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1 Corinthians

Chapter 1

¹{I,} Paul, {write this letter to you,} and Sosthenes our fellow believer {is with me}. God chose to send me to represent the Messiah Jesus, because that is what God wanted. ²{I send this letter} to {you who are part of} the congregations that belong to God, which are in {the city of} Corinth. {God has} set {you} apart for himself by uniting you to the Messiah Jesus, and {he has} chosen {you} to be his own people. {You are} part of the group of believers who worship our Lord Jesus the Messiah in many countries and cities. {Jesus the Messiah is} their {Lord} and our {Lord}. ³{May} God, {who is} our Father, and the Lord Jesus the Messiah {continue to be} kind to you and {make you} peaceful.

⁴I often thank my God with reference to you. {I do this} because {I know how} God is acting kindly towards you by uniting you to the Messiah Jesus. ⁵{When I say that God has acted kindly towards you, I mean} that he has abundantly blessed you through your union with the Messiah in every area {of your lives}, including whatever you say and whatever you know. ⁶{God has blessed you} because he has proved to you that what we told you about the Messiah was true. ⁷{God has done these things for you} so that you are completely equipped spiritually {during this time when you} confidently expect our Lord Jesus the Messiah to return. ⁸{Just as he proved our message to be true,} God will also prove your trust {in the Messiah} true until {your earthly lives} end. {Because of this,} he will judge you not guilty when our Lord Jesus the Messiah returns {to earth}. ⁹God always does what he promises, {and he is the one} who has specially chosen you to share everything with his Son, Jesus the Messiah, our Lord.

¹⁰My fellow believers, by the authority of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, I appeal to you, {asking} that all of you agree with one another. {I ask that} you do not split up into rival groups but that you reconcile with each other by agreeing in what you think and by agreeing in what you decide to do. ¹¹{I appeal to you} because some {members} of Chloe's {household} have talked to me about you, my fellow believers. {They said} that you quarrel among yourselves. ¹²What I am talking about is how many of you are claiming that you belong to Paul's group, for example, or that you belong to Apollos's group, or that you belong to Cephas's group, or that you belong to the Messiah's group. ¹³No one has split the Messiah into pieces{, so you also should not split into pieces}. No one crucified Paul in your behalf, and no one baptized you so that you belong to Paul. ¹⁴I give thanks {to God} that I baptized no people who belong to your group except for {two individuals:} Crispus and Gaius. ¹⁵Because {I baptized so few of you,} no person is able to claim that I baptized you so that you belong to my group. ¹⁶Oh yes, I remember that I also baptized those who live in the house of Stephanas. Other than that, I do not think that I baptized any other people {in your group}. ¹⁷The reason {I baptized so few of you} is that the Messiah did not commission me to baptize {people}. Rather, {he commissioned me} to proclaim the good news. {I do this} without using words that are wise {by human standards}. That way, I do not destroy {the power of the message about} the Messiah dying on the cross.

¹⁸{I do not use wise words} because the message that I proclaim about {the death of the Messiah on} the cross sounds foolish to people who are bringing destruction on themselves. However, God works powerfully in this message for us whom he is rescuing. ¹⁹{You can tell that this is true} because the Scripture says,

"I will render useless the wise things that wise people think,

and I will make the intelligent things that intelligent people think worthless."

²⁰{So then,} wise people are not really wise, and experts are not really experts, and people who are good at arguing are not really good at it, as they all belong to the current world system. {In fact,} God has shown that what seems to be wise in this current world is not wise at all. ²¹Here is how {God has done this}. Just as God wisely chose, unbelievers did not get to know God by means of their wise thinking. So, God decided to rescue those who

have faith {in the Messiah} by means of the foolish message that believers proclaim. ²²On the one hand, {many} Jewish people want to see powerful deeds. On the other hand, {many} Greek people search for wise thinking. ²³We, however, proclaim that the Messiah died on a cross. {Many} Jewish people {find this message} offensive, and {many} non-Jewish people {think that this message is} foolish. ²⁴We, however, whom God has chosen, whether {we are} Jewish {people} or Greek {people}, have learned that God works powerfully and wisely through {this message about} the Messiah. ²⁵{This is} because what God does that seems foolish is wiser than {anything that} humans {do}, and what God does that seems weak is stronger than {anything that} humans {do}.

²⁶For {proof that this is so,} think about the fact that God chose you {the way you are}, fellow believers. From a human perspective, most of you did not think wisely, do powerful deeds, {or} belong to important families.

²⁷Rather, God decided to use what seems foolish to humans to humble those who think wisely. God decided to use what seems weak to humans to humble those people and things that act powerfully. ²⁸God decided to use what seems unimportant to people and what people look down on. {It is as if} these things do not {even} exist, {but God decided to use them} to make the things that everyone knows about insignificant. ²⁹{God did these things with the goal} that no humans would say great things about themselves in God's sight. ³⁰It is God who has united you to the Messiah Jesus. By working through the Messiah, God has made us wise. He has declared us innocent, chosen us to be his own people, and delivered us {from evil powers}. ³¹So, {because God is the one who does all these things, we should do what} the scripture says:

"If people want to say great things about something, they should say those great things about the Lord."

Chapter 2

¹My fellow believers, I also {acted according to this pattern} when I visited you and told you about what God has now revealed to us. I did not speak in more powerful ways than others do. I did not argue in wiser ways than others do. ²{I did this} because I chose {to speak and act as if} the only things I understood while I was with you were Jesus the Messiah and how he died on the cross. ³I also {lived according to this pattern} when I was staying with you. I was sick, I was afraid, and I frequently shivered and shook. ⁴I did not speak wisely and persuasively {according to human standards} when I talked {to you} and shared my message {with you}. Instead, I proved that God's Spirit works powerfully {through me when I shared my message}. ⁵{I shared my message in this way} in order that you might trust {in God} because he acts powerfully, not because humans spoke wise words {to you}.

⁶Despite {what I have said,} we {who proclaim the good news} do speak wisely when we are with spiritually mature people. However, people who think in only human ways and people who rule right now do not think that we speak wisely. {Soon,} these people will no longer rule. ⁷No, we speak wisely {because we proclaim} the things that God has revealed to us. God concealed these things {until now}, although he had already decided to do them before he created anything. {He has done all of this} so that he might honor us. ⁸The people who rule right now did not know about these wise things. {You can tell that} they did not know because they killed our glorious Lord on the cross.

⁹Rather, {how they acted} fits with what Scripture says:

"God has ready for the people who love him

things that no one witnessed before,

and things that no one heard about before,

and things that no human even imagined before."

¹⁰God has made these things known to us by the {power of God's} Spirit. {God works by the power of his Spirit} because God's Spirit explores all people and things. He even explores things about God that are very difficult to understand. ¹¹{You can tell that God's Spirit explores everything about God} because everyone knows that only each human being understands everything about himself or herself. In the same way, only God's Spirit understands everything about God. ¹²We did indeed receive the Spirit who comes from God. We did not receive a

spirit that belongs to the current world. {We received God's Spirit} in order that we might understand everything that God has done for us. ¹³These are the very things that we also talk about. We do not use words that humans wisely teach. Instead, we use words that the Spirit teaches, so that we explain spiritual truths with spiritual words. ¹⁴Now, people who do not have God's Spirit reject the things that God's Spirit gives and teaches. {They reject these things} because they think that they are foolish. They cannot know about {the things that God's Spirit gives and teaches} because only people who have God's Spirit can judge rightly about them. ¹⁵On the other hand, people who have God's Spirit {can} judge rightly about everything. However, no {other} person {can} judge rightly about them. ¹⁶This fits with {what the scripture says}:

"No human knows what the Lord is thinking.

