

This quarterly continues our study of 1 Corinthians, begun in Fall 2011. It covers chapters 10-16 with the exception of 16:1-4, to be paired with 2 Corinthians 8 later. It is likely that the Apostle Paul is addressing areas of disagreement between him and the Corinthian church, so reading this letter sometimes feels like you've stepped into the middle of an argument.

Paul addresses controversies which continue to exist today, such as the role of spiritual gifts in the church, the role of women, and how the church should be involved in the culture of its community. We encourage you and your class to discuss these subjects. It is our hope that these discussions first focus on understanding the viewpoints of others, rather than determining who is right.

We have five lessons by Kent Ross that deal with spiritual gifts in the Church. In our guide we've given an option of identifying the spiritual gifts of your class members. If you want to follow that option there is a note in the section of this guide on lesson 6 about how to download a copy of a spiritual gifts questionnaire to use with your class.



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**Lesson 1    September 2, 2012**  
**Lessons from the Wilderness**  
**1 Corinthians 10:1-13**

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. How do you find your way back to the wilderness where God can draw you unto Himself?
2. Why does Paul use examples from Israel's past?
3. How do the four examples from Israel's past relate to the Corinthian church's situation?
4. How do the four examples from Israel's past relate to the modern church of Christ?

5. What temptations most consistently face you? How do you attempt to overcome these temptations?
6. Do you think a person is closer to God in the "wilderness" (and why, or why not)?
7. Is there evidence from scripture to support the future Kingdom of God being urban or wilderness?
8. What is one thing you have learned about God from the Bible text or this lesson?

**Golden Text:** "Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved."  
(1 Corinthians 10:5-6)

**Key Thought:** God uses the trials in the wilderness to reveal Himself to His children.

### Lesson Aim

*To Know:* How God interacts with His children using examples of Israel's history as recorded in the Old Testament.

*To Respond:* By understanding how God is using my own wilderness wandering to draw me closer to Him.

### Life Need – Introduction

*Option one:* As you begin play the song “In the Wilderness” by Michael Card.

*Option two:* Ask students to recall an event when they felt God's presence in a nature or wilderness setting, and to explain the situation and how the feeling of God's presence came in it.

As a class consider *Questions for Discussion 5* and 6.

Ask students to share an especially difficult time in each of their lives, considering how God was trying to use that situation to draw them back to God.

*A Youth Leader question:* What benefits do you see in providing youth opportunities for primitive camping experiences? Do you think that removing modern conveniences creates a different atmosphere for spirituality?

### Bible Learning

As a class consider *Questions for Discussion 2* and 3.

### Bible Application

As a class consider *Questions for Discussion 4* and 7.

You can also ask: “How do you think God feels when you are suffering?”

### Life Response

As a class consider *Questions for Discussion 1* and 8.

### Bible Application

**“be not ignorant”** It seems the Corinthians were oblivious to how their city's immoral culture had come among them. Paul seeks to have them wake up to this fact.

**“all were baptized into Moses”** This may symbolize the Corinthian church being baptized “into Christ” as part of being under a covenant of the gospel of Christ.

**“spiritual meat” “spiritual drink”** The food and water provided by God supernaturally to the Israelites serves as a type of Christ to the Church. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst” (John 6:35).

**“the spiritual rock that followed them”** This refers to Christ, representing him as the rock upon whom the church of YAHWEH, the Father, is built.

**“let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”** Our standing in the faith depends on our union with God, and that depends on our watching unto prayer and continuing to possess that faith that worketh by love. (*Adam Clarke's Commentary*, 1967)

**“God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able”** Temptation is not sin; Jesus himself was tempted. The promise here is that as temptations come God will provide the means, through His power and grace, for a way out. He will provide the strength to resist the temptation and not allow Satan to keep us from the power God provides to overcome the trial.

### Life Response

In this passage Paul states clearly that we will not be tempted above what we are able to overcome. This lesson can promote discussion of methods and principles that help us rise beyond temptations through the power of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus.

### Truths to Emphasize

1. We are not to remain ignorant of the lessons of the Jews' disobedience as they passed out of the slavery of Egypt.
2. God used the trials in the wilderness to reveal Himself to His children.
3. When we are tempted, we will not be tempted beyond what we are able to withstand, by the power of God, the Father, through the saving grace of His Son, Jesus.

**Lesson 2 September 9, 2012**  
**Do Everything to the Glory of God**  
**1 Corinthians 10:14–11:1**

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. Have you ever been surprised that someone disapproved of something that you did? How did you respond?
2. What do we learn about the Lord's supper from verses 15-22?
3. What do you think of the idea that idol worship is actually demonic?
4. How does Paul illustrate his freedom in Christ in chapters 8-10? What examples does he give of giving up his rights?
5. What distinction does Paul make between eating meat in the idol's temple and eating meat from the marketplace? What does he have to say about doing so in an unbeliever's home?
6. How does what Paul teaches about eating meat offered to idols seem different than James' admonition to the Gentiles in Acts 15?
7. Sum up Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1.
8. How does the story of Eric Liddell relate to our text?
9. How do we do all things to the glory of God?
10. How do we avoid giving offense to anyone? Does this mean that we must give up everything we enjoy if someone objects or are there non-offensive ways to do some things?
11. How can I imitate Christ this week?

