

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

v92

First Corinthians

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1 Corinthians

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 groups of believers belonging
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.

4 I often thank my God about 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 by
uniting you to 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*. 9 God 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.

10 My fellow believers, as one whom our Lord Jesus the
Messiah has authorized, 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. 12 What 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' group, or
that you belong to Cephas' group, or that you belong to the
Messiah's group. 13 No 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.
14 I give thanks *to God* that I baptized no people who belong
to your group except for *two individuals:* Crispus and Gaius.
15 Because *I baptized so few of you,* no person is able to claim
that I baptized you, so that you belong to my group. 16 Oh 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*. 17 The 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 prophet
Isaiah wrote,

> "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. 21 Here 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. 22 On the one hand, *many*
Jewish people want to see powerful deeds. On the other hand,
many Greek people search for wise thinking. 23 We, 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. 24 We, 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*.

26 For *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. 27 Rather, 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. 28 God
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. 30 It 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*. 31 So, *because God is*
the one who does all these things, we should do what the prophet
Jeremiah wrote:

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

2 My 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. 3 I also *lived according to this pattern* when I was staying with you. I was sick, I was afraid, and I frequently shivered and shook. 4 I 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*.

6 Despite *what I have said,* we *who proclaim the good news* do speak wisely when we are with spiritually mature people. However, people who think only in human ways and people who rule right now do not think that we speak wisely. *Soon,* these people will no longer rule. 7 No, 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. 8 The 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. 9 Rather, *how they acted* fits with what the prophet Isaiah wrote:

> "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."

10 God 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. 12 We 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. 13 These 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. 14 Now, 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. 15 On the other hand, people who have God's Spirit *can* judge rightly about everything. However, no *other* person *can* judge rightly about them. 16 This 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.

3 My 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 only in human ways. *I had to do this* because you believed in the Messiah in an immature way. 2 I 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 only in 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 only in human ways and who act only in human ways. 4 Further, 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 only in human ways.

5 You need to realize that Apollos and I, Paul, are just 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. 7 You 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. 8 In 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. *He will reward them* in a way that is appropriate for what they did. 9 We *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.

10 God gave me the skills to wisely proclaim the good news to you first. I am like the construction boss 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 the right way on top of a foundation. 11 No 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. 12 Builders can use many different 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. 13 On 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. 14 Any 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. 15 Any 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, when he judges everyone, God will not honor or reward all those who teach more about the good news in a way that God does not accept. However, God will still accept these teachers despite the wrong things that they have taught.

16 You 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*. 17 God 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*.

18 Do 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 author of the book of Job wrote,

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

20 Further, *the author of a psalm wrote*,

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

21 Therefore, 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*. 22 You 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. 23 Further, the Messiah has you, and God has the Messiah.

4 I 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. 2 Whenever 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 good news do our task faithfully.* 3 I 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*. 4 In 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*. 5 So 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*.

6 My 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 authors of the Scriptures wrote. Then, nobody will speak great things about one leader and bad things about another leader. 7 Nobody 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. 9 Rather *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. 10 We *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. 11 Even 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. 12 We 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. 13 When people say bad things about us, we say encouraging words to them. From a human perspective, we are worthless, like filthy garbage that someone should throw away. *All these things are true about us* even now *as I write this letter to you*.

14 I 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. 15 When 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. 16 Because *I am your spiritual father*, I plead with you to imitate how I live. 17 Because *I want you to imitate me*, I had Timothy visit you.

He is like my own child, and I love him. He faithfully *serves the Messiah* as one whom God has united to the Lord. He will teach you again about how I behave as one whom God has united to the Messiah Jesus. I instruct every church in every place *that I visit* to behave in these ways.

18 Some of you are saying great things about yourselves. These people act as if I were not about to visit you. 19 However, I will visit you very soon, as long as the Lord wants *me to do so*. I already know what these people who say great things about themselves claim. *When I visit you*, I will learn whether they are actually powerful or not. 20 *I will do this* because God's kingdom functions by God working powerfully through people, not by people saying great things. 21 When you choose how you will respond to what I am saying, you are also choosing how I will act *when I visit*. When I visit you, I can either harshly discipline you *because you did not listen*, or I can act gently and lovingly *because you did listen*.

5 I have learned that you are in fact allowing people from your group to have improper sex. Even those who do not worship God do not allow some of the things that you allow. *The worst thing that I have learned is* that a man from your group is having sex with his stepmother. 2 *Despite this,* you still say great things about yourselves instead of lamenting *that sin*. *You should have lamented* with the goal of expelling the man who committed this sexual sin. 3 *You should expel him* because I have already declared the man who did this evil thing to be guilty. Although I am not with you physically, I think about you and care about you. *Therefore, when I declare this man to be guilty, it is as valid* as if I were with you. 4 When you gather together, and I am thinking of you, we represent our Lord Jesus the Messiah. *When you gather in this way, you should punish this man* as our Lord Jesus authorizes you to do. 5 You should expel this man so that Satan rules over him. That will destroy his sinful parts, and then God will save him when the Lord returns.

6 Saying great things about yourselves is not the right thing to do. Surely you realize that one person doing evil things is like fermented dough. Even a little fermented dough makes a whole lump of dough fermented, and even one person doing evil things makes the whole church guilty. 7 Just as Jews remove the yeast from their houses *during the Passover festival*, so you should remove anyone who does evil things from your group. Then, you will be free of sin, just like fresh, unleavened dough is free of yeast. In fact, you live in a time that is like the festival of Passover. *This is because* the Messiah has died for you, just like the lamb that Jews sacrifice during the Passover festival represents how God delivered them. 8 Since *the Messiah has died for us*, let us act as if we were participating in the festival of Passover and remove the old leaven. We should get rid of the leaven, which stands for doing what is evil and wicked. Instead, we should eat unfermented bread, which stands for doing what is honest and trustworthy.

9 In the letter *that I sent to you before this one*, I told you not to keep company with people who act in sexually improper ways. 10 *I did* not *mean that you should* entirely *disassociate* with unbelieving people who act in sexually immoral ways, or with people who want more than they need or who cheat others, or with people who worship false gods. To avoid these kinds of people, you would need to get away from the entire world. *That is not what I have commanded you to do.* 11 Now, in this letter, I am telling you not to keep company with any person whom you call a fellow believer who is acting sinfully. This includes having improper sex, wanting more than one needs, worshiping other gods, abusing others with words, getting drunk, and cheating others. Do not have meals with a person who does any of these things. 12 *I want you to act in this way only with fellow believers,* because *you and* I do not need to decide whether someone who is not part of our group is guilty or innocent. Rather, you need to focus on deciding whether people who are part of your group are guilty or innocent. 13 *Do not worry about people who are not part of your group because* God is the one who decides whether they are guilty or innocent. *You should focus on people who are part of your group because the scripture says,*

"You must get rid of any evil person who is
part of your group!"