No human can teach him about anything."

We, however, can think the same things that the Messiah is thinking.

Chapter 3

¹My fellow believers, {when I visited you,} I was unable to teach you in the way I would teach people who have God's Spirit. Rather, {I had to teach you} in the way I would teach people who think in only human ways. {I had to do this} because you believed in the Messiah in an immature way. ²I taught you about things that are simple. I did not teach about things that are complex. {I did this} because you were not ready for complex teachings. In fact, you are still not ready for complex teachings. ³{I know that you are not ready for complex teachings} because you are still people who think in only human ways. Some of you are jealous of each other, and some of you are fighting with each other. When you do these things, it proves that you are people who think in only human ways and who act in only human ways. ⁴Further, some of you are claiming that you belong to Paul's group, for example, or that you belong to Apollos's group. When you make claims like these, it proves that you are thinking and acting in only human ways.

⁵You need to realize that Apollos and I, Paul, are only people who serve {the Messiah}. Each of us does what the Lord has assigned us to do. When we told you about the Messiah, you trusted in him{, not in us}. ⁶{God assigned} me to proclaim the good news to you first. I was like someone who plants seeds. {God assigned} Apollos to proclaim even more about the good news to you. He was like someone who waters the seeds {so that they grow}. However, God himself enabled you to believe in and understand the good news. In the same way, he is the one who makes the plants grow. ⁷You can see that the person who first proclaims the good news to people is not important. The person who proclaims even more about the good news to people is not important. These people are like those who plant the seeds and those who water the plants, since they too are not important. Instead, it is God who is important because he enables people to believe in and understand the good news. In the same way, he is important because he causes the plants to grow. ⁸In fact, the person who first proclaims the good news to people and the person who proclaims more about the good news to people have the same goal. They are like the person who plants the seeds and the person who waters the plants, who also have the same goal. God will reward people who do either task in a way that matches what they did. ⁹We {who proclaim the good news} all work for God, but you belong to God. It is as if you were farmland that God owns{, in which we planted and watered seeds}. Indeed, it is as if you were a house that God owns.

¹⁰God gave me the skills to wisely proclaim the good news to you first. I am like a wise head builder who puts a foundation in the ground before building a house. Others{, such as Apollos,} proclaim more about the good news to you. They are like other builders who construct a house on top of that foundation. In the end, all the people who proclaim more about the good news should make sure that they proclaim it correctly. They should be like builders who construct a house on top of a foundation correctly. ¹¹No one can put a foundation in the ground if another person has already put it in the ground. So also, no one else can first proclaim the good news to you, because I already did that. What I proclaimed to you is {what} Jesus the Messiah {accomplished}. This message about Jesus is like the foundation of a house. ¹²Builders can use many difficult building materials when they construct a house on its foundation. They can use {more durable materials like} gold, silver, and jewels, {and less durable materials like}

lumber, grass, and straw. In the same way, some of those who proclaim more about the good news teach things that are more pleasing to God. Others teach things that are less pleasing to God. ¹³On the day when the Messiah returns to judge everyone, he will reveal what kind of work each person has done. The quality of the materials that builders use to construct a building becomes clear when the building catches on fire. In a similar way, a judgment like fire will occur on the day when the Messiah returns. This judgment will show the quality of what those who proclaim more about the gospel have taught. ¹⁴Any builders who constructed a building that survives a fire gain honor and money. In the same way, God will honor and reward all those who teach more about the good news in a way that God accepts when he judges everyone. ¹⁵Any builders who constructed a building that fire consumes lose respect and money. However, the builders do not die in the fire, but they escape from the flames. In the same way, God will not honor or reward all those who teach more about the good news in a way that God does not accept when he judges everyone. However, God will still accept them, despite the wrong things that they have taught.

¹⁶You need to remember that you are like God's temple in Jerusalem {because God is present among you like he was present in the temple}. You need to remember that you are like a house in which God's Spirit lives {because he is always present with you}. ¹⁷God will act against any person who acts against his temple. This is because God's temple belongs to him alone. {Since} you are like God's temple{, God will act against any person who acts against you}.

¹⁸Do not believe what is not true about yourselves. You who consider yourselves to be wise according to human standards should become foolish {according to human standards}. In this way, you will {really} become wise people. ¹⁹{I speak these words} because the things that humans consider to be wise are things that God considers to be foolish. {You know that this is true} because the scripture says,

"God is the one who disrupts the clever schemes that wise people plan."

²⁰{The scripture says} further,

"The Lord is aware of everything that wise people plan, {and he knows} that these plans will not succeed."

²¹Therefore, none of you should boast about {how you follow other} humans. {I say this} because you have everything{, so boasting about following other humans is foolish}. ²²You have {leaders such as} Paul, Apollos, and Peter. You have everything that God made, {you do not fear when} you live, and {you can find comfort when you} die. You have everything that exists now and everything that will exist in the future. Indeed, you have everything.

²³Further, the Messiah has you, and God has the Messiah.

Chapter 4

¹I want people to think of us {who proclaim the good news} as those who serve the Messiah and who are in charge of proclaiming what God has now revealed to us. ²Whenever a leader puts another person in charge, the leader requires that person to do his or her tasks faithfully. {In the same way, God requires that we who proclaim the Gospel do our task faithfully.} ³I do not worry about what you or any other human authority decides {about whether I have acted faithfully or not}. In fact, I do not even worry about what I myself decide {about whether I have acted faithfully or not}. ⁴In fact, I do not know about anything I have done wrong. However, what I know about myself does not prove that I have acted faithfully. Rather, it is the Lord who will decide {whether I have acted faithfully or not}. ⁵So then, you should not finally decide about anything until the Lord comes back {to judge everyone and everything}. He will make clear what is now hidden, and he will show everyone what each person desires and plans. At that time, God will praise each person {who has acted faithfully}.

⁶My fellow believers, I have talked in this way about myself and Apollos for your benefit. I want you to learn from our example that you should act only in ways that fit with what the scriptures say. Then, nobody will speak great things about one leader and bad things about another leader. ⁷Nobody has set you apart {from every other believer}. In fact, God has given to you every good thing that you have. Since these things are gifts from God, you should not say proudly that you yourself earned them.

⁸{You are acting as if} you currently have everything that you need spiritually. {You are acting as if} you currently have more spiritual blessings than you need. {You are acting as if} you have currently begun to rule with Christ, even though we {who proclaim the good news} are not ruling with Christ now. Indeed, I wish that you really were ruling with him, in order that we {who proclaim the good news} could be ruling with you. ⁹Rather {than thinking that we rule with Christ now}, I consider us apostles to be those whom God has appointed to suffer humiliation and to die. We suffer humiliation and die publicly, and everything that God has created, including spiritual beings and humans, can see us. ¹⁰We {seem to} be foolish people because we serve the Messiah, but {you think that} you are wise people because God unites you to the Messiah. We {seem to} be people who do not have power or influence, but {you think that} you do have these things. {You think that} people praise you, but those people shame us. ¹¹Even now {as I write this letter to you}, we {whom Christ has sent} have often not had enough food or drink. We wear ragged clothing, and others repeatedly strike us. We constantly travel and do not return to a home. ¹²We do manual labor {to earn a living}. When people speak badly to us, we say good things about them. When people hurt us {because we serve the Messiah}, we patiently live through it. ¹³When people say bad things about us, we say encouraging words to them. From a human perspective, we are worthless, like filthy garbage that needs to be thrown away. {All these things are true about us} even now {as I write this letter to you}.