**Golden Text:** "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God."  
(1 Corinthians 10:31)

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**Lesson 3 September 16, 2012**  
**Christian Women in Corinth: Part One**  
**(no specific Bible text)**

**Note:** several issues with women in Corinth are addressed, citing verses from 1 Corinthians 1, 3, 7, 11, 14 and 16, and 32 verses from other books. Several verses from chapter 14 are printed for readers' convenience, but they are not a "lesson text".

**Resources**

With such a broad topic it is not practical to give a list of resources here about issues of women in the Bible, in the Church, in the family, in history, etc., to cover what might come up in class. Given specific questions the author may

**Key Thought:** Our freedom in Christ includes our freedom to give up our rights.

**Lesson Aim**

*To Know:* that in disputable matters we can make decisions that reflect our freedom in Christ as well as affect our relationships with other Christians.

*To Respond:* by doing all things to the glory of God.

**Life Need**

Read the pinball story in the *Introduction* then ask the first of the *Questions for Discussion*.

**Bible Learning**

Cover the background information in the *Introduction* then use the *Bible Learning* and *Questions for Discussion* 1-7 to discuss the *Bible Text*.

**Bible Application**

Read the story of Eric Liddell and discuss question 8.

**Life Response**

Read the *Life Response* and use *Questions for Discussion* 9 and 10.

**Truths to Emphasize**

1. We have freedom in Christ.
2. We cannot have fellowship with God and demons.
3. We can give up our rights to benefit others.
4. We must do all things to the glory of God.

be able to field them or suggest relevant resources:  
danielsmead1993@gmail.com.

In case they would give useful background, older lessons on Ephesians 5 (Summer 2008), and 1 Peter 3 (Fall 2010) are available at [windsofdoctrine.wordpress.com](http://windsofdoctrine.wordpress.com).

**Introduction**

Much that is referenced in this lesson seems not to have been addressed in the quarterly before now. For example it seems that until this year 1 Corinthians 16 was not used, that only part of chapter 14 was used (in just one lesson), and that only the later part of chapter 11 was used. Chapter 7 was first a lesson text last year.

When we discuss and compare texts we have rarely used it should not surprise us if we come away seeing things differently.

## Bible Learning

The lesson begins with some general ideas before addressing 1 Corinthians. Invite students to comment on whether there are parts of this overview they had previously considered, and if any parts were surprising or confusing.

The first paragraph of the *Bible Learning* names several Old Testament women. For your convenience that list is expanded on here.

Miriam watched Moses in the Nile (Exodus 2 – she is not named there) and stepped forward to offer his own mother to care for him. Over 80 years later she and Aaron had a famous conflict with Moses. It resulted in her being ceremonially unclean for several days (Num. 12; Aaron may have been spared a similar result due to being High Priest, compare Leviticus 10:1-7). But we are also told that Miriam was also a prophetess (Exod. 15:20) sent by God to lead the Hebrew people with her brothers (Micah 6:4).

The prophetess Huldah (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chron. 34:22) ministered during the time of Jeremiah. Her brief story at least shows that her role was well enough known for her to be consulted about whether or not a book was scripture.

The judge Deborah (Judges 4-5) may mainly be recalled for Barak's hesitancy to begin a battle without her. She was also a wife and mother and prophetess. Judges 4:4-5 indicates that her ministry was recognized and sought by God's people over a long period.

Likely Queen Esther (aka Hadassah) was valued by her husband King Xerxes for her beauty. We should remember her for cunning and bravery in blocking the plot of Haman. The book of Esther is unique in the Old Testament for not mentioning God. But God's work is referenced when Esther's relative Mordecai advises her about the importance of speaking up when the time is right (Esther 4:14).

You could tell your students: "The lesson assumes that we should not expect God to place restrictions on the service of women in the Church age which did not exist in the Old Testament era. What impact do you think Pentecost had on how men and women served God?"

Students may be surprised at some of the interpretations offered in the *Bible Learning*. It might be helpful to ask early in the lesson for students to consider the following questions: "How often have you come to see a biblical text in a new way? What sort of evidence or situation did that change depend on?"

On the issue of how people come to their beliefs it would be interesting to compare the thoughts of second- or third-generation members of the Church of God to first-generation members. But please don't get so caught up in

this aspect of the discussion that you do not finish the lesson.

## Bible Application

Read the *Bible Application*. It may result in plenty of discussion among the students without any prompting, but if you wish you can use one or both of these suggestions.

*Option one:* "The lesson suggests we sometimes use 'lead' to mean a list of things we expect about leaders, such as showing self discipline, working hard, encouraging, being honest, engaging with others' needs, and standing against sin. Let's try to expand on that list. What are other things people might mean when they say 'lead', or simply things that people want from leaders?"

Arrange your class' list in two columns. One column will show things which the students figure are desired from believers in general. The other column is for any things which might be argued as only desired from leaders.

When the list is complete have you students consider if they think anything which has been listed would be a problem for women to do (whether because they think it would be easier for men to do, or less socially accepted for women to do, etc.). Discuss any such items. You might go on to ask whether there is anything on the list which some students think would be *easier* for women to do than for men to do.

Some people have strong gender expectations (which differ based on factors like culture), for example thinking of compassion as feminine, or of logic as masculine. Unless we acknowledge such ideas it is difficult to examine them to decide consciously whether they make sense.

*Option Two:* This is built from the lesson's footnote, so be sure to have it read before discussing it. "Let's look at Genesis 3:14-19, listing off what the serpent, Eve, and Adam are told."

Having created that list say "Now let's decide which parts of what they were told we see as instructions." Perhaps put check marks