6 When someone from your group quarrels with another person from your group, you should never settle the quarrel *in a public court* in front of people who do not believe. Rather, *you should settle the quarrel in private* among the people whom God has set apart for himself. 2 Surely you know that the people whom God has set apart for himself will decide whether all things and people that God has created are guilty or innocent. Since you will decide whether all these things and people are guilty or innocent, you can surely decide about small quarrels *within your group*. 3 You need to realize that we will decide whether angels are innocent or guilty. *Since we will do that,* we are certainly able to decide about disputes related to our current lives. 4 Therefore, whenever you quarrel with one another concerning your current lives, you should not choose people who are not part of your group of believers to decide who is guilty or innocent. 5 I include what I have just said in order to make you feel ashamed. Surely there are people in your group who are wise enough to be able to decide about disputes among fellow believers. 6 But instead, some believers among you accuse other believers in a legal court, and people who do not believe settle the dispute.

7 Because you have disputes with each other, you have already completely failed to follow Jesus. Rather *than failing in this way*, you should instead forgive fellow believers when they harm or defraud you. 8 Rather *than forgiving others*, however, you have harmed and defrauded *other people*. In fact, *you have done* these things to fellow believers!

9 *I am shocked that you do these things* even though you realize that people who harm others will not participate in God's kingdom. Do not believe anyone who tells you something else. Anyone who has improper sex or who worships other gods or who has sex with a married person or who participates in sexual acts with a person of the same gender or who initiates sexual acts with a person of the same gender 10 or who steals from others or who wants more than he or she needs or who gets drunk or who abuses others with words or who cheats others will not participate in God's kingdom. 11 Some of you used to behave in these ways. However, now God has cleansed you, he has made you holy, and he has declared you to be innocent. *You experience these things* because the Lord Jesus

the Messiah and the Holy Spirit work powerfully *to give them to you*.

12 *Some of you say,* "I can do anything and not become guilty." However, *I say that* some things are not helpful *to anybody*. *Again, some of you say,* "I can do anything and not become guilty." However, *I say that* I will not serve anything that will make me its slave. 13 *Some of you say,* "Food exists for a person's stomach to digest it, and a person's stomach exists to digest food." Indeed, *I also say that* God will make food and stomachs unimportant. *While it is true that food exists for a person's stomach,* the human body does not exist for a person to have improper sex with it. Instead, *the human body* exists to serve the Lord, and the Lord has worked to save the human body. 14 In fact, God made the Lord alive again, and he will work powerfully to make us also alive again.

15 Surely you know that your bodies belong to the Messiah, just as if you were his body parts. Because of that, you should not take your body back and then give it to a prostitute, so that your body belongs to her, just as if you were her body parts. Never do that! 16 Surely you know that a man who has sex with a prostitute unites himself to her as closely as if they shared the same body. *You should know this* because the scripture says, "The *man and the woman, although* two people, will become *like* one person." 17 In a similar way, any people who unite themselves to the Lord become spiritually one *with the Lord*.

18 Intentionally avoid having improper sex. When people sin, they usually do so without directly hurting their bodies. However, when people have improper sex, they do hurt their own bodies. 19 Surely you know that God has given the Holy Spirit to you. Therefore, your bodies are like temples for the Holy Spirit, since he unites himself to you *like how a god unites himself to his temple*. Because of that, you do not belong to yourselves. 20 *Rather, you belong to God, since the Messiah died for you. When he died for you,* it was as if God paid money to buy you. Because *you belong to God*, you must honor him whenever you do anything with your body.

7 Moving on to what you asked me about, in your letter you said that it is appropriate for people not to have sex with each other. 2 On the other hand, people often desire to have sex, even improper sex. Because of that, a husband should stay married to his own wife, and a wife should stay married to her own husband. 3 Husbands should regularly have sex with their wives. Similarly, wives should regularly have sex with their husbands. 4 Wives' bodies belong to their husbands, not to themselves. Similarly, husbands' bodies belong to their wives, not to themselves. 5 You should only stop having sex regularly when both of you agree to do so for a brief time. You should only do this when you want to focus on praying to God, and you should soon resume having sex regularly. If you do not do this quickly, Satan will use how you desire to have sex to entice you to do what is wrong.

6 I do not command you *to stop having sex regularly in order to focus on praying*. Rather, I am only allowing you *to do so*. 7 If it were up to me, all people would be like me *and remain unmarried*. However, God gives each person his or her own way to live. Some *people live in* one way, while other people *live in* another way.

8 Here I am speaking to people who have not married and to women whose husbands have died. The best thing *for these people* is to stay *unmarried* like I do. 9 However, some people will struggle to control how they desire to have sex. These people should get married, because that is a better choice than constantly desiring to have sex.

10 Here I am speaking what the Lord himself said to people who have gotten married. I require the wives to stay with their husbands. 11 Now whenever they do not stay with their husbands, they should not marry again, or they should go back to their husbands. Further, husbands should stay with their wives.

12 Now to the rest *of you who have a spouse who is not a believer*, the Lord did not speak about this, so I am speaking what I myself command. Some fellow believers have unbelieving wives, and the wives may wish to stay with their believing husbands. In this situation, the husbands should stay with their wives. 13 Similarly, some fellow believers have unbelieving husbands, and the husbands may wish to stay with their believing wives. In this situation, the wives should stay with their husbands. 14 *You should remain with an unbelieving husband or wife,* because God considers the unbelieving husband to be an acceptable spouse for the believing wife. Similarly, God considers the unbelieving wife to be an acceptable spouse for the believing husband. Because of this, God treats the children in this situation just like he treats the children of two believing parents. If what I have said were not true, God would treat the children in this situation just like he treats the children of two unbelieving parents.

15 On the other hand, some unbelieving husbands or wives may want to leave their believing spouses. In this situation, the believing spouses should allow them to leave. The believing spouses do not have to stay with their unbelieving husbands or wives. *In any situation like this, remember that* God requires us to be peaceful people. 16 *You should allow an unbelieving spouse to leave* because each wife does not know whether she can help her husband to believe in Jesus. Each husband also does not know whether he can help his wife to believe in Jesus.

17 In general, all people need to behave in ways that fit with what the Lord has appointed them to do and with how God requires them to act. I require people to follow this teaching in every group of believers *that I visit*. 18 There are some people whom others circumcised before they believed in Jesus. These people should not try to become uncircumcised again. There are other people whom others did not circumcise before they believed in Jesus. These people should not try to become circumcised. 19 Whether a person has had someone circumcise them or not does not matter *to us or to God*. On the other hand, doing what God requires of us *does matter to us and to God*. 20 All people should serve God faithfully while doing the normal things they were already doing when God changed them. 21 Some people were slaves when they believed in Jesus. These people should not worry about being slaves. On the other hand, they should make use of any chance they have to become free. 22 *Do not worry about your social position,* because the Lord considers all people who were slaves when they believed in him to be free people now. Similarly, the Messiah considers all people who were free people when they believed in him to be his slaves now. 23 *When Jesus died for you,* it was as if God paid money to buy you. *Because of that,*

you should not serve other humans, but only God. 24 My fellow
believers, all people should serve God faithfully while doing
the normal things they were already doing when God changed
them.