¹⁴I do not include in my letter what I have just finished saying because I want to make you ashamed. Rather, {I include these things} because I want to admonish you, since you are like my own children, whom I love. ¹⁵When I first preached the good news to you and God united you to Jesus the Messiah, I became your spiritual father. So, even if you had a million teachers who helped you to live in union with the Messiah, I would still be the only spiritual father you have. ¹⁶So I urge you to follow my example. ¹⁷That is why I sent Timothy to you. I love him, and he is my faithful child. He will remind you of how I live as I am joined to the Messiah. I teach the same things everywhere we go and in every church we visit.

¹⁸Some of you have become proud. You live as though I might not come back to you soon. ¹⁹But if the Lord wants me to come, I will come to you soon. Then I will learn not only how these arrogant people talk, but I will find out whether they have God's power in them. ²⁰God's kingdom is not about what you say; it is about God's power. ²¹What would you want me to do? Should I come to punish you with harsh discipline, or should I come so you can see how much I love you by how gentle I am to you?

Chapter 5

¹People have even told us that there is someone in your church who is living in sexual immorality, a kind of immorality that even the unbelievers do not allow. A man has a sexual relationship with his father's wife! ²And you, you remain arrogant! Rather you should have wept over this sin, and should have expelled this man from your congregation. ³I am not with you physically, but I am very concerned for you all, and I am with you in my spirit. And I have already judged the one who did this, just as if I were with you. ⁴When you gather together for worship under the authority of the Lord Jesus—and I am worshiping with you in spirit—⁵you should turn this man over to Satan out into the world, so that his physical body might be destroyed, so that God may save his spirit on the day of the Lord's return.

⁶It is not good that you are praising yourselves. Surely you know that evil is like yeast: A little yeast makes the whole loaf rise. ⁷Sin is like that yeast. You must clean out the old yeast and throw it away so that it cannot infect the whole batch of dough. You are like an unleavened batch of dough. As in the Passover Festival, the yeast must be kept away from the bread. For the Messiah is our Passover lamb: He became the sacrifice for us. ⁸So let us celebrate the Passover Festival, and let us follow all the rules of purification. We must throw out the old yeast, which stands for disobedience and wickedness, and we must celebrate the festival by obeying God and speaking truth to each other. If we do that, we will be like the bread that has no yeast.

⁹I wrote to you, that you must not keep company with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰Of course, I did not mean that you should not associate with unbelievers who are immoral, or who selfishly desire many things, or who trick and cheat to take from others, or who worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid all people like that.

¹Instead, I mean that you are not to be close friends with a fellow believer who is living in sexual immorality. We must include other sins, such as greed, or idolatry, or one who is abusive in the way he talks to others, or a drunkard, or a swindler. You must not even eat with these people who claim to trust in the Messiah, yet they do these terrible things. ²For I have no obligation to judge those who are outside the church of the Messiah. Your duty is to judge those who are in it. ³God is the one who will judge those who are outside the church. The scriptures command us,

“You must take away the evil person who is among you!”

Chapter 6

¹When you have a dispute with another believer, you should not have the audacity to take that matter before a civil judge who is not a believer. Take the matter to fellow believers, whom God has set apart for himself. ²You should know that we who belong to God will judge the world. If you will judge the world one day, you should be able to settle matters that are less important. ³You should know that you will judge angels! Certainly you are able to judge matters in this life. ⁴And if you can settle matters that are important in this life, you should not find it necessary to hand off disputes between Christians to be settled by unbelievers. ⁵I say this to show how you have disgraced yourselves. There certainly must be someone in the church who is sensible enough to settle these disputes when these sort of cases come up between Christian brothers and sisters. ⁶But instead, some believers among you accuse other believers in a civil court and you allow a judge who is an unbeliever to settle the matter!

⁷When you have any disputes between one another it means that you have not done what you should have done. Allow a brother or sister to take advantage of you rather than you take them to court. ⁸Instead, you have wronged and cheated others, and the ones you cheated are your own brothers and sisters.

⁹Surely you understand that the wicked will not come under God's rule. Do not believe them when they tell you otherwise. The truth is that the sexually immoral, those who worship anything or anyone other than God, those who break their marriage vows, those who engage in perverse acts of so-called worship involving sex, and those who engage in the practice of homosexuality, ¹⁰those who steal, the ones who are greedy for more, those who get drunk, those who tell lies about others, and those who trick and cheat to steal from others—these will never come under God's rule. ¹¹Some of you used to do these things. But God has made you clean from your sins, he has set you apart for himself, and he has made you right with himself. He has done all this through the power of the Lord Jesus the Messiah and the Spirit of our God.

¹²Some say this: “I am free to do anything I want, because I am joined to the Messiah.” Yes, but because something is permitted does not mean it is good for me. “I am free to do anything I want”—but I will not allow anything to become my master. ¹³People also say, “Food is made for a person's body to digest, and a person's body is made to digest food”—but God will soon do away with both food and the body's normal functions. Of course, they are really talking about sleeping with people. However, God did not make our bodies so we could be sexually immoral. But the body is to serve the Lord, and the Lord will provide for the body. ¹⁴God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will also raise us up by his power to live again.

¹⁵You should know that your bodies are joined to the Messiah. Should you take away that which is a part of the Messiah and join it together with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶You understand that anyone who sleeps with a prostitute becomes united with her. It is like the scriptures say about marriage: “The two will become one.” ¹⁷And those who are joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

¹⁸So when you want to commit a sexual sin, run away from it as quickly as you can! People say, “Every sin that a person commits is committed outside the body”—except that when one sins sexually, he sins against his own body. ¹⁹You should know that your body is a dwelling place, a temple of the Holy Spirit within you. God gave you his Spirit and now you no longer belong to yourself. Instead, you belong to God. ²⁰God purchased you with the price of his Son's life. Therefore honor God in all you do in your human body.

Chapter 7

¹You wrote to me some questions about how married believers should live. Here is my answer. There may be times in which it is good to abstain from sleeping together in marriage. ²But people are tempted very often to be sexually immoral. So each husband should have his own wife, and each wife should have her own husband. ³And each married believer should have the right to sleep with his or her spouse. ⁴For the husband gives control of his body to his wife. And the wife gives control of her body to her husband. ⁵So do not deprive one another of sleeping together, unless you both agree to abstain from it for a short period of time, so that you may pray. But after that time is over, come together again. Do not allow Satan to tempt you because you cannot control yourself.

⁶I am not commanding you to get married, but I will compromise because I know that many of you are married or will wish to marry. ⁷My example is before you: I am single, and sometimes I wish that each of you were single in order to serve God. But God gives many different gifts to his children; he makes some able to be married, and others to remain single.

⁸To those of you who have never married and those whose husbands have died, I say that it would be good if you continue to be single, like me. ⁹But if it is hard for you to control yourself, you should get married. It is better for you to marry than to suffer from strong sexual desires.

¹⁰The Lord gives his own commands to you who are married: "The wife should not separate from her husband."

¹¹(But if she separates from her husband, she should not marry again, or else she should make peace with her husband.) And, "the husband should not divorce his wife."

