

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*Why Can't You People Get Along with Each Other*  
1 Corinthians 1:1-17

**Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.**

## **Leaders' Responsibilities:**

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## **Prior to this Coming Session:**

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

### **Bible Study Leader:**

Have enough sheets of paper or newsprint for each person in the group to write a "campaign slogan" as suggested in the Bible Study Plan. You will need markers or chalk for each person. Various colours would be good.

### **Worship Time Leader:**

To conclude the Worship Time, choose beforehand a song of thanksgiving and praise for the church to sing.

### **Music Sources:**

**Bind Us Together**, *The Worship Hymnal* #390; CCLI # 1228

**Change My Heart, O God**, *The Worship Hymnal* #529; CCLI #1565

**Let It Be Said of Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #597; CCLI #1855882

**We Are One In the Bond of Love**, *The Worship Hymnal* #387; CCLI#14459

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

## ***Why Can't You People Get Along with Each Other***

### **Focal Text**

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

### **Background Text**

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

### **Main Idea**

Divisions among God's people are incompatible with God's blessings on the church and God's intentions for the Christian life.

### **Questions to Explore**

How can people so blessed by God's grace sometimes be so divided from and hostile to one another?

### **Teaching Aim**

To guide the church to describe how divisions among Christians are incompatible with God's blessings on the church and God's intentions for the Christian life.

### **Gathering together:**

Sing:

**Bind Us Together**, *The Worship Hymnal* #390; CCLI # 1228

**Change My Heart, O God**, *The Worship Hymnal* #529; CCLI #1565

### **First thoughts:**

The title for today is **Why Can't You People Get Along with Each Other?** It is a provocative title. We may want to turn around and ask "Are you talking to me?" "Do you mean my church?" If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that we have been in situations with other Christian people where mistrust, misunderstanding and a lack of love have existed. We may have been part of the problem or just a person affected by it. The reality is that when Christians do not agree, when the church has no

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4

***Why Can't You People Get Along with Each Other?*** – 13-33-01-en

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unity, we have very little impact on the world around us. Today's study is a warning to avoid the problems faced by the Corinthian church. Far removed from us in culture and by time, its problems are still real to us as we live together as Christian brothers.

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### ***Why Can't You People Get Along with Each Other***

#### **Focal Text**

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

#### **Background Text**

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

#### **Main Idea**

Divisions among God's people are incompatible with God's blessings on the church and God's intentions for the Christian life.

#### **Questions to Explore**

How can people so blessed by God's grace sometimes be so divided from and hostile to one another?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To guide the church to describe how divisions among Christians are incompatible with God's blessings on the church and God's intentions for the Christian life.

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

Paul's introduction to the book of 1 Corinthians is an amazing affirmation for the Corinthian believers. Eugene Peterson in *The Message* describes God's church at Corinth as “Christians cleaned up by Jesus and set apart for a God-filled life”.

Paul goes on to say that “every time I think of you – and I think of you often! – I thank God for your lives of free and open access to God, given by Jesus. There's no end to what has happened in you – it's beyond speech, beyond knowledge. The evidence of Christ has been clearly verified in your lives” (*The Message*, 1 Corinthians 1).

These positive words must be firmly in our minds as we approach the following verses of the chapter. Paul knew that criticism is more easily received when one has been

affirmed and it is most easily received when it comes from one who obviously has our well-being in his/her heart and mind.

Paul, however, was not using a “technique” to accomplish his purpose. He genuinely rejoiced in what happened in the Corinthian believers and he is genuinely distressed that problems have arisen.

## **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series of Bible Study and Worship sessions (Bible Teaching #.....). The person who downloaded this session should have that material for you, as well.

The ancient city of Corinth was a Roman colony. It was the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in the empire (400,000 – two-thirds of whom were slaves). It was a wealthy, cosmopolitan, commercial center.

Morally the city was bankrupt. The main religion (the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of lust and love) was immoral and sensual. One thousand priestesses served daily as religious prostitutes in a temple built for her worship.

The members of the church were mostly Gentile converts with an immoral background.