25 I am now moving on to speak about those who have not
gotten married. On this issue, I do not have anything that the
Lord said to tell you. However, I will tell you what I think
is best. *I do this* because God has acted kindly towards me
by making me a trustworthy *teacher*. 26 What I suggest is that
people should not change how they are living. I say this because
I know that dangerous things are going to happen soon. 27 Some
people have gotten engaged. They should not separate. Other
people have never gotten engaged. They should not try to
become engaged. 28 However, a single man or woman who gets
married does not sin. I only advise you against getting married
because people who get married will experience troubles while
they live.

29 My fellow believers, what I am about to tell you *is
important*. The end times are not far away. Therefore, until
then, each man who has a wife should live like a man who
does not have a wife. 30 Each person who cries should live like
a person who does not cry. Each person who is glad should
live like a person who is not glad. Each person who acquires
anything should live like a person who does not own anything.
31 Each person who utilizes worldly things should live like a
person who does not utilize these things. *You should act in
these ways* because God will soon abolish the worldly way of
doing things.

32 I want you to care about few things. Single men care
about what they can do to serve the Lord. 33 On the other hand,
married men care about worldly things, particularly how they
can serve their wives. Because of this, they care about two
different things*: serving their wives and serving the Lord*. Single
women and women who have never gotten married 34 care
about what they can do to serve the Lord. Their goal is to
be completely holy. On the other hand, married women care
about worldly things, particularly how they can serve their
husbands. 35 I have said these things because I think they are
helpful for you. I do not want to force you into acting in only
one way. Rather, I want you to be able to act honorably and
serve the Lord well and attentively.

36 In some cases, an engaged man may consider that he
might act in sexually improper ways with his fiancée. Further,
his fiancée may be fully mature and ready to have sex. In these
cases, here is what to do: the man should marry his fiancé. He
does not sin *when he does this*, and the two of them should get
married. 37 In other cases, an engaged man may have made
up his mind, and no person or thing has forced him *not to
marry*. He can control what he desires, and he has decided for
himself *not to marry*. In this case, he can rightly choose not to
marry his fiancée. 38 In the end, any man who gets married to
his fiancée does a good thing. Further, any man who does not
get married *to his fiancée* does a better thing.

39 Wives must stay married to their husbands unless their
husbands die. Then, they may marry any believing man whom
they want to marry. 40 However, *I think that* any woman whose
husband has died will be more blessed if she does not marry
again. While that is my opinion, I think that God's Spirit speaks
through me.

8 I am now moving on to speak about meat that someone
has offered to another god. All of us *who believe* do know
what is true about other gods. However, knowing *what is true
often* makes people proud. It is loving others that really helps
other believers. 2 All people who reckon that they understand
something do not yet understand it in the way that they should
understand it. 3 However, God understands and cares for all
people who love him.

4 Now *I will go back to speaking* about whether to eat meat
that someone has offered to another god. We *who believe in
God* understand that other gods do not really exist. In fact,
we understand that the only god is the one God. 5 It is true
that there are many things that are in heaven or on earth that
people call "gods." In this way, many "gods" and "lords" exist.
6 However, we *who believe* acknowledge one God, who is the
Father. He created everything, and we exist to honor him.
We also acknowledge one Lord, who is Jesus the Messiah. He
created everything with the Father, and we exist by means of
what he does *for us*.

7 However, some people do not fully understand *what I have
said*. They used to worship other gods in the past, and they
incompletely understand what is right and wrong. When they
eat meat that someone has offered to another god, they feel
guilty. 8 Now food does not connect us with God. Those who
do not eat *certain foods* do not miss out *on anything from God*.
Also, those who do eat *certain foods* do not receive something
extra *from God*. 9 However, you need to be careful about how
you live if you know *that food is not significant*. How you
live should not cause someone who incompletely understands
what is right and wrong to struggle *to follow Jesus*. 10 *You
need to be careful* because fellow believers might observe a
believer who knows *what is true about other gods* sitting down
to eat *meat* in another god's temple. Those fellow believers,
who incompletely understand what is right and wrong, will
become confident that they also can eat meat that someone
has offered to another god. 11 As a result, by acting based on
what you know *is true about other gods*, you harm others who
incompletely understand what is right and wrong. These are
fellow believers, and the Messiah died for them. 12 When you
act in these ways, you sin against fellow believers by leading
them, who incompletely understand what is right and wrong,
to do what they think is wrong. *When do you this,* you sin
against the Messiah too. 13 Consequently, in cases where what
I eat would lead a fellow believer to sin, I will never ever eat
meat again*, whether someone has offered it to another god or not*.
This way, I do not lead any of my fellow believers to sin.

9 I am not bound *to eat only certain foods*. Our Lord Jesus
sent me to represent him, and I have seen him *with my
own eyes*. God has united us to the Lord, and I have worked
hard for you because of that. 2 Other people may not think
that the Messiah sent me to represent him, but you do know
that. *You know that* because you proved that the Messiah sent
me when God united you to the Lord.

3 I will now defend myself against anyone who wants to
question *whether the Messiah sent* me *to represent him or not*.
4 Barnabas and I certainly can require you to send us food
and drink. 5 We certainly can travel around with a wife who
believes in the Messiah. This is what the others whom the
Messiah has sent to represent him do, including Peter and the

Lord's brothers. 6 It is not true that Barnabas and I are the only ones *who represent the Messiah* who must work *to support ourselves*. 7 No soldiers ever pay with their own money to serve in the army. No farmers plant vines and then do not eat what the vines produce. No shepherds take care of sheep and then do not drink the milk that they produce.

8 What I am arguing does not depend on merely human thinking. Rather, you can read what I am arguing in the law *of Moses*. 9 Here is what Moses wrote in the law of Moses: "You should not keep an ox from eating the grain when it is helping you separate grain from chaff." God is not primarily interested in oxen*, however*. 10 Rather, God speaks mostly about us *in this law*. God had Moses write this command for us because any person who plows a field should expect to receive some of the crop. Any person who separates the grain from the wheat stalks should also expect to receive some of the crop. 11 We proclaimed the good news to you as if we were planting spiritual seeds. Because of that, it would be normal for us to receive financial help from you as if we were receiving some of the crop that grew from the seed that we planted. 12 Other people have received financial support from you. Barnabas and I deserve even more to receive it from you.

However, we have not asked for any support from you. Rather, we choose to go without things so that we will not keep the good news about the Messiah from spreading. 13 Surely you know that the people who perform their duties in the temple eat some of the food that people offer in the temple. More specifically, the priests who offer sacrifices on the altar receive part of what people bring to them to offer on the altar. 14 Similarly, the Lord instructed that anyone who preaches the good news should make their living from *preaching* the good news.

15 However, I have not asked for any of this support from you. Further, I am not now writing to you to ask for support for myself. I would prefer to die rather than to have someone take away what I can boast about. 16 Now I cannot boast about preaching the good news, because God requires me to preach it. Indeed, were I to stop preaching the good news, God would discipline me. 17 God would reward me if I preached the good news because I myself chose to. However, I have not chosen to do so, for God himself has told me what I need to do. 18 God still rewards me, however. *He does so* when I preach the good news without requiring people to pay me. I tell people about the good news in this way so that I do not misuse what I am able to require because I preach the good news.

