

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

Living Charity is Our Life

Theme: Application of I Corinthians 14

As the dispensation of grace began, there was an important place for sign gifts. They verified the Apostleship of Paul and his message. It also convicted unbelieving Israel to get saved under Paul's ministry. It confirmed that God set Israel aside to work in the Gentiles. As explained in the August issue, "that which is perfect" did come. Paul's epistles completed the Word, and this signaled that sign gifts had become obsolete: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (I Cor. 13:9-10)

During the short time when temporary gifts were to be manifest in the Church, there was to be a clear understanding of their purpose and application. All things were to be done in charity and not to exalt self. Charity is love in action (i.e. doing things unto the Lord and for other's good unto edification so they can grow).

Yet Corinth was manifesting these gifts to be seen of men rather than doing them in love. That is why the chapter begins: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore..." (I Cor. 12:1-3) This was a warning not to repeat the same mistake exalting themselves or things (like the gifts) to worship as idols.

Sound doctrine and its work in us produces godly charity. Anything without charity profits nothing. (I Corinthians 13:3) Faith works by love (Gal. 5:6), and this has been God's desire for saints in all time periods. Charity fulfills the law: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (I Tim. 1:5)



Thus, we are instructed to do all things by charity and exercise (live) the Word with the purpose to edify others. This love-driven motive actually characterizes our Christian life. So, does it? (continued)

Order to Spiritual Gifts

Chapter 14 provided order to the spiritual gifts until they passed away. Why? "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." (I Cor. 14:33)

-Tongues: Do all things to edify (spiritually build up) others in charity: "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. (verse 12)

-Tongues: When teaching in the Church, speak clearly so it is easy for others to understand: "I thank God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." (verse 18-19)

-Tongues: Allow only 2 or 3 to speak, and in proper order (not both at once), with an interpreter: "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that by course; and let one interpret." (verse 27)

-Tongues: If there is no interpreter, let all keep silent: "But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God." (verse 28)

-Prophets: Let 2 or 3 speak, with another to discern what is said: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (verses 29-31)

-Related to both spiritual gifts: Women in the Corinth Church are to be silent: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." (verse 34-35)

At that time, there was disorder in how the Corinthians used some of the spiritual gifts, i.e. tongues and those who prophesied. Therefore, Paul wrote these instructions as a correction. Additionally, their women were usurping authority over men, prompting clarification of God's design in Church roles. All these were to set order.



Study Tools: How the Timeline Can Help Us Understand



Use of the Timeline: The last newsletter began a series to understand how the Bible is organized, which can be used to help us in the reading and study of Scripture. It is important to know that God dealt differently with man over time. Recognizing the context can enable us to know whether or not God is speaking to us with an instruction that we are to apply.

Some books in the Bible are instructions written to Israel, while others are to us, the Body. We need to rightly divide the Word. (*II Tim. 2:15*) This tool is #6 on p. 17 of "Exploring the Bible Using Study Skills," on Amazon or free at: Christianlifecoachsupport.squarespace.com Do a few assignments to practice this tool:

1. Find clues to determine who Matthew was written to: you as a Gentile, or Israel, the Jewish Nation? a) Chapter 1: Read *verses 1-16*: Christ's lineage goes back to Abraham and Jacob, whom God used to form Israel. Also read *verse 21* to find who Christ came to save. b) Chapter 2: What king were the wise men looking for in *verse 1*? In *verses 4-6*, who did Herod consult to find the location of the Messiah's birth? Where was He to be born? c) Skim through Matthew to notice the general focus. Was it speaking to Israel or the Gentiles? Read *Matthew 10:5-6* to find the focus of Christ and the twelve's ministry.

***Newer students: Focus on reading Scripture rather than using many new study insights.**

2. Who was Romans written to and by whom?

a) The writer: Look at *Romans 1:1* to find the writer. It is placed at the beginning in all of Paul's epistles, as letters in that day began with listing the writer. (Search this by examining the first chapter of each of Paul's epistles.) b) Look at Romans 1:7: Find the group to whom Paul is writing. The person or Church being addressed is usually found in the first section of the first chapter in Paul's writings. (Examine this by reading *Chapter 1* of a few of Paul's letters.)

3. Paul is writing to the Church in Rome; would this be to you, a Gentile member of the Body, or Israel?

a) Paul's ministry focused on the Gentiles (Look at *Acts 9:15 & Acts 28:28*. Also, *Romans 1:5,7,13-15*.) The Roman Church, to whom Paul was writing, was comprised of Gentile believers, which simply means 'all the nations of the world.' b) *Romans 9-11* explains how God set aside Israel for a time to focus on the Gentiles. God had a mystery purpose, to form the Body of Christ as His new vessel to manifest His grace to the world (Read *Romans 11:16-25*.) This is the time in which we live. c) Skim through Paul's epistles, Romans thru Philemon. Notice in the first chapters that they were written either to a Gentile Church or to a preacher of the Gentiles. Understanding that God raised Paul into the position as the Apostle of the Gentiles will confirm to the student that all Paul's writings are to us. (*Rom. 11:13 & 15:16, Eph.3:1-8*)

Living Charity Is Our Life...But Some Think So Differently (Continued)

Can we live charitably even when others think/believe differently than we do? For example, some may not agree with the passing away of these sign gifts. Is this difference in thinking a deal breaker for fellowship? How could we be an example or instruct them? Are we to separate from those who believe the temporary gifts are still active today? Or, are we their enemy, because we relay what Paul teaches about these gifts? I think not! At the start of our service to God (*Rom. 12:5*), we're encouraged to remember that we are closer than family, members of the same body: "*So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*" Charity is our guide as we realize this relationship.

