. striving about who/what doctrine to follow.

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual...For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (I Cor. 3: 1, 3) Most saints at Corinth struggled to believe and apply basic doctrine to think and live godly. Therefore, I Corinthians uses aspects of Romans 1-13 *"...for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness."* (II Tim. 3:16) As their spiritual father, Paul reminded them he was the God-appointed Apostle of the Gentiles, desiring that they live in grace and in their new identity in Christ.



Satan's Attack On God's Wisdom & Power

There is a tendency in the believer to *"...think of himself more highly than he ought..."*, continuing self-centered ways in fleshly wisdom and power. (Romans 12:3) As we study I Corinthians and Galatians, it is helpful to realize we are prone to similar attacks by Satan. These epistles speak to issues we all tend to have, not just to those who are 'very carnal' or are 'in groups living under the law.'

In this increasingly ungodly world system, all believers are inclined to be pulled aside by Satan's wiles. His ways will thwart aspects of our testimony in Christ, inhibit functional spiritual growth, life, and ministry, and even affect us at the judgment seat of Christ. *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."* (II Corinthians 5:10) We need to stay self-aware!

The answer is to be vigilant, by reading & meditating on Scripture & focusing on: *"...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."* (I Cor. 1:24) *"Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."* (Prov. 4:7) The Spirit and Christ the Word is our power/wisdom, which can quicken us as they dwell in us: *"...he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."* (Rom. 8:11) As we yield to the Word, meditate, & allow it to dwell in us, we can 'mortify the deeds of the body' and have glorious victory!

Paul's Second Apostolic Journey



Paul visited Corinth on his second expedition. The map is labeled Paul's Second Apostolic Journey, rather than as a missionary journey, because he is never actually called a missionary. Rather, he was appointed by God to an office: 'The Apostle of the Gentiles.' Romans 11:13 states, "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnified mine office." (The study below was taken from Son Light Bible Atlas, Son Light Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 5164, Fort Smith, AR, 1998.)

Study For Yourself Paul's Second Journey in Acts 15:1-18:22

*Background: Acts 15:1-39

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| 1. Through Syria and Cilicia: Acts 15:41 | 7. Berea: Acts 17:10-13 |
| 2. Derbe and Lystra: Acts 16:1-3 | 8. Paul sent to coast, then Athens: Acts 17:14-34 |
| 3. Phrygia and Galatia: Acts 16:4-6 | 9. Corinth: Acts 18:1-17 |
| 4. Opposite Mysia: Acts 16:7 | 10. Cenchrea: Acts 18:18 |
| 5. Passed by Mysia to Troas, then through Samothracia and Neapolis to Philippi: Acts 16:8-40 | 11. Ephesus: Acts 18:19-21 |
| 6. Through Amphipolis/Apollonia to Thessalonica: Acts 17:1-9 | 12. Caesarea (Syria), Jerusalem, and Antioch: Acts 18:22 |



God addresses two issues in the foundational book of Romans: First, is our justification, that is, how to be righteous before God. (Rom. 1-5) The second term is sanctification, thinking/yielding to have a holy walk and service unto God. (Rom. 6-16) These are the core issues Satan attacks in Corinth & Galatia, but also today with all believers. Why? Because they're the fundamental doctrines!

Many never become established in justification and sanctification. The result affects maturity—saints will become carnal babes. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." (1 Cor. 3:1) Thus, it behooves us to be sure we are not being detoured or derailed by Satan's wiles and tactics. While this life can seem challenging and busy, time is like liquid gold, a precious resource. Our life is a training ground for living on earth, but also into eternity. "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed...But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Rom. 13:11,14) **Put ye on Christ the Word!**

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To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)

Do We Really Need To Attend A Church?

The Body of Christ refers to those who have trusted Christ as their Savior. As members, collectively, ‘we’ are the Church. God refers to Christ in Ephesians 1:22-23: *“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”* Also consider: *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”* (I Cor. 12:27) Therefore, according to the Word, the Church is not simply ‘a building,’ as the term is often used today; it refers to all members/believers in Christ.

So, should we attend local meetings with saints? There appears to be no direct instruction ‘to the Body,’ yet it is modeled in Churches through Paul’s epistles (I Cor. 5:4) and addressed in many places within Scripture (i.e. Neh. 9:1-3, Heb. 10:24-25).

Like-minded saints gather together naturally; sweet fellowship is sought as most precious. Why? Experiencing unity of the Spirit with others can be uplifting and comforting, though it is not always the case, as with the Corinthians. When saints are carnally minded there can be strife/envy/divisions.

In Romans 16, believers met in homes, but wherever and whenever saints get together, there can be glorious fellowship, edification, comfort, and service. Note: Choose wisely the local assembly you join yourselves to, as not all groups teach the Truth, nor the grace message, that is, Paul’s doctrine for this Gentile time of grace. (II Timothy 2:15)

(Applying Pauline Truth)

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