William Barclay observes that in the first ten verses of the first chapter of I Corinthians the name of Jesus occurs no less than ten times. Paul takes Jesus and deals with a difficult situation in the light of his death/resurrection and his love.

Though the church at Corinth had many problems they were very dear to the heart of the apostle Paul. He expresses his gratitude to God for them (v 9) and recognizes they are spiritually enriched in speaking and in knowledge (v 5). In fact, he observes, “You do not lack any spiritual gift” and acknowledges that they eagerly await the return of the Lord Jesus (v 7). He does, however, recognize that there are problems in the church (namely division) and appeals to them that they all agree (v 10).

Paul wants the Corinthians to be “perfectly united in mind and thought” (v 10). The word translated “united” also can be translated “equipped”. Reference to “mind” has to do with the thought processes (thinking). “Thought” refers to purpose and intent, the act of the will in decision making.

Just as early believers became divided it is possible for believers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be divided. Often division takes place over differences in taste and opinion. We can learn from this passage how destructive division can be, and we can also get some help on how to maintain unity and harmony.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

The theme in this passage is “Division”. Notice several things about division in the church. A reference is made to Chloe who very likely was a well-known member of the church at Corinth. Apparently, some of Chloe’s family had brought news to Paul who was in Ephesus of divisions among the believers. Paul obviously trusted Chloe and her family to be unbiased in their reporting.

1. Division in the church is caused by people who are possessors, but not users of spiritual gifts. They are receivers, but not transmitters. Selfishness has shut off the power to transmit.
2. They have the gift of speech, but are not saying the same thing (vs. 5, 10).
3. They are called to participate in a fellowship (community), but are divided (vs. 9, 10).
4. They have the gift of knowledge, but do not form the same judgments about issues (vs. 5, 10)
5. Division in the church is caused by people who are partisan (vs. 11-12).

Paul emphasized freedom from the Law. Perhaps his followers had taken moral liberties that took them past God’s parameters.

Apollos was a great orator. Perhaps his followers were guilty of spiritual snobbery. People may have become enamoured with this gifted Alexandrian preacher whose rhetorical style and eloquence were well known.

Peter had a dominant Jewish background. Perhaps his followers were inclined to return to Old Testament worship. Peter’s flamboyant personality, softened by his relationship to Christ, probably led some to want him to be looked upon as the primary leader.

The Christ party. This party claimed to be the only true Christians. Their fault was not in saying they belonged to Christ, but that Christ belonged to them. Opposing the partisan spirit is right, but organizing another party to deal with it is wrong.

Division is healed with a reaffirmation of the headship of Jesus Christ (vs. 13-17)

Christ is not divided – one Lord.

Christ died for our sins – one faith.

We were baptized in the name of Christ – one baptism.

## **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**



As the leader of this study, focus on the affirmation Paul gave to the Corinthian church as well as his admonition to believers to avoid disunity. It is an amazing reality that we as Christians can go from the glorious experience of salvation to discouraging conflict with fellow believers. It happened in Corinth; it happens today. Studying this passage can help us examine our contributions to disunity and strengthen our resolve to not be a part of further problems.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***Why Can't You People Get Along with Each Other***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

#### **Background Text**

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

#### **Main Idea**

Divisions among God's people are incompatible with God's blessings on the church and God's intentions for the Christian life.

#### **Questions to Explore**

How can people so blessed by God's grace sometimes be so divided from and hostile to one another?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To guide the church to describe how divisions among Christians are incompatible with God's blessings on the church and God's intentions for the Christian life.

#### **Connect with Life:**

Division among people is common. We divide over politics, religion, preferences, likes and dislikes, and many other things. Even husbands and wives, parents and children, and good friends can find themselves divided. In a gathering of believers division is always a possibility. Therefore, taking a look at what the Bible says about division can be a helpful thing for all of us.

#### **Guide the Study:**

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***Why Can't You People Get Along with Each Other?* – 13-33-01-en**

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Begin the teaching of the passage with a strong affirmation of the Corinthian believers.

Have different people read Paul's words to them in 1 Corinthians 1-9 in more than one translation of the Bible.