19 *Since I preach the good news for free,* I do not need to serve any humans. However, I choose to serve all humans so that I can help more of them *believe in the Messiah*. 20 When I am with Jewish people, I act like a Jewish person. That way, I can help Jewish people *believe in the Messiah*. When I am with people who think they need to obey Moses' law, I act like someone who thinks that he needs to obey Moses' law. While I myself know that I do not need to obey Moses' law, *I act this way* so that I can help the people who think they need to obey Moses' law *believe in the Messiah*. 21 When I am with people who do not obey Moses' law, I act like someone who does not obey Moses' law. *I act this way* so that I can help the people who do not obey Moses' law *to believe in the Messiah*. Of course, I do obey God's law, since I do what the Messiah commanded. 22 When I am with people who incompletely understand what is right and wrong, I act like someone who incompletely understands what is right and wrong. *I act this way* so that I can help the people who incompletely understand what is right and wrong *to believe in the Messiah*. *As you can see,* when I am with any people, I act like they do so that God might work through all the things I do in order to save some of them. 23 As you can see, I act in all these ways because I want people to believe in the good news. *Further, I do these things* in order that I too will receive what God has promised in the good news.

24 Surely you know that all the runners participate in a race, but in the end only one runner wins the race and takes the reward for winning. When you serve God, it is much like this kind of race. You need to work hard to gain what God has promised to you, just like the runner runs hard to win the race. 25 All athletes carefully control everything that they do *so that they can win*. They compete for a crown made of leaves that will fall apart. We, however, *control ourselves so that we can receive what God has promised to give us,* which will last forever. 26 Because of this, I am like a runner who runs straight toward the finish line. I am like a boxer who strikes an opponent without missing. 27 I totally control my body and make it serve me. I do that because I do not want to proclaim the good news to other people but then find that God does not approve of me.

10 Now I want to remind you, fellow believers, that our Jewish ancestors all followed God when he appeared to them in a cloud. They all walked through the Red Sea when God made a dry path for them through the water. 2 *It was as if* someone baptized all of them so that they belonged to Moses. *This happened* when they followed the cloud and walked through the Red Sea. 3 All of them together ate the special food that God gave them. 4 All of them together drank the special water that God gave them. This happened when they drank the water that came out of the special rock that God provided and that followed them. That water was something that the Messiah gave. 5 However, most of our Jewish ancestors did not please God. *You can tell that this is true* because they died while they traveled through the desert places.

6 The things that happened to them illustrate how we should act. Through what happened to them, God warns us to avoid doing what is evil, such as the evil things that they did. 7 You should not worship idols, which is what some of our Jewish ancestors did. *You can tell that they worshiped idols,* because Moses wrote, "The Israelites started eating and drinking and then worshiped other gods in sexually immoral ways." 8 We should not have improper sex, which is what some of our Jewish ancestors did. Because they did this, 23,000 of them died during one day. 9 We should not challenge the Lord, which is what some of our Jewish ancestors did. Because they did this, snakes killed them. 10 You should not complain, which is what some of our Jewish ancestors did. Because they did this, a dangerous spiritual being *whom God sent* killed them.

11 Those things that our ancestors experienced illustrate *how we should act*. In fact, someone wrote down what happened to them so that we can learn from them, since we are the ones who are experiencing the last days. 12 As those stories illustrate, any people who think that they firmly believe *in the Messiah* should make sure that they do not fail *to follow the Messiah*. 13 Other people have experienced the things that

tempt you. Further, God will act faithfully. He will not let you
experience anything that tempts you if you cannot resist it.
Rather, when something tempts you, he will give you what
you need to faithfully resist it.

14 Because *of that I have said*, fellow believers whom I love,
intentionally avoid worshiping other gods. 15 I am talking
this way because I think that you are reasonable people. You
should decide for yourselves whether what I am about to say
is right or wrong. 16 When we drink the wine that we bless
in the Lord's Supper, we together connect ourselves with the
Messiah's blood. When we eat the bread, we together connect
ourselves with the Messiah's body. 17 We use one loaf of bread
in the Lord's Supper, and we all together eat pieces of that one
loaf. Because we do this, we join ourselves together like we
all make up one body.

18 Take the people of Israel as an example. The people who
offered something would eat some of what they offered. This
means that they connected themselves with the altar*, where
the priest would present the rest of what they offered to God*. 19 I
am arguing, therefore, that meat that someone has offered
to another god and other gods themselves are not powerful
or important. 20 However, *you should know* that when those
who do not worship God offer sacrifices, they are offering
them to evil spiritual beings, not to God. I want you to avoid
connecting yourselves with evil spiritual beings. 21 You cannot
drink wine that belongs to the Lord and also wine that belongs
to evil spiritual beings. You cannot eat food that belongs to
the Lord and also food that belongs to evil spiritual beings.
22 Those who do both of those things should expect the Lord
to act jealously against them. Further, we are certainly less
powerful than he is.

23 *Some of you say,* "I can do anything and not become
guilty." However, *I say that* some things are not helpful *to
anybody*. *Again, some of you say,* "I can do anything and not
become guilty." However, *I say that* some things do not help you
grow. 24 Do not work hard to gain what is best for yourselves.
Rather, *you should work hard to gain* what is best for other
people. 25 You can eat any food that you buy in the public
marketplace. You do not need to find out *where it came from*
so that you know whether it is right or wrong *to eat it*. 26 *You
can do this* because *David wrote*, "The earth and everything
connected with it belongs to the Lord." 27 At some point, people
who do not believe may ask you *to eat with them*, and you
may decide to *do so*. When this happens, you can eat all the
food that they serve you. You do not need to find out *where it
came from* so that you know whether it is right or wrong *to eat
it*. 28 (However, someone might tell you that a person offered
the food to a god. In this situation, you should not eat the
food. *You should act in this way* to benefit the person who told
you *about the food* and because of knowing what is right and
wrong. 29 By "knowing what is right and wrong," I mean what
the other person knows, not what you know.) In general, what
another person thinks is right or wrong should not keep me
from doing what I am able to do. 30 As long as I am grateful
to God when I eat any food, no one should speak badly about
me because of something for which I thanked God.

31 To summarize, whenever you eat or drink anything, and
indeed whenever you do anything, you should always behave
so that you and others honor God. 32 Do not behave in ways
that discourage Jewish people, non-Jewish people, or fellow
believers from trusting the Messiah. 33 I illustrate *how to do
this* with how I live. I always act in ways that everyone around
me accepts. I do not work hard to gain what is best for myself.
Rather, *I work hard to gain what is best* for other people. *I do
this* in order that God will save them.