Think on this: We are instructed by the Word to be open to learn and grow, be patient with others, and to walk in love. How can we do this with such differences? Be fully persuaded in your mind on what you believe (*Rom 14:5*), however, avoid high-mindedness and listen to the Spirit speaking sound doctrine in and through others. Humbly consider that perhaps you are the weak brethren in an issue. But also allow others to be where they are in their journey, holding forth the Word patiently. Keep Scripture as your sole authority and prove all things! Sometimes there are areas we need to set aside: what we always thought, what the pastor says, or what our family and friends say, to live what the Word says.



Everything God does is in love and for our good, as a perfect Father would do for His precious children. The life we have is a gift, an apprenticeship in a living laboratory, preparing us for our eternal home. Viewing this life in this way can help us see the importance God places on our walk of faith in our daily living.

This is a grand opportunity enabling us to learn what the Scripture is teaching us and recognize Paul's distinct ministry to us (*Eph. 3:2*), *Romans through Philemon*. God desires that we grow from spiritual babes to adult believers led by the Spirit. We are to apply the knowledge we attain by putting it into practice in our personal living laboratory. This teaches and trains us in practical application: *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* (*Phil. 2:12*)

How? We're to nourish (feed) ourselves on sound doctrine to walk by faith, reading and studying the Scripture, rightly dividing the Word. That is, realizing the context of a book/passage we are studying. Then Paul relays that we are to *"...exercise thyself rather unto godliness."* The reason is given: *"For bodily exercise (physical, earthly things) profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."* (*I Tim. 4:7-8*)

As we work out the doctrine in the details of our lives, we learn God's ways. We gain confidence to rely on God and His Word, but also gain personal conviction and depth to the Truth we acquire. Functionally, we learn how to live through life challenges: *"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."* (*I Tim. 4:10*)

Reflect: If we keep our understanding of the Word as head knowledge, we do not exercise the Truth to allow it to work in the laboratory of our lives. Instead, the Word is stifled, or kept in a box, so to speak. Many things designed by Satan can interfere with this process. Yet, faith and trust will enable us to work it out in life. It's a choice to yield to God, enabling the Spirit to lead us. (*Rom. 8:14*) Is your lab an active one?



Question: How do you help a saint in love who desires to change, but is stuck in carnality?

The Corinthians were boldly pleasing themselves, living contrary to who they were in Christ rather than loving and serving God. Similarly, this saint may unknowingly fear losing what he 'enjoys' to walk by faith and live the Truth. Serving God, even just making time to read, study, and meditate on the Word, means his 'important things' would be set aside. He may think: "Why try? This suffering is too much for me. I sure don't want to fail at trying to please God."

Exalting God above fleshly fears can seem impossible, and it is. We are weak and unable to maintain a godly walk **on our own**. *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."* (*Rom. 8:3*) This is the struggle of many Christians. Maybe they've forgotten that Christ in us is our power and wisdom to serve.

This saint is trying, in his own efforts to please God. Even in his mind, he knows *"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."* (*Rom. 7:19*) By himself, he will fail, as he has many times before. Thus, fear of condemnation rules.

We can learn how to deal with a beloved saint (or even our own selves) who is caught in this stronghold. Fear is not of God (*II Tim. 1:7*), neither is trying hard to live the Christian life. As we try, we fall deeper into sin/condemnation. This is the grievous 'sin cycle': *"For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."* (*Rom 7:15*)

Teach this dear friend, by holding forth the Word in love, to trust God's Word stored within to walk by faith. This is exactly what Abram did when he finally rested to trust God to give him a son, even though he and Sara were too old to have children. *"He staggard not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."* (*Rom. 4:20*)

Yielding to God is walking by faith to live the Word, not focusing on fleshly feelings/fears. Allow God to set these aside. Your flesh may balk at not being in the lead, but decide who you want in control: your flesh with Satan in the backdrop or God? *"Neither yield ye your member as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."* (*Rom. 6:13*) Help your friend to learn to trust/yield.

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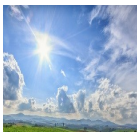
To:

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



Physical light is a beautiful gift from God. It allows us to see and enjoy His handiwork. The refraction of light brings color, depth, and richness to our environment. Light also reveals the pitfalls we would otherwise stumble into in its absence. Without light, we would be incapable of fully understanding or navigating this world in which we presently reside. What a frightening existence that would be.

There is another type of light that far exceeds the glory of physical light. *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:6)* It illuminates beyond the mere physical world. This light allows us to see truth in God’s Word. It shines so brightly that we are able to see how spiritually dark this present evil world truly is: An upside-down world where evil is called good, and good is called evil (*Isaiah 5:20*). This is the light we are given the moment we trust in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ through His death, burial, and resurrection.



Praise be to God that we not only have this light, but now are made beacons of God’s light to a dark world.

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” (Philippians 2:15) When the darkness of this world presses in, let us never forget who we are now: *“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” (1 Thess. 5:5)* **Kindle the light through God’s word and shine!**

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