Share this request with the group: Would each of you choose one of the phrases which would bring joy to your heart if it were addressed personally to you.

Tell the participants: Paul often begins his writing with the words, "I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus".

State: How powerful are the words, "***I always thank God for you***".

Emphasize: "When we are correcting a rebellious teenager, a sloppy employee or a fellow Christian, it is wise to focus first on positive aspects of their work and our relationship."

Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 1:7.

Pose this question: Have you noticed spiritual gifts in others? (ability to teach, etc.)  
Give them opportunity to respond.

Seek answers to this: Have any of you felt inferior when others exercise their gifts?

Invite answers: Have some of you noticed someone who seemed to think they were superior because of their gifts? Encourage them to be specific without giving names.

Explain to them how this can cause division. Emphasize how we all need each other and that each of us is important in the body of Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10.

Inquire: What does Paul do to make his corrections more acceptable to the people to whom he is writing? (Paul uses the words, "I appeal to you".)

Verbally list ways members of the class may have begun a conversation involving correction. ("You better shape up"; "I'm the boss here"; "I am so tired of your always doing...")

Explain: In verse 11, we find that Paul has learned of divisions in the group from "some from Chloe's household".

Encourage responses: What would you believe Chloe's role in the church to be for Paul to act on information from one of her household?

Request someone to read 1 Corinthians 1:11.

Ask what kinds of things people quarrel about. Give opportunity for examples to be given.

Share: Some things are useless to quarrel about – like taste and opinion. One can say, “This tastes wonderful!” Another could say, “It tastes awful!” Who is right?

Explain how many quarrels in churches are over tastes and opinions. People have divided over what colour of carpet to buy.

Look for responses to this: Are there other things that are useless to argue about? (One example might be the interpretation of a verse or verses in the Bible.) Ask for examples from the Bible. Give people opportunity to give other examples.

Ask: Do truths exist that are not debatable? Encourage them to give examples.

Encourage a brief discussion on this: How does agreeing about non-debatable things bring unity even when we disagree on debatable things? (Mutual acceptance and affirmation can help maintain unity. We are not in competition with each other. We are interdependent.)

Invite a different person to read v. 12.

Continue: What are the four groups into which the believers are divided?

Give a brief description of each group (as given in the background material).

**(Leader: See the instructions for the Bible Study Leader at the beginning of the material for today for the activity below.)**

Hand out strips of paper (newsprint will do) and assign participants to write a slogan to use in campaigning for one of the “candidates”. If your group is big enough, you may have two people working on one campaign slogan. (Suggestions: “Apollos the eloquent – He makes us think” “Peter the Rock – Chosen by Jesus” “Paul our founder and leader” or “Christ is the only one”). Allow a few minutes to write a slogan and then share with the group.

Comment: From our group activity, we can easily see how we can become involved with an idea, a person, a political party, or a worthy cause and lose perspective about how other people may be feeling.

Look for a response: What are Paul’s feelings about people seeing him as to be lifted up and followed?

Have someone read vs. 13-17.

State: In verse 17 Paul declares what his task is (to preach the gospel).

Inquire: How does knowing what our primary purpose in life is keep us on track.

Encourage a brief discussion: What are ways in which we can lose sight of that purpose as a church and as individuals?

### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Emphasize the purpose of studying this scripture: The passage which has been studied calls each believer to examine areas in which he/she may contribute to division in the group. Inflexible attitudes, strongly held opinions and strident discussions may cause others to feel that their opinions are of little value. However large or small the group, there exists the opportunity for different points of view. Listening to others gives us the opportunity to learn. Covenant together to live in harmony.

Close by having a person pray for the Christian love that will ensure our church to have the right attitudes and actions regarding the teachings of our Bible study today.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***Why Can't You People Get Along with Each Other*** **1 Corinthians 1:1-17**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

For today's session, youth should participate in the activity planned for adults. They will be good at campaign slogans! If they separate from the adults, they should discuss the slogan they wrote and their reason for choosing it.