11 Do what I do, just like I do what Christ did.
2 I commend you because you always think of what I
teach and do and because you carefully believe and do what
I taught you to believe and do. 3 I am telling you that each
man comes from the Messiah. A wife comes from her husband.
Finally, the Messiah comes from God. 4 Men might cover their
heads when they pray or proclaim what God says. Those who
do this shame the person they come from: *the Messiah*. 5 Now
women might bare their heads when they pray or proclaim
what God says. Those who do this shame the people they
come from: *their husbands*. *You can tell that this is true,* because
a woman who bares her head is like a woman whose hair
someone has shaved off. 6 In fact, someone should cut short the
hair of any woman who bares her head. Since people shame
a woman who has short hair, women should not bare their
heads. 7 Further, on the one hand, men should not cover their
heads, because they represent and honor God. On the other
hand, wives honor their husbands. 8 *You can tell that this is true*
because God did not make the man Adam from the woman
Eve. Rather, he made the woman Eve from the man Adam.
9 Another *way that you can tell that this is true is* because God
did not make the man Adam for the sake of the woman Eve.
Rather, he made the woman Eve for the sake of the man Adam.
10 Because *wives honor their husbands*, women should control
what they wear on their heads. *They should do this also* because
of the powerful spiritual beings.

11 Despite all that, when God unites people to the Messiah,
women cannot exist without men, and men cannot exist without
women. 12 In fact, while the woman *Eve* did come from the
man *Adam*, men only exist because women give birth to them.
However, everything that exists*, including men and women,*
comes from God. 13 You yourselves should decide whether
women who pray to God without covering their heads act
appropriately or not. 14 You can learn from observing the way
things are that it is dishonorable for men to have long hair.
15 However, *you can also learn from observing the way things
are* that it is honorable for women to have long hair. *This is*
because God has given women their long hair, which functions
to cover *their heads*. 16 Now if any people consider arguing
about what I have said, neither we nor God's churches allow
women to uncover their heads *when they pray or prophesy*.

17 I am now going to instruct you about another topic, and
I cannot commend you in this area. *I cannot commend you,*
because you harm fellow believers instead of helping them
when you gather as fellow believers. 18 Here is the first thing
I will speak about: some people have told me that you split
up into rival groups when you gather as fellow believers to
worship God. I believe that this is partly true. 19 *I believe it*
because there need to be disagreements in your group. That
way, it may become clear *to everyone* whom in your group
God considers to be acceptable *to him*. 20 Because of these
divisions, you are not actually eating the Lord's Supper when
you gather as fellow believers together *to eat*. 21 During your
meals, some people are eating their own food before *others*

receive some. In this way, some people do not have enough to eat, while other people are getting drunk. 22 You act in these ways despite the fact that you can eat food and drink wine in your own houses. Instead, though, you think contemptuously about God's church. In particular, you shame people who have less than you do. You should already know what I will say to you. I am not going to commend you for doing these things. I will definitely not do that!

23 I have already told you what I learned from the Lord about the night when Judas handed the Lord Jesus over *to the authorities, who executed him*. During that night, Jesus picked up a loaf of bread. 24 He thanked God *for the loaf of bread*, and then he tore it into pieces *so that the disciples could eat it*. Then he said, "This *bread* is my body, which I am offering for your sake. Repeat what I have done so that you remember *how I am offering* myself *for you*." 25 Just as *he picked up the loaf of bread*, he also picked up the cup *of wine* after they had eaten. He said, "This cup *of wine* is the new covenant *that I am inaugurating* with my blood. Repeat what I have done whenever you drink from this cup of wine so that you remember *how I am offering* myself *for you*." 26 This means that, until the Lord comes back, whenever *you participate in the Lord's Supper by* eating this bread and drinking *wine from* this cup, you announce that the Lord has died.

27 So then, some people, while participating in the Lord's Supper, might eat the bread or drink *wine from* the cup in a way that dishonors *the Messiah*. God will hold them responsible for *how they have acted against* the Lord's body and blood. 28 To avoid that, believers should carefully consider how they are behaving. Then, they can eat the bread and drink *wine* from the cup. 29 *You should carefully consider how you are behaving,* because some people eat and drink *during the Lord's Supper* but do not recognize *that God has united fellow believers to the Lord as closely as if they were* the Lord's body. How those people eat and drink *during the Lord's Supper* will result in God punishing them. 30 Because *people in your group have acted in that improper way*, many of them have gotten sick and some of them have died. 31 So, we believers really should carefully consider how we are acting *before we participate in the Lord's Supper*. Then, God will not punish us. 32 However, when the Lord does punish us, he does it to train us. That way, God does not include us when he declares everyone who does not believe in the Messiah to be guilty.

33 In conclusion, my fellow believers, when you gather together to eat *the Lord's Supper*, you should not start eating until everyone has received food and drink. 34 Any people who are *so* hungry *that they start eating before everyone has received food and drink* should eat at their own houses. That way, when you gather together as fellow believers, God will not punish you.

I have not said everything that I need to say. So, I will instruct you about those things whenever I visit you.

12 I am now moving on to speak about how God's Spirit specially empowers believers. I want to inform you, my fellow believers, about these things. 2 You remember *what you did* when you were not believers. You worshiped other gods. These other gods cannot even speak, but you did whatever *wrong things people told you to do* to worship these other gods. 3 So then, I am informing you that a person who curses Jesus does not speak with the power of God's Spirit. On the other hand, a person who says that Jesus is Lord must be speaking with the power of the Holy Spirit.

4 The Spirit empowers people in many different ways, but there is only one Spirit. 5 People serve the Lord in many different ways, but there is only one Lord. 6 People work for God in many different ways, but there is only one God. He is the one who empowers all people to function in all these ways.

7 Each believer receives from God specific ways in which God's Spirit works through them to help fellow believers. 8 For example, God's Spirit empowers some believers to speak wisely. Other believers can speak knowledgeably, and the same Spirit empowers them to do this. 9 The same Spirit empowers some believers to trust God in special ways. The same Spirit empowers other believers to heal others. 10 Other believers can do powerful things. Other believers can speak messages from God. Other believers can decide whether something comes from God's Spirit or not. Some believers can speak unknown languages. Other believers can interpret those unknown languages. 11 The same Spirit works to empower believers to do all these things. There is just one Holy Spirit, and he decides how to work specifically through each believer.

12 *We consider* a person's body to be a unity, but the body has many body parts. So, all those body parts, no matter how many there are, together make up one body. *We can think about* the Messiah in a similar way. 13 Now, *God has united us together as closely as if* we made up one body. *This happened when* people baptized us, with the result that we have the one Spirit. *We make up this one body* even though some of us are Jewish people and others are non-Jewish people, and even though some of us are slaves and others are free people. Further, we all shared in this one Spirit just like we all shared a drink from one cup.