¹²And I have this to say—and this is my advice, not the Lord's command—to you who have a wife who is not a believer: If she is content to stay with you, do not divorce her. ¹³And if you are a woman with a husband who does not believe, and if he is content to stay with you, do not divorce him. ¹⁴The unbelieving husband is set apart in a special way because the wife trusts in God. It is the same for an unbelieving woman with a husband who trusts in God. It is the same for your children: They are set apart in a special way to God, because one parent believes in the Messiah.

¹⁵However, if the unbelieving spouse wants to leave you, you should let that person go. In this situation, the vow you took when you married is no longer binding on you. God has called us to peace. ¹⁶You do not know how God may work through the life you live before your unbelieving spouse. And you do not know whether your life may become a means by which God might save your husband or your wife.

¹⁷We must live the life the Lord has assigned us to live, and to obey the call God gave us. This is the principle in all the churches. ¹⁸If you were circumcised before you became a Christian, you should not try to remove the marks of that circumcision. If you were not circumcised when God saved you, you should not let anyone circumcise you.

¹⁹Circumcision or uncircumcision—these are not important to us. But what is important is that we obey what God commands us to do. ²⁰So continue to live and work as you did when God called you to trust in the Messiah. ²¹If you were a slave when God saved you, do not worry about it. Of course, if you have the chance to gain your freedom, take advantage of the opportunity. ²²This is because anyone who the Lord calls a slave is a free person because of the Lord. In the same way, you become God's slave when he calls you, even if you were never a slave to anyone.

²³God bought you with the price of his Son; your freedom is precious. So do not become slaves of humans.

²⁴Brothers and sisters in the Messiah, whatever you were when God called you, whether you were slave or free, remain in that same position.

²⁵Regarding the question about those who have never married, I will give my views, but I have no specific commandment from the Lord on this question. But you can have confidence in my reply because God has been kind to me and enabled me to be someone whom people can trust. ²⁶Therefore, because of the difficult times that seem to be coming upon us all, I think it is good for you to remain as you were when God called you. ²⁷To you who are married, I say this: Do not seek to be freed from your vow. As for you who are not married, do not try to find a wife. ²⁸But to the men who are single, I say, if you marry, you have committed no sin. I give the same advice to the

single women: If you get married, you have committed no sin. However, if you marry, you will have many worldly troubles, and I would spare you those kind of troubles.

²⁹This is what I mean about the time in which we are living, brothers and sisters: We have a short amount of time left. From now on those who are married will have to live as though they were not married, because of all the trouble that is coming. ³⁰Those who are filled with grief should not cry. Those who are rejoicing over some wonderful event should have no joy on their faces. Those who have spent money to buy something should take no delight in it; they should live as if they owned nothing. ³¹And those who deal with the things of the world should not involve themselves completely with them. For this world system is about to crumble into nothing.

³²I want you to be free from things to worry about. As you see, the unmarried man is concerned about the matters that are important to the Lord. He wants to serve the Lord and do what he wants. ³³But the man who is married must also concern himself for the ordinary matters of the world as well as serving and pleasing his wife. ³⁴So married men can only do some of the things they need to do. It is the same with widows and young ladies who have not married: As believing women, they are concerned to spend their time serving the Lord with their entire selves, with their physical abilities and with their spirit. But married women are concerned about the day-to-day matters of the world—such as how to please their husbands. ³⁵I tell you this to help you. I am not trying to control you. If you follow my advice, you will find it easier to serve the Lord without worrying about things that married people worry about.

³⁶If a man has promised to marry a woman, but if he finds he is not treating her with respect because she is becoming too old to marry, he should get married. This is not a sin. ³⁷But if he has decided that he does not desire to marry at the present time, and if he is in control of the situation, he makes a good decision not to marry. ³⁸So the one who marries his fiancée does a good thing and does not sin; and the one who chooses not to marry also chooses something even better.

³⁹A woman must remain with her husband as long as he lives; if her husband dies, she is free to marry whomever she wishes, but she must marry only someone who has faith in the Lord. ⁴⁰However, it is my judgment that a widow will be happier if she does not marry again. And I think that I, too, have the Spirit of God.

Chapter 8

¹Now, about the question you asked regarding eating food that was offered to idols: We know that people say, "We all have knowledge." But if you think you know a lot, you can become very proud of yourself. If, however, when you love others, you help them grow strong in their faith. ²The truth is that if someone assumes he knows something, he has not yet learned the humbleness he needs to know. ³When you love God, God knows you.

⁴Now about eating food sacrificed to idols: Let us begin with this principle: Just as some say, "Idols in this world do not actually exist," and, as Moses taught, "There is only one God." So idols are not real gods; they are not living gods at all. ⁵But I know that some people say that many gods and lords exist in the heavens or on the earth—after all, there are many supernatural beings who have real power. ⁶Yet even so, we say,

"There is one God, the Father,

from him come all things, and for him we live.

And there is only one Lord, Jesus the Messiah;

he made everything there is, and he is the one who gives us life."

⁷But not everyone knows this. Some worshiped an idol in earlier times, and, now, if they eat food sacrificed to an idol, they worry that they are still worshiping a god. They are torn between two opinions, and they are weak in their faith in the Messiah, so they feel they are honoring an idol when they eat food that has been offered to it. ⁸We know that the food we eat does not make us better or worse before God. ⁹But what is important is your brothers

and sisters in the Messiah. You are free to eat that food, but you should not cause people to fall down in their faith because you have the freedom to eat it. ¹⁰You know that idols were never alive, nor were they gods at all. But if brothers and sisters who do not know the difference between right and wrong see you eating in an idol's temple, they would think you were encouraging them to turn back to their idolatry. ¹¹As a result, if your weaker brother or sister sees you eat meat offered to idols because you have freedom in your mind to eat that food but they did not have the same freedom—you by acting as a free person could destroy your fellow believer for whom the Messiah died. ¹²So, you sin against your weaker brothers and sisters when you encourage them to do something that their sense of right and wrong tells them not to do. This is sinning against the Messiah. ¹³Therefore, if my brother or sister are unable to serve God well because they have seen me eat something, I will never eat meat again! I do not want to do anything that causes them to fall.

Chapter 9

¹To people who criticize how I work, I reply like this: I am an apostle. I have seen Jesus our Lord. I am free. You are the result of the work I did—you are my workmanship. ²Even if some others do not think I am a true apostle, I am a true apostle to you. By the Lord's stamp of approval, you are the proof that I am a true apostle.

³I answer those who say that I am not a true apostle by not using money that you believers give me for payment for my service. ⁴Of course we have the right to live on such money. ⁵We certainly have the right to travel with a believing wife, like the other apostles do—like the Lord's brother and Cephas. ⁶No one made a rule that only Barnabas and I must work to support ourselves. ⁷No soldier serves in the army at his own expense. No one plants a vineyard without being able to eat the grapes or drink the wine. No one shepherds a flock and without drinking some of the milk that comes from the animals.

⁸This is common sense. But the law says this as well. ⁹For the law of Moses says, "When an ox is treading out the grain, do not stop it from eating some of it." There is more that God is concerned about in this law. ¹⁰This law is about us. Moses is saying that those who work in any job should benefit from the fruit of that work, just like the ox eating the grain on which he is treading. ¹¹If we have sown the seed of the good news to you, is it too much for us to receive money from you in our support? ¹²Others received this kind of help from you, and we have certainly proven that we deserve it even more than they do.

However, we have not accepted anything from you, even though we were entitled to it. Instead, we endure all kinds of hardships so that we do not make it more difficult for people to believe in the good news about the Messiah.

