

1 ☐ “Truth to Transform a Worldly Church”  
Studies in I Corinthians  
Study #2

“Spiritual Terrorism”

I Corinthians 3:1-8

2 ☐ ■ *“My brothers, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.”*  
*I Cor. 1:11*

- 3 ☐
- **The Problem:** The nature and seriousness of the problems in the Corinthian church
  - **The Pertinence:** The relevance of the Corinthian Church problem to today’s church
  - **The Prescription:** Paul’s antidote and his directions to avoid the disaster of a church split

4 ☐ **The Problem:**  
The nature and seriousness of the problems in the Corinthian church

- Two images of disaster and destruction
  - “Spiritual Terrorism”
  - “Divorce”

5 ☐ **The Pertinence:**  
The relevance of the Corinthian Church problem to today’s church

- The root problems are the same age-old problems which have plagued God’s people from the beginning - cf. I Cor. 10:6-12
- Paul likely addressed the problems in order of priority. And the first problem he addressed was the problem of “quarrels” [1:11].

6 ☐

- The reference to “grumbling” in I Cor. 10:10 is likely to Numbers 11:1-3.
- the fact that there were “quarrels” indicates there were bad attitudes; deeply rooted, stubborn “strongholds” in the hearts and souls of the Corinthians, which needed to be “torn down” (II Cor. 10:3-5). [Bad attitudes, or “sinful” attitudes such as pride, selfishness, hatred].

## 7 Four different factions

### The Paul party

- Some have suggested that this faction may have been the “traditionalists,”
- Or, the ones who took advantage of grace

### The Apollos party

- probably Greek believers who loved philosophy and the wisdom of men probably viewed Paul as dull and ineffective compared to Apollos

## 8

### The Cephas party

- Gal. 2:11-14 Paul had at one time confronted Peter because Peter wavered on the issue of circumcision for Gentile believers. The members of this faction in the Corinthian church were probably radically conservative Jewish converts who didn't want to wander too far from the law and Judaism.

### The Christ party

- This was likely a “holier than thou” club in the church at Corinth. This party projected a special air of superiority to all the others.

## 9 An Analysis Of This Situation

- The apostle Paul held a high view of the church  
[I Cor. 1:2; Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:1-8 & 14-16; Eph. 4:17-24]

- Paul viewed the situation in the Corinthian church as a formula for failure!

## 10 Formula for failure

- Pettiness
- Personal preference
- Prejudice
- Pretense
- Partisanship
- The results: division, fragmentation, destruction and ruin.

## 11 All of this was the result of worldly influences

- Note how the underlying causes of such divisions went back to the worldly influences which had crept into the church.
- [i.e. “personality cults,” factions, divisions based upon personal preferences; resulting in ‘party spiritedness’ and an “elitist attitude” - i.e the pride and arrogance of radical conservatives, and the judgmentalism of legalism”]

## 12

- The people at Corinth wanted to center the ministry of the church around various things [intellect, tradition, radical conservatism (legalism), or the personal control of the elitists.]

## 13 The Prescription

- While the Corinthians were trying to center the church around all of their special, personal interests, Paul was saying “No”!!!! - Back to the basics! The church is to be centered around Christ crucified and nothing else!

- 14  I Cor. 1:17 & 18 - It was not about baptism, or who baptized who, but about “*the cross of Christ.*”
- *For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*
- 15  I Cor. 2:1-5 - It was not about the wisdom of men, but about “*Jesus Christ and him crucified.*”
- *When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*
- 16  **Paul’s appeal to this divided church**
- I Cor. 1:10 - *I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.*
- 17  **The real problem**
- They had become distracted from what is truly of greatest importance - ‘Christ and him crucified’ - and they had lost perspective!!! They were no longer seeing ‘the big picture’!!! The Gospel! - And this overruled all their ‘petty’ differences!
- 18  **Four things to keep in mind when there is danger of division**
1. Keep the focus on the cross of Christ [i.e. the danger of losing perspective; or wrong priorities]
  2. Nurture the life of the Spirit [i.e. keep in step with the Spirit [Rom. 8:14]; do not grieve the Spirit [Eph. 4:30]; facilitate responses which are governed by the Spirit [Phil. 2:1-5]!
  3. Keep personal preferences and personalities in perspective [only God makes things grow - I Cor. 3:5-8].
  4. Support, encourage, and come under the God-ordained leadership in the church [i.e. yield to Christ’s plan for the church].