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Why Can't You People Get Along with Each Other***  
**1 Corinthians 1:1-17****Beginning the Service:**

Sing one or both of the following:

**Let It Be Said of Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #597; CCLI #1855882

**We Are One In the Bond of Love**, *The Worship Hymnal* #387; CCLI#14459

**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

The Mahishya [pronounced: "Mā-hē-shī-a"] of West Bengal, India live in the plains outside of Kolkata. Bangla speakers, their name comes from the Sanskrit words "mahi" (meaning "earth") and "shya" (meaning "for the interest"). The Mahishya are both landowners and cultivators; their main crops are rice and millet. A common last name among the Mahishya is "manna". The vast majority of Mahishya are Hindu. Within one generation, many Mahishya have shifted from agricultural work to engineering and skilled-labour positions in urban areas. Composed of both poor and rich, the Mahishya are strategic to reaching all of West Bengal with the gospel.

**Sharing Guide:**

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.**

**Receivers or Transmitters?**

We will focus on a statement given in the background teaching material for our session today. The statement is “Division in the church is caused by people who are possessors, but not users of spiritual gifts. They are receivers, but not transmitters. Selfishness has shut off the power to transmit.”

Christians are possessors of spiritual gifts. Paul again emphasized the importance of Christian unity when writing to the Ephesians in Ephesians 4. In verses 1-3 he wrote, “As a prisoner of the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Later in the chapter he wrote “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (verses 11-13).

Later in the chapter Paul wrote “From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (verse 16).

There is, apparently, a strong link between the gifts given to the members of the body and their appropriate use, and the unity of the body.

Every Christian has the responsibility to help every other member of the body of Christ to grow in faith. The goal of Christ is that such equipping, ministering and building up will go on until complete maturity is achieved. Therefore, if one member is failing to transmit the spiritual gift given to them, the whole body suffers.

We may spend a great deal of time discerning what our spiritual gift is. We may consult the listings given in the New Testament. These may include prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy (Romans 12:6). Other lists are found in other writings by Paul – 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10 and 28-30. Later studies in this unit of study will give more attention to these listings.

The point to be made is that one indication of a spiritual gift is that it grows and builds up the body of Christ.

Many faithful servants of Christ would not consider themselves to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers, but they have built up the body by acts of compassion, making cups of coffee and cleaning the church after others have gone home. They may not have preached or evangelized with words, but have done so with actions and those actions have blessed the whole body.



The bible study writer wrote that “selfishness had shut off the power to transmit.” Selfishness always cause disunity – it is, in fact, the antithesis of unity. I cannot do things my way and contribute to the good of the community.

To fail to transmit the gifts we have received will automatically contribute to disunity in the body. Someone else may have to carry a double responsibility. At the very least we are not receiving the blessing which would be ours by that member’s faithful carrying out of the talents and abilities given to him or her.

Paul urged early Christians to live a life worthy of the calling they had received. His admonition reaches down the corridor of time to us today – in this place and in this historical moment in time. Live a life worthy of the calling – transmit the gifts you have received.

### **Call to Commitment:**

A Christian man once felt called to give two years of his life working with university students in a country far from his home. For over a year he assisted a team of career missionaries. He accomplished much. However, before his term ended he went to the team leader and explained that he would be leaving, even though some of the projects he had begun were not completed. When the missionary leader mentioned his understanding but disappointment in his choosing to not finish the projects, the man said, “Don’t worry, God will replace me here.”

Sadness swept over the team leader. With all the care and kindness he could manage, he told the man that, no, God might bring another person to do the tasks God wanted from that person. However, each of us are called to do what we alone can do. None of us can be replaced. Each of us are unique to God. No one else can ever do the ministry that God assigns to you or to me as His chosen child, regardless of how simple, common, or complex we think that ministry is. If it were possible to truly replace us in our God-given call, we would not be unique to God.

Today, each one of us should look once again at the responsibilities which God has given us and our unique spiritual gifts to do and complete those tasks. Then we need to reaffirm our commitment to carrying out God’s will for all He has for us, short-term and long-term. Let’s recognize once more how very special and precious we are to our Lord and Saviour. And, let us thank Him for that specialness.

### **Concluding the Service:**

Choose a song of thanksgiving to God and close the service by the group singing it with joy and praise to the Lord.