¹³Certainly you know that those who helped carry out the sacrifices offered to God in the temple received some of those offerings for their own needs. They received some of the food offered to God. ¹⁴In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who proclaim the good news are to receive their living wages from the good news. They receive part of what is given to God for their needs.

¹⁵But I have not demanded any of these things for myself. And that is not why I am writing this to you now. I boast that I never demand these things from you, and I would have to stop boasting of you were to pay me, so I would rather die than have you pay me. ¹⁶If I proclaim the good news, I am not doing anything for which I should boast. I feel obliged to preach the good news. I would grieve with many tears if I could not do what God called me to do.

¹⁷When I preach the good news because I want to, I have a great reward. But even if I only preached because someone forced me to preach, I would still have to preach, because God trusted me to do this work for him. ¹⁸So what is the reward that God gives me? It is that when I preach the good news, I offer it without anyone paying me for it. Instead, I offer it for free so that I can do it without receiving the payment the Lord would allow me to take.

¹⁹I am not obligated to anyone, but I am a servant to everyone, so that I might persuade more and more people to trust in the Messiah. ²⁰When working with Jewish people, I become like a Jew, so that I may win them to the Messiah. To those who were living under the law I lived as they lived, in order that those living under the law may trust in the Messiah as I trust in him. I lived as they lived, even though I am not living my life by the law's demands.

²¹When I am with those who are non-Jews, those who live apart from the law of Moses, I became like them (though

I myself am not outside God's law, and I am obedient to the law of the Messiah), so that I can persuade those apart from the law to trust in the Messiah. ²²To those who are weak about rules and laws, I lived as they did, so I could persuade them to trust in the Messiah. I have lived under rules and with many life-styles and with all kinds of people so that in any way God chooses to work, God will rescue some of them. ²³I do all this so I may proclaim the good news about the Messiah, so that I will also experience the good things the good news brings to us.

²⁴You know when people run in a race, they all run, but only one of them wins the prize. So you also should run to win the prize. ²⁵Every athlete is careful in how he trains. They are running so one of them may get a crown of victory that is put on their heads; but it is made of olive leaves, and it quickly perishes and fades away. But we are running so we might receive a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore, in everything I do, I do it for a purpose. I do not waste my effort or exhaust myself by striking the air like a boxer who has no opponent. ²⁷I discipline my body and I make it obey my commands. I do not want to preach the good news to others and then lose my reward because I failed to fulfill what he commanded me to do.

Chapter 10

¹I want you to remember, brothers and sisters, that our Jewish ancestors were following God, who led them out of Egypt by means of a cloud during the day, and that they passed through the Sea of Reeds on dry land. ²And as we have been baptized into the Messiah, so the Israelites were to follow Moses as he followed God in the cloud and across the sea. ³They all ate the supernatural manna that God gave them from heaven, ⁴and they all drank the supernatural water that God gave them when Moses struck the rock. The rock was the Messiah. ⁵But God was angry with most of them because they worshiped other gods and rebelled against him, so their dead bodies lay on the ground all across the wilderness.

⁶Now these things were an example for us, so we would learn not to greatly desire evil things, as they did. ⁷Some of our ancestors also worshiped idols. As the scripture says, "The people sat down to eat and drink and then they rose up to dance wildly in a sexual way." ⁸Twenty-three thousand of our Jewish ancestors died in one day because of their sexual immorality. ⁹Let us not test the authority of the Messiah by disobeying him, as some of our ancestors did, and poisonous snakes killed them. ¹⁰Do not grumble about what God provides, as some of our ancestors did, and an angel destroyed them.

¹¹Now these things happened to our ancestors; they were written so we could learn from them—we, who are living very close to when the world will end. ¹²And so the lesson is this: If you think you are strong and are standing strong, be very careful, because this is just when you may fall. ¹³Every temptation you have fought against is shared by us all, but God has given us his promise and he will not permit the temptation to be greater than your ability to fight against the sin. When the temptation comes, God will provide a way for you to get free of it, so you may endure the temptation to sin.

¹⁴Therefore, my loved ones, run away as fast as you can from idol worship. ¹⁵I speak to you as people who consider carefully how you live; think about what I am saying here. ¹⁶When we drink the cup of wine that we bless, we share in the blood of the Messiah. When we break the bread, we share in the body of the Messiah. ¹⁷There is only one loaf of bread, and we, although we are many, all make up just one body together, and we all take and eat from the one loaf of bread together.

¹⁸Think about the people of Israel. Those who eat the sacrifices at the altar share in the altar. ¹⁹So I am saying that an idol is not something real and to eat food sacrificed to an idol is not significant. But even so, there are important issues here. ²⁰What I mean is this: When non-Jews make their sacrifices, they are really making them to demons, and not to God at all. And I do not wish that you share anything with demons. ²¹You must not drink from the Lord's cup and then later drink the cup of demons. You must not share in the Lord's supper and then later eat a meal with demons. ²²To do so would provoke the Lord to become jealous about split loyalty. You are not stronger than he is!

²³Some say, "Everything is lawful," but not everything is for our good or for the good of other people. Yes, "everything is lawful," but not everything helps people to grow strong in their life with God. ²⁴Do not work for your good only, but also for the good of other people. All of us must act toward everyone in such a way as to help them all. ²⁵Here is our rule: You may buy and eat whatever meat you want in the market without having to ask whether it was sacrificed to idols or not. ²⁶As the psalmist says, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." ²⁷If a non-Jewish unbeliever invites you to a meal, and you desire to go, eat whatever he serves you. God does not require you to ask him about where he purchased the food. ²⁸But if someone says to you, "We bought this food at the idol temple and it was sacrificed to the gods," then do not eat the food, for the good of the person who served it, and so as not to cause conflict in the sense of right and wrong. ²⁹This is being careful about how that other person thinks about right and wrong, not how you think about it. My personal choices are not to be changed by what another person believes is right or wrong. ³⁰If I enjoy the meal with thanksgiving, I should not permit someone else to condemn me.

³¹The rule here is that whether you eat a meal or drink something offered to you, or whatever you do, do everything in a way so that you give praise to God. ³²Do not be offensive to Jews or to Greeks, nor even to those in the church of God, about matters such as these. ³³I make it my duty to please everyone I can, in every way that is possible. I do this by not seeking my own good. Instead, I try to build up other people by helping them, so that God might save them.

Chapter 11

¹Follow my example, just like I follow the example of the Messiah.

²I praise you because you remember me in all you do, and you hold tight to all the important teachings that I have passed down to you and you have kept them just as I taught them to you. ³I want you to understand that the Messiah has authority over every man, and that a man has authority over a woman, and that God has authority over the Messiah. ⁴So if any man covers his head when he prays or when he proclaims a message from God, he brings disgrace on himself. ⁵But if a woman prays or proclaims a message God gave her with her head uncovered, she brings disgrace on herself. For it is exactly the same as if she had shaved her head. ⁶If a woman refuses to cover her head, then she should cut her hair short, like a man's. But you know that it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut short or to have her head shaved. So, instead, she should cover her head. ⁷A man should not cover his head because God made him like himself, and the man reflects some of what God himself is like. But women reflect some of what men are like. ⁸For God did not make the man Adam from the woman Eve; instead, he made the woman Eve from the man Adam. ⁹It was not the man whom God created to help the woman, but the woman to help the man. ¹⁰This is why women should cover their heads, as a sign of the authority, and because of the angels.