14 As you know, one body part does not make up a body. Rather, it takes many body parts *to make up a body*. 15 Imagine that your foot *could talk to you, and it* said that, since it was not a hand, it could not belong to your body. That reason does not keep it from belonging to your body. 16 Again, imagine that your ear *could talk to you, and it* said that, since it was not an eye, it could not belong to your body. That reason does not keep it from belonging to your body. 17 Imagine that only eyes made up your body. You would not be able to hear anything! Imagine that only ears made up your body. You would not be able to smell anything! 18 But here is what is true *about the body*: God decided how each body part should function, and he connected each body part to the body for a specific reason. 19 Imagine that all *your body parts* were the same *kind of* body part. You would not really have a body at all! 20 But here is what is true *about the body*: many *different* body parts exist. However, *together they make up* one body. 21 Imagine again that your body parts could talk. An eye would never tell a hand, "I do not need you." Similarly, a head would never tell feet, "I do not need you." 22 Rather, what is true is that the body parts that we consider to be the delicate ones are actually necessary. 23 Further, we more highly value the body parts that we think of as less valuable. We treat our indecent body parts more decently, 24 but we do not treat our decent body parts in any special way. In the end, God is the one who put all the body parts together into one body, and he makes

the less valuable parts more valuable. 25 *God did this* in order
that the body would not split up into different parts. Instead,
the body parts work together and do not privilege one body
part over other body parts. 26 So, all the body parts hurt when
one body part is hurting. All the body parts celebrate when
somebody praises one body part.

27 *I say all this because* you all are *like* the Messiah's body.
Each of you is *like* a body part *in that body*. 28 In line with
that, God has specially empowered the people who worship
him. First, some people are those whom God has sent to
represent the Messiah. Second, some people proclaim what
God says. Third, some people teach other believers. Further,
some people do powerful things. Others can heal others, help
other believers, guide the group of believers, or speak unknown
languages. 29 Only some believers are those whom God has
sent to represent the Messiah. Only some proclaim what God
says. Only some teach other believers. Only some do powerful
things. 30 Only some heal others. Only some speak unknown
languages. Only some interpret *those unknown languages*. 31 Now
I want you to eagerly seek the most beneficial gifts. Next, I
will tell you about the very best thing you can do.

13 Imagine that I could speak many human and angelic
languages, but I did not love others. I would be *able to
make much noise,* like a loud metal instrument*, but I would not
be helping anyone*. 2 Again, imagine that I could proclaim what
God says, that I could comprehend and know everything, and
that I believed so much that I could make mountains change
places. But imagine further that I did not love others. Because
of that, nothing else matters. 3 Yet again, imagine that I gifted
everything I owned *to people who needed food*, and that I did not
protect my own body, with the result that people would honor
me. But imagine further that I did not love others. *Because I
did not love others*, none of those things that I did help me at
all.

4 Those who love others wait patiently and act graciously.
They do not wish that others would lose the good things that
they have. They do not say great things about themselves or act
like they are great. 5 They do not do shameful things. They do
not care only about themselves. They do not quickly become
angry. They do not keep track of what others have done wrong.
6 They do not celebrate when people do bad things. Instead,
they celebrate what is true. 7 They always put up with *others*.
They always believe *that God will do what is best*, and they are
always confident *that God will do what he has promised*. They
always persevere *when bad things happen*.

8 Those who love others never cease doing so. However,
someday people will no longer proclaim what God says.
Someday, people will stop speaking unknown languages.
Someday, people will no longer know special things. 9 *These
things will no longer happen,* because we know special things
incompletely, and we proclaim what God says incompletely.
10 So, when we experience what is complete *when Jesus comes
back*, what is incomplete will no longer matter. 11 *Here is an
analogy:* when we were young, we talked as children talk.
We thought as children think. We made decisions as children
make decisions. But when we grew up, we stopped acting as
children do. 12 Right now, we see *God* indirectly, as if we saw
a reflection in a mirror. When *Jesus comes back*, however, *we
will see God* in person. Right now, we know *God* incompletely.
When *Jesus comes back*, however, we will know God just as
much as he knows us. 13 In the end, there are three things that
we will always keep doing. We will believe *in the Messiah*,
confidently expect *God to do what he has promised*, and love
God and other people. However, loving *God and others* is the
most important out of these three things.

14 You should seek to love others always. Also, you should
eagerly seek that the Holy Spirit specially empowers
you, particularly that you might be able to proclaim what
God says. 2 *You should desire this* because people who talk
in unknown languages are talking with God, not with other
people. *This is* because no one knows what they are saying.
Rather, they say secret things as the Holy Spirit empowers
them. 3 On the other hand, those who proclaim what God says
do talk to other people. They help other believers become
stronger, urge other believers to act in proper ways, and comfort
other believers. 4 People who talk in unknown languages help
themselves become stronger. On the other hand, people who
proclaim what God says help the group of believers become
stronger.

5 I want all of you to talk in unknown languages. What I
want even more, however, is that you might proclaim what God
says. Proclaiming what God says is more important and helpful
than talking in unknown languages. Of course, if someone
explains *the unknown language*, then it *too* can help believers
become stronger.

6 Here *is what I am trying to say*, my fellow believers:
imagine that I*, for example,* visited you, and I talked in
unknown languages. I would not be helping you at all. To
actually help you, I would need to reveal things *to you*, help
you know things, proclaim what God says *to you*, or teach
you. 7 Even things that are not alive but that we use to make
sounds *illustrate what I am saying*. *When someone plays* a flute
or a harp, the instrument must make various distinct sounds.
Otherwise, no one would understand what a person plays on
the flute or the harp, *since all the sounds would be the same*.
8 Further, suppose that a trumpet did not make clear sounds
when a person used it to warn others. No one would know that
they needed to get ready to fight the enemy. 9 Whenever you
do not use words that other people recognize when you talk,
you are like *an instrument that does not make a clear sound*.
No one will comprehend what you are saying, and you will
be *like* a person who talks to nobody. 10 It seems to be true
that a great many varieties of languages exist. Every one of
them communicates clearly. 11 So, when I*, for example,* do not
understand how a language communicates, I am a stranger
to everyone who speaks *that language*, and they are strangers
to me. 12 So, here is what you must do: because you desire
that the Holy Spirit specially empowers you, you should strive
more and more *to use what the Holy Spirit empowers you to do*
to help the group of believers become stronger.

13 Therefore, those who talk in unknown languages should
ask God to enable them to explain *what they are saying*. 14 When
I*, for example,* pray *to God* in an unknown language, only part of
me is praying since I am not thinking about what I am saying.
15 Therefore, here is what *you and I should do*. We should pray
to God not only with just some parts of us but also by thinking
about what we are saying. We should sing *to God* not only
with just some parts of us but also by thinking about what

we are singing. 16 Imagine that people who do not understand *unknown languages* hear you praising God when you are using just some parts of you*, and you are not thinking about what you are saying*. Those people will not be able to participate when you praise God because they do not understand *the unknown language* that you are speaking. 17 In this situation, you praise God appropriately. However, you do not help other people become stronger. 18 I give thanks to God that I talk in unknown languages more than you all do. 19 However, when I gather together with fellow believers to worship God, I want to speak only a few words that I think about. In this way, I can teach other believers and *not just myself*. *It is better for me to do that* than *to say* a million words in an unknown language.

20 My fellow believers, I do not want you to be foolish *about these things, like* little children *are*. Rather, you should know much *about these things, like* a fully grown adult *does*. You should *only* be *like* little children by not doing what is wrong. 21 The prophet Isaiah wrote in the Scriptures what the Lord says,

> "I will talk to my people Israel
> by means of people who speak foreign languages.
> However, they will not listen to me in this way."