¹¹So as we live joined to the Lord, women need men to help them, and men need women to help them. ¹²This is because the woman was made from the man, and the man is born from the woman. They are dependent on one another. But all things come from God. ¹³Judge this for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God without a cover on her head? ¹⁴Nature itself teaches us that it is a disgrace for a man to have long hair, ¹⁵but nature also teaches that long hair for a woman is a display of her beauty. Her hair is given to her by God to cover her beauty. ¹⁶But if anyone in the church wishes to argue about this matter, we do not have any other custom than this, nor do any of the churches do anything different.

¹⁷In these instructions, I cannot praise you for what you are doing about the Lord's supper. When you come together to eat, instead of encouraging and helping one another, you make the fellowship in the church much worse. ¹⁸The first matter of concern is that when you come together, you come with different groups and factions. This is what people have told me, and I believe that some of what they say is true. ¹⁹It appears that you need to have different groups among yourselves so that you can test and approve the ones that have places of honor, and others that do not. ²⁰When you come together you are not eating the Lord's Supper. ²¹When you eat, one person

brings an entire meal and eats it as soon as he arrives; he does not wait for anyone else. Another person goes hungry while other people drink so much wine that they get drunk. ²²You act as though you did not have houses to eat and drink in! You treat the church with dishonor, and you despise the purpose for which you gather. You humiliate those who are poor. I can say nothing good about this. This is a disgrace.

²³For I have passed on to you what I received from the Lord, that on the night when the Lord Jesus was handed over to his enemies, he took bread, ²⁴and after he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you, do this and remember me." ²⁵After the same manner, he took the cup, after they had eaten, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, remember me." ²⁶For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again.

²⁷All who come to this celebration of the Lord's Supper should come to give honor to God in the way it is shared. Those who eat the bread and drink the cup must do so in a manner that honors the Lord. Anyone who dishonors the bread and the cup will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸Therefore we should all examine ourselves before we take the communion. We should only eat the bread and drink the cup after we have examined ourselves. ²⁹Anyone who eats and drinks this Supper and does not consider what is the Lord's body, eats and drinks the judgment of God on himself. ³⁰Many among you are physically ill, and several have even died because of the way you have treated the Lord's body. ³¹If we examine ourselves before we take the communion, God will not judge us. ³²But when the Lord judges and punishes us, he disciplines us to correct us, so that he will not condemn us along with the world that has rebelled against God.

³³My fellow believers, when you come together for the Lord's Supper, wait for one another. ³⁴If one of you is hungry, eat at home—so that when you come together as the church, it will not be an occasion for God to discipline you.

And when I come to you, I will give you instructions concerning the other matters you wrote me about.

Chapter 12

¹And now let me teach you about spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters. I want you to know how to use them. ²You may recall how, when you worshiped idols—idols that could not even speak a word—they led you astray. ³The Spirit of God helps you declare, "Jesus the Messiah is Lord." No one who is filled with the Holy Spirit would ever say, "Jesus is accursed!"

⁴The Spirit gives many different gifts to the people of the Messiah, but he is the same Spirit. ⁵There are also many different ways to serve God, but there is only one Lord. ⁶There are also many ways for people to work in God's kingdom, but it is God who gives the power to his people to work for him.

⁷God makes it possible for each believer to show that he has some of the Spirit's power; God does this in order to help all believers together to trust him and honor him more. ⁸For the Spirit makes one person able to speak a message with great wisdom from God, and he makes another person able to pass on to others some knowledge from God. ⁹To another believer the Spirit gives the gift of trusting God for wonderful things. To still another person he gives the ability to pray to God for him to heal people. ¹⁰The Spirit makes some believers able to do powerful deeds so that people will praise God. As for certain other believers, he makes them able to speak messages from God. The Spirit makes still other believers able to tell spirits who honor God from spirits who do not. To still others, the Spirit gives various kinds of languages in which to speak messages from God, and he makes others able to interpret those messages into our language. ¹¹Again and again we see the many different gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives these gifts to individuals, as he chooses.

¹²As the human body is a union of many parts, and every part of the body makes the whole, so it is with the Messiah. ¹³For it is by the Spirit of the Messiah that, when we were baptized, we were each joined together into the body of the Messiah. It made no difference what our background was, either Jew or Greek, slave or free, but each of us received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴Remember, the body is not just one part, but many parts work together to make up the entire body. ¹⁵If your foot spoke to you and said, "I am not the hand, therefore, I am not part of your body," it would not be less a part of your body because it was not like your hand. ¹⁶And if your ear said to you, "I am not an eye. For that reason, I have no place in the body," it would not be less a part of your body because it was not an eye. ¹⁷If your whole body were an eye, there would be nothing with which to hear. If your whole body were an ear, there would be nothing with which to smell. ¹⁸But God fitted each part of the body together, and it works just as he designed it. Every part is needed. ¹⁹If each of us were exactly like all the other parts, we would not have a body at all. ²⁰We are all many members, but only one body. ²¹In your body, the eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you"; it surely does need the hand. Nor would the head say to the feet, "I do not need you." ²²Even the parts that are weak are all still essential to the body as a whole. ²³The parts that we would be ashamed for others to see, we take more care to cover them. In this way we show more respect for them. ²⁴but God has joined the distinguished parts with the less important ones. And God gives honor to those less presentable parts, because they are part of the body. ²⁵God honors the entire body in this way so there is no division in the church, and that members of the body of the Messiah might care for every member of the body with the same affection, no matter what their purpose or role, gifting or abilities. ²⁶Because we are one body, when one member suffers, we all suffer. When one member is given honor for something they accomplished for the Messiah, the entire body rejoices together.

²⁷Now you are the body of the Messiah, and individually, you are all members of it. ²⁸God has also given people as gifts to the church. He gave to the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then those who do powerful deeds, those who perform healing, those who provide helps, those who do work of administration, and those who have various kinds of languages that the Spirit has given them. ²⁹Not all of us are apostles. Not all are prophets. Not all are teachers. Not all do powerful deeds. ³⁰Not all of us can heal the sick. Not all of us can speak in special languages. Not all of us can interpret messages into other languages. ³¹But I want you to eagerly seek after the greater gifts. And now, I will show you a more excellent way.

Chapter 13

¹If I could speak so that I could amaze and persuade people to do what I wanted, or if I could speak the language of angels—but if I did not love people, all my talking would be worth less than a noisy gong or a cymbal that only clangs. ²If I could proclaim messages for God, and if I could explain secret truths about God, and if I trusted in God so much that I could move a mountain—but if I did not love people, I would be worth nothing. ³If I gave away all I own to feed the poor, or if I sacrificed myself to be burned to rescue someone else—but if I did not love people, I would gain nothing.

⁴If you truly love others, you will endure hardships with joy. If you truly love, you will be kind to others. If you truly love, you will not resent that other people possess things you do not have. If you truly love, you will not boast about yourself or be proud. ⁵If you truly love others, you will not abuse them. You will not live to please yourself. No one will be able to make you angry quickly. You will not keep track of the wrong things people have done. ⁶If you truly love others, you will not be happy if anyone does wicked things; instead, you will be happy when people are faithful to God. ⁷If you truly love others, you will endure everything that happens. You will trust that God will do the best things for people. You will trust in God regardless of what happens. You will obey God regardless of what hardships you are facing.

⁸If you truly love, you will not stop loving. Those who are able to speak God's messages, speak in strange languages, or know hidden truths, do these things only for a while. One day they will stop doing these things.