22 Therefore, talking in unknown languages signifies that God judges people who do not believe *in the Messiah*, not people who do believe *in the Messiah*. On the other hand, proclaiming what God says *signifies that God acts kindly toward* people who believe *in the Messiah*, not toward people who do not believe *in the Messiah*. 23 So, imagine that the whole group of believers gathered together to worship God, and all of you talked in unknown languages. Imagine further that people who do not understand *unknown languages* or who do not believe *in the Messiah* visit your group. They will tell *others* that you are crazy. 24 On the other hand, imagine that all of you proclaimed what God says. Imagine further that any people who do not believe *in the Messiah* or who do not understand *unknown languages* visit your group. Everything that you say will show them and confront them with *what they have done wrong*. 25 *In this way,* everyone will know the things that these *visitors* hide from others. In response, they will kneel down and worship God. They will proclaim *to others* that God truly is with you.

26 My fellow believers, here is what I mean. Whenever you gather together *to worship God*, each believer *has something to do*. Some sing songs, others teach, others reveal things, others speak in an unknown language, others interpret an unknown language. Believers should do all these things to help other believers become stronger. 27 When believers are talking in unknown languages, only two or three at most *should speak*. They should talk one after the other, and someone needs to explain *what they are saying*. 28 On the other hand, when believers gather to worship God and a person who can explain the unknown language is not there, everyone who can talk in unknown languages should keep quiet. Instead *of talking out loud*, they should talk *in unknown languages* privately to God.

29 Similarly, *around* two or three people who proclaim what God says should speak. Everyone else should decide whether *what they say* is correct or incorrect. 30 Now, whenever God reveals something to a person who is listening *to someone else proclaim what God says when believers gather together*, the person who is speaking should stop speaking. 31 *You should do that* so that everyone has a chance to proclaim what God says, one after the other. In that way, everyone learns something, and everyone becomes stronger. 32 Those who proclaim what God says control how and when they proclaim it. 33 *That is true* because what is peaceful and orderly, not what is disorderly, characterizes God.

I want you to act like all the *other* people whom God has set apart for himself act when they gather together to worship God. 34 Wives should keep quiet when believers gather together *and their husbands are speaking*. They should not talk but rather honor and obey *their husbands*. *They should do this* because that is what we find in *God's* law. 35 Now, when wives want to learn more *about what their husbands are saying*, they should ask their husbands questions in their own houses. *They should do this* because wives who talk when believers gather together *and their husbands are speaking* shame *themselves and their families*. 36 *If you dislike what I have said,* remember that you are not the source of what God has said, and you are not the only ones who have heard *and believed what God has said*. 37 All people who consider themselves to be those who proclaim what God says or those whom the Holy Spirit has specially empowered must recognize that the Lord himself requires what I am writing to you. 38 On the other hand, you should not recognize *as authoritative* any people who do not recognize *that the Lord requires what I have said*.

39 In the end, my fellow believers, eagerly seek to proclaim what God says. Further, do not prohibit people from speaking unknown languages. 40 Finally, *when you gather together to worship God*, you should always act in honorable and orderly ways.

15 Next, I am informing you, fellow believers, about the good news that I told you about. You learned this good news *from me*, and you firmly believe it. 2 When you continue to firmly believe the message that I preached to you, God saves you by means of that message. Otherwise, you believed *the message* for nothing.

3 Here is one of the first things that I told you, which I learned *from the Lord*: the Messiah died *on the cross* to take away our sins, just as *the authors of* the holy books *wrote*. 4 People buried him, but during the third day *after that*, God made him alive again, just as *the authors of* the holy books *wrote*. 5 He appeared to Peter and then to the *rest of Jesus'* 12 *closest followers*. 6 After that, he appeared at one time to greater than 500 fellow believers. Although some of these people have died, almost all of them are still alive. 7 After that, he appeared to James and then to everyone whom he sent to represent him. 8 Finally, after he appeared to all of them, he appeared to me also. So, *because I became one whom Jesus sent to represent him after everyone else*, I am like a baby that was born in an unusual way. 9 In fact, I am less significant and honorable than every other person whom the Messiah sent to represent him. Indeed, since I tried to destroy those who believe in the Messiah, I do not deserve it when others call me one whom the Messiah sent to represent him. 10 However, God graciously made me one whom the Messiah sent to represent him. Further, what he has given me has resulted in great things. In fact, I worked harder than all the other *ones whom the Messiah sent to represent him*. Of course, it was not really I *who worked so hard*. Instead,

it was God graciously working through me *who did so much*.
11 In the end, both I and the other apostles proclaim the good
news that I have described, and you trusted this good news.

12 Because all believers say that God made the Messiah alive
again, no one in your group should be claiming that people
who have died will not live again. 13 Suppose *that it were true*
that people who have died will not live again. *In that case,*
God did not make the Messiah alive again. 14 Suppose *that it*
is true that God did not make the Messiah alive again. In that
case, it was for no reason that we proclaimed *the good news*
and you believed it. 15 Further, we would be people who tell
lies about God, because we declared before God that he made
the Messiah alive again when he really did not. This would
all be true were God not to make those who have died alive
again. 16 *You can tell that this is true when you* suppose that God
does not make people who have died alive again. *In that case,*
God did not make even the Messiah alive again. 17 Suppose
that it is true that God did not make the Messiah alive again.
In that case, you believed *the good news* for no reason, and sin
continues to control you. 18 In that case again, the believers
who have died will never live again. 19 Suppose that we can
confidently expect the Messiah *to help us* only before we die.
In that case, all people should feel sorry for us more than *they*
feel sorry for anyone else.

20 But here is what is true: God has made the Messiah alive
again, and he is the first of those who have died *whom God will*
make alive again. 21 *You can tell that this is true,* because people
die through what the one man *Adam* did. So also people who
have died will live again through what the one man *Jesus* did.
22 What I mean is that, just as all people end up dying because
God united them to Adam, in the same way all *believers* will
live again because God unites them to the Messiah. 23 Now, all
people *who will live again* do so in turn: first the Messiah and
then those who belong to the Messiah when he comes *back*
again. 24 After that, what everything that God has created is
waiting for *will happen*. At that time, the Messiah will get rid of
everyone and everything that rules and governs and controls.
Then, he will present God, *who is our* Father, with the kingdom
so that God rules over everything. 25 Here is how *that works*: God
has decided that the Messiah will rule until whenever he has
conquered all those who oppose him. 26 The last thing that
opposes Christ that he will get rid of is that people die. 27 Now,
David wrote, "he made him conquer everything that opposes
him." Of course, "everything" does not include God, who is
the one who "made him conquer everything." 28 So, after he
has conquered everything, then God the Son will submit to
the one who made him conquer everything. In this way, God
will conquer and rule all things.