⁹Now, in this life, we know only a small part of all there is to know. Those who proclaim God's messages do so only partially. ¹⁰But when things are complete, everything that is partial or incomplete will end. ¹¹When I was a small child, I talked as a child talks, I thought as a child thinks, and I made decisions as a child makes decision. But when I became an adult, I stopped acting like a child, and I started acting like an adult. ¹²What we understand about the Messiah now, we understand very imperfectly, not well at all. But when the Messiah returns, we will see him face to face. Now we know only part of what is true. But then we will know him fully, just as he knows us fully. ¹³It is

important that we trust in the Messiah now. It is important that we are certain that he will do for us everything that he has promised. And it is important that we love him and each other. But the greatest of these three things is love.

Chapter 14

¹Strive for how to love others and for gifts that strengthen your fellow believers. Especially strive to be able to proclaim his messages that he gives you to say. ²When a person speaks in a language given by the Spirit, he is not speaking to people, because no one can understand him, but he is speaking to God. He is saying things to him as the Spirit leads him. ³On the other hand, the prophet who proclaims the messages from God speaks directly to people. He does this in order to help them by making them stronger, to help them be unshakable, and to give them comfort so they can be happy even in hardship. ⁴A person who speaks in a language given by the Spirit builds himself up and gives himself help, but a person who proclaims the messages of God builds up everyone and helps everyone in the church to be stronger in their faith.

⁵Now I wish that all of you spoke in such languages, but it would be far better for the entire church if more and more of you had the gift of speaking God's messages. Anyone who speaks messages from God is helping to strengthen his fellow believers. For this reason, he is doing work that is more important than those who proclaim messages in various other languages—unless someone is able to interpret those messages.

⁶If I come to you and am only speaking in languages given by the Spirit, how can that help you? That cannot help you unless I speak to you and help you know matters that were hidden from you, or unless I help you understand facts you did not know, or unless I proclaim to you some message you did not hear before, or unless I teach you some rule that you had never learned before. ⁷If someone is playing the flute or harp (they are not living things), and if the notes on the flute or harp sounded no different from each other, no one would be able to tell which tune I was playing. ⁸And if a soldier blew the trumpet poorly, the army would not know whether to get ready for battle. ⁹This is what it is like when you say words that no one can understand: No one will know what you have said. ¹⁰There are certainly many languages in the world, and all of them give meaning to those who understand them. ¹¹But if I do not understand someone's language, I will be like a foreigner to him, and he will be like one to me. ¹²So because you want very much for the Spirit to work in you, try to help the believers in the church to trust the Messiah and obey him.

¹³For that reason, pray that God will enable you to interpret what you say in a language that God has given you.

¹⁴If anyone prays in such a language, his spirit certainly prays, but his mind does not. ¹⁵Therefore, we should pray with our spirit, but also pray with our mind. And it is the same if we sing praise to God. ¹⁶If you insist on praising God only in your spirit, the outsider will never understand what you are saying, and will never be able to agree with the message. ¹⁷For if you give thanks in your spirit, that is well and good for you, but you are not helping the other believers. ¹⁸I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you do. ¹⁹But to the church I would rather speak five words with my mind, words with which I can teach others, than say ten thousand words in a strange language.

²⁰Brothers and sisters, you should think like adults. But when you think about evil things, you should think like small children. Your thinking should be sensible. ²¹In the law it is written that God says,

"I will speak to my people Israel

by foreigners, men who speak in strange languages;

but my people will still not understand me."

²²So if a believer speaks in a language that God has given him, this impresses the unbelievers who might be listening. But if a believer speaks a message from God, this impresses the other believers. ²³You can see how confusing it would be if all the believers met together and spoke in different languages. Any unbeliever who heard them would call them all crazy. ²⁴But if you were all taking turns speaking true messages from God, any unbeliever would realize that he was guilty of sinning against God. ²⁵This unbeliever would become aware of what was deep

in his consciousness. He would fall down with his face to the ground in wonder and fright, and he would praise God and say that God is truly with you.

²⁶Brothers and sisters, it should be this way when you worship God together. Each of you should come with a psalm to sing, or something to teach from the scriptures, or something that God has told you, or with a message in a language that God has given, or with an interpretation of such a message. Everything you do together should encourage each other, for you are the Messiah's church. ²⁷If there are any who wish to speak a message in a language from the Spirit, there should be no more than two or three such persons. They should speak one at a time, and someone should interpret the messages. ²⁸However, if there is no one able to interpret those messages, then those who speak in languages from the Spirit should keep silent and speak only to God.

²⁹If there are any who want to speak a message from God, there should be only two or three such persons; and everyone else should judge those messages according to what the scriptures say. ³⁰But if God allows someone seated in the assembly to understand a message, then the one speaking the message should stop speaking. In this way, all the believers can listen to the meaning of the message. ³¹For each of those who proclaim the messages of God should do so. But they must do so one by one, in order, so that all the believers can learn and receive courage to love God better. ³²For those who truly speak God's messages control the spirit in which they do so. ³³For God does not create confusion; instead, he makes peace.

This next question is answered the same way in all the churches of God's people. ³⁴Women should keep silent in church for they are not permitted to speak. They must not interrupt the one who is speaking God's message, but they should always obey their husbands, as also the law says. ³⁵When women want to learn, instead of interrupting the worship, they should speak with their husbands at home. It dishonors her husband for a woman to interrupt the service. ³⁶Were you the people by whom God gave us his word? Or are you the only ones to whom it came? ³⁷Those of you who think you are prophets or spiritual should agree that the things I write are what the Lord has commanded and follow what I have written. ³⁸But as for those who do not acknowledge what I have written, you should not acknowledge them in your assembly.

³⁹So, brothers and sisters, with earnest desire speak God's messages to the church; and do not forbid anyone from speaking in languages that God gives. ⁴⁰All that you do in the worship of the church, do it in a pleasant and orderly way.

Chapter 15

¹And now I wish to remind you, brothers and sisters, about the good news I proclaimed to you. You believed this message and now you live according to it. ²This good news saved you, as long as you hold firmly to it—unless you did not truly believe it.

³For I have passed on to you what others first told me, that the Messiah died for our sins, as the scripture foretold he would; ⁴also that they buried him, and that God raised him to life on the third day, all just the way the scriptures said it would happen. ⁵Then the Messiah appeared to Cephas (known as Peter), and then he appeared to the rest of the apostles. ⁶He later appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters in the Lord when they were all together. Some of them have since died, but most are still alive and can verify this. ⁷Then he appeared to James, and then again to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all he appeared to me, although I am very unlike the other apostles. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles. I made the church of the Messiah suffer greatly, so I do not deserve to be an apostle. ¹⁰But God has been very kind to me, so I am an apostle, and he has done much good through me. Really, I have worked harder than all the other apostles. Still, it was not really I who worked, but God, who gave me the strength. ¹¹So whether it is the other apostles or I who preached to you, we proclaimed the good news about the Messiah, and you believed us.

¹²Now some of you are saying that those who are now dead will not rise anymore. This cannot be true, because we have announced to you that the Messiah rose from the dead. ¹³If no one rises from the dead, then God certainly

has not raised the Messiah. ¹⁴And if he has not raised the Messiah from the dead, then what we preach makes no sense at all, and what you believe about the Messiah can do nothing for you in your life or in your death. ¹⁵In addition, people will see that we have told lies about God, if the dead really do not rise again. ¹⁶Again I say, if no one rises from the dead, then God has not even raised the Messiah. ¹⁷And if he has not raised the Messiah, then what you believe is useless, and God still condemns you because you have sinned. ¹⁸If that is the case, then all those who have died trusting in the Messiah have also died with no hope of resurrection. ¹⁹If in this life only we have hope in the Messiah, and we expect him to do nothing for us after we die, then of all people we most deserve the pity of others, for we have believed in a lie.

²⁰But in fact, God has raised the Messiah from the dead, and he is only the first of the many people that he will raise. ²¹For everyone in the world dies because of what one man, Adam, did. However, those who have died will live again—also because of what one person has done; that is, the man the Messiah Jesus. ²²Because, just as all die because Adam sinned, in the same way, all will live again because of what the Messiah has done. ²³But they will rise from the dead in a certain order: the Messiah is the first to have risen from the dead; then those who are joined to the Messiah will live again when he returns to earth. ²⁴Then the world will come to an end, when the Messiah will present all the world to God the Father, for him to rule. This is when the Messiah will bring to an end all who have the status of rulers, and everything that has reigning authority and all seats of power in this world. ²⁵For the Messiah must rule until God has conquered every one of his enemies, and placed them under the Messiah's feet to show that they have no more power. ²⁶The final enemy that God will destroy is death itself. ²⁷For the scriptures say, "God has placed everything under his feet," that is, the Messiah's feet. But it is clear that this does not include God himself. ²⁸After God has placed all things into the Messiah's power, then the Son also will place himself in the power of God the Father, so that God may be the same in relation to everyone and everything.

²⁹If there is no resurrection from the dead, as some say, then there is no reason for people to receive baptism for the sake of those who have died, as some do. If God does not bring any dead people back to life, then here is no reason for living people to receive baptism for the sake of those who have died. ³⁰And we apostles would have no reason to risk our lives every day, as we do, to proclaim the good news if there is no resurrection from the dead. ³¹My brothers and sisters, I am so proud of you; you are like my possessions that I show off to the Messiah Jesus our Lord. Every day I am in danger of dying! ³²If God will not raise the dead, then I fought with those wild animals at Ephesus for nothing. What the poets wrote would in that case be true: "Let us eat food and drink wine today, because we will die tomorrow." ³³Do not be tricked: "If you have bad friends, you will not care to live any longer in the right way." ³⁴Sober up! Live in the right way and do not keep sinning. Some of you do not know God at all. I say this to shame you.

³⁵Someone may ask you, "How can the dead rise? What kind of body could they ever have?" ³⁶You know nothing! You do not think about the fact that any seed you plant in the ground will not start to grow until it dies. ³⁷And what a farmer plants does not look the same as what will come up. It is only a bare seed; it will change into something entirely different. ³⁸God will give it a new body just as he chooses, and to each seed put into the ground he will give a different body. ³⁹Not all living creatures are the same. There are human beings, and there are animals on the land of many kinds, and there are the birds and fish. All of them are different. ⁴⁰There are also different kinds of things in the heavens. The nature of those bodies in the sky is different from the nature of the things on this world. ⁴¹There is one kind of the nature for the bright sun, and another kind for the softer moon. There is still another kind of nature for the stars, but the stars all differ one from another in many ways.

⁴²It is the same way when people rise from the dead. What goes into the ground has died, but what rises will never die again. ⁴³When it goes into the ground, it is in the dirt, but when God raises it again, it grows with honor and power. ⁴⁴What goes into the ground belongs to this earth, but what rises from the dead has God's power. So, there are things that belong to this earth, and there are things that have God's power, which lasts forever.

⁴⁵So the scriptures say, "The first man, Adam, was a living being who gave his children and descendants life." But the Messiah, the second Adam, gave people God's power to live forever. ⁴⁶What belongs to the earth came first, the natural, and then came what belongs to God, that is the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man, Adam, belonged to the earth, for

he was made from dust. But the second man, the Messiah, belongs to heaven. ⁴⁸All those who are made from dust are just like Adam, the one who was made from dust. All those who belong to heaven are just like the Messiah, the man from heaven. ⁴⁹Just as God made us like the man who was made from dust, so he will also make us be like the man from heaven.

⁵⁰Now I say this, brothers and sisters, human beings who will die cannot obtain the things that God promises to give all those whom he rules. It is just as the things that die cannot become things that do not die. ⁵¹Look! I tell you something that God has hidden from us. Not all believers will die, but God will change all of us. ⁵²He will change us in an instant, as fast as one can blink his eye, when God's angels blow the final trumpet. For they will blow that trumpet and then God will raise the dead so as to never die again. ⁵³For it is these bodies that will die, but God will make them live forever, never to die again, and it is these bodies that now can be destroyed, but God will make them new, never to die again. ⁵⁴When this happens, then it will come true, what the scriptures say:

"God has totally defeated death."

⁵⁵"Death will never win again!

The pain of dying has been taken away!"

⁵⁶It is sin that brings such pain to us when we are dying. And sin's power comes into our lives because of the law.

⁵⁷But now we thank God because he gives us victory over death through our Lord Jesus the Messiah!

⁵⁸Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be solid in your faith, unmoveable in your life, doing more and more in the Lord's work. You know that whatever you do for him will last forever.

Chapter 16

¹Now I wish to answer your questions about the money that we are collecting for the people in Jerusalem who belong to God. You should do exactly what I told the believers in the churches in Galatia to do. ²Every Sunday, each of you should put some money aside, as you are able, so you will not need any more collections when I come. ³You must choose people, whomever you wish, to take your gifts to Jerusalem. And when I arrive, I will send letters with them about your gift. ⁴If it is the right thing to do, they will travel together with me to Jerusalem.

⁵I am planning to come to you when I travel through the region of Macedonia. ⁶Perhaps I will stay with you, and perhaps all through the winter, so that you can help me along the way in my trip. ⁷I do not want to see you for only a short time. I hope that the Lord will allow me to spend enough time together that we can help each other. ⁸I want to stay in Ephesus until the Festival of Pentecost, ⁹because the Lord has opened a door for me there, although there are still many who oppose us.

¹⁰Now when Timothy comes, treat him kindly and see to it that he has nothing to be afraid of, for he is doing the Lord's work, just like I am doing. ¹¹Do not let anyone treat him as unimportant. Help him on his way as much as you can; send him away in peace so that he may join me. I am expecting him to travel with other brothers who are coming my way.

¹²You asked about our brother Apollos. I urged him strongly that he should visit you when the other brothers came to you. He decided not to come now, but he will come to you later when he has opportunity.

¹³Be on guard, do not wander from your faith. Work for the Lord like grown men, and be strong. ¹⁴Do everything through the power of love.

¹⁵You know the people in the house of Stephanas. You know that they were the first ones in the province of Achaia to believe, and they are determined to help those who belong to the Lord. I urge you, brothers and sisters, ¹⁶obey people like them who help in the work and who work hard with us. ¹⁷I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and

Achaicus arrived here from Corinth, because they made up for the fact that you were not here. ¹⁸They encouraged and helped me in my spirit, and they helped you as well. Tell others about how much they helped you.

¹⁹The churches in Asia send greetings. Aquila and Priscilla send you greetings as you do the work of the Lord, and the other believers that meet in their home do so as well. ²⁰The rest of the brothers and sisters greet you, too. Greet one another with a kiss of affection.

²¹I, Paul, am writing this sentence with my own hand. ²²If anyone does not love the Lord, let a curse be on him. O Lord, come! ²³May the kindness we do not deserve that comes from the Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴I send you this reminder that I love all of you, as you all are joined together in the Messiah Jesus.

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