29 Now, consider people who baptize others to help those
who are dead. Further, suppose again that God never makes
people who have died alive again. *In that case,* there is no
reason for people to baptize others to help those who have
died. 30 Even more, *in that case,* there is no reason for we *who*
proclaim the good news to constantly endanger ourselves *as we*
do. 31 Indeed, I risk dying very frequently. I swear *that this is*
true by how I boast about you, fellow believers, which I do
because God has united all of us to the Messiah, *who is* Jesus
our Lord. 32 Suppose that I was thinking about merely human
things while I struggled against those who opposed me when
I visited the city of Ephesus. *In that case, struggling against*
them does not benefit me at all. Suppose again that God does
not make people who have died alive again. *In that case,* we
should *do what many people say to do*: eat *food*, and drink *wine*,
because we will die very soon. 33 You should not believe what
is wrong. *This popular saying is true:* "Evil friends lead astray
a person who normally does what is proper." 34 I want you to
start acting alertly and properly. You should not keep doing
what is wrong. *I command these things* because some people in
your group do not know God. I say that in order to make you
feel ashamed

35 Now a person may ask about the way in which the people
who have died live again and about what form they will take.
36 *If you do not know the answers to those questions,* you are not
thinking clearly! *Just think about this:* a seed that you put in the
ground must die before it can grow. 37 *Speaking about* a seed
that you put in the ground, *you know that* it is not in the form of
the plant. Rather, it is just the seed. This is true whether *we are*
speaking about wheat or some other crop. 38 Indeed, God makes
seeds grow into the forms that he chooses, and each kind of
seed has a specific form *into which it grows*. 39 The physical
parts of different living beings vary. For example, humans,
mammals, birds, and fish all have different kinds of physical
parts. 40 Some things exist in heaven, and other things exist on
earth. The forms of things in heaven are glorious in one way,
while the forms of things on earth are glorious in another way.
41 *Further,* the sun, moon, and stars are glorious in different
ways. In fact, each star is glorious in its own specific way.

42 Here is the way *all that applies to how* people who have
died live again. People put a decaying body into the ground,
but God makes it alive again so that it can never die. 43 People
put a body that receives no respect into the ground, but God
makes it alive again so that everyone respects it. People put
a frail body into the ground, but God makes it alive again
so that it is strong. 44 People put a body that belongs to this
world into the ground, but God makes it alive again so that it
belongs to the world that God will renew. Just as some bodies
belong to this world, so some bodies belong to the world that
God will renew.

45 *You can tell that this is true* because Moses wrote, "God
made the first human, Adam, as a living being who belonged to
this world." *On the other hand, Jesus, who is like* another Adam,
now belongs to the world that God will renew and gives life to
others. 46 Now *the first Adam's* body that belongs to this world
existed first, and only after that does *the last Adam's body* exist
that belongs to the world that God will renew. 47 *Adam, who*
represents the first *kind of* human, belonged on the earth. *In*
fact, God made him from dust. *On the other hand, Jesus, who*
represents the second *kind of* human, belongs in heaven. 48 All
people who belong on the earth are like Adam. All those who
belong in heaven are like Jesus. 49 Our bodies currently are
like *Adam's body* that belongs to this world. In the same way,
we should live in such a way that our bodies will eventually
be like *Jesus' body,* which belongs to the world that God will
renew.

50 Listen to this, my fellow believers: human bodies as they
currently exist cannot participate in God's kingdom that lasts
forever, since they fall apart and die. 51 Pay attention! I am
going to tell you something that God has now revealed. Not
all of us will die, but God will transform all of us. 52 *He will*
transform us in one moment, as fast as a person blinks an eye.

This will happen when *an angel blows* the trumpet that signals that this world is ending. When *an angel* blows that trumpet, God will make those who have died live again so that they can never die, and he will transform everyone who still lives.
53 So, bodies that fall apart and die need to transform into bodies that last forever and can never die. 54 When our bodies that fall apart and die transform into bodies that last forever and can never die, at that time what the prophets wrote about will finally happen:

"God has made it so that people no longer die."
55 *Further,*
"When people die, this does not destroy or hurt them."

56 People die because sin causes them to die, and that happens because the law specifies dying as the penalty for sin. 57 However, I praise God because he has enabled us to conquer *how we sin and die*. *He has done this* by means of what our Lord, Jesus the Messiah, has done.

58 So then, fellow believers whom I love, firmly believe *what you know is true*. Consistently serve the Lord more and more. *You should do these things* because you know that what you do *to serve the Lord* will result in great things, since God has united you to the Lord.

16 I am now moving on to speak about the money that I am collecting for God's people *who are Jewish*. I want you to do what I instructed the groups of believers *who live* in the region of Galatia to do. 2 During each Sunday, every one of you should take some money out of whatever you have earned and save it. That way, I will not need to collect money when I visit you. 3 Choose some trustworthy people from your group. When I visit you, I will have them take the money *that you have collected* to the city of Jerusalem. Also, I will give them letters *that say that I have authorized them*. 4 You and I may decide that I should go *to Jerusalem* as well. In that case, the people *whom you choose* will travel with me.

5 I am going to visit you after I travel through the region of Macedonia, which is the way I will be traveling. 6 In fact, I may spend some time with you, maybe the whole winter. That way, you can assist me in traveling to wherever I decide to go next. 7 *I am making these plans* because I would rather wait to be with you for a long time than visit you right now for just a short time. I confidently expect to do this as long as it is what the Lord wants *me to do*. 8 For now, I plan on remaining here in the city of Ephesus until the Pentecost festival. 9 *I am remaining here* because God has allowed me to effectively and freely proclaim the good news. *Further, I need to resist* the large number of people who are working against me.

10 Whenever Timothy arrives *in your city*, make sure that he feels safe when he is with you. *You should do this* because he serves the Lord *by proclaiming the good news*, just like I do.
11 So, do not treat him disrespectfully. Rather, act in a friendly way by assisting him in traveling back to me. *You should do this* because I anticipate that he will come back to me with the other believers *who are traveling to visit me*.

12 I am now moving on to speak about our fellow believer, Apollos. I firmly urged him to visit you with the other believers *who were traveling to visit you*. However, he firmly decided that it was not the right time to visit you. Instead, he will visit you when he thinks that it is the right time.

13 Watch out *for what is wrong*! Firmly believe *the good news*! Be courageous! Be determined! 14 You should focus on loving others whenever you think or do anything.

15 You know that those who live in the house of Stephanas were the first people *to believe the good news* in the region of Achaia. Further, they have chosen to serve God's people. I ask you, my fellow believers, 16 to honor and obey them and other people like them. In fact, *you should honor and obey* every person who works hard *to proclaim the good news* with us. 17 I am happy that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus arrived here. *That is* because they have allowed me to connect with you all even when you are not with me. 18 They encouraged and energized both me and you. Therefore, you should honor them and other people like them.

19 The groups of believers here in the region of Asia say hello to you. Aquila and Priscilla, as those whom God has also united to the Lord, say hello to you affectionately. The believers that gather in their house *also say hello to you*. 20 All the fellow believers *who are with me* say hello to you. Welcome each other in a loving way.

21 I, Paul, say hello *to you*. I am writing *these last words* myself *instead of having my scribe write them*. 22 May God curse everyone who fails to love the Lord. I pray that the Lord returns soon. 23 *I pray that* the Lord Jesus will be gracious to you. 24 I continue to love all of you, since God has united us together with Jesus the Messiah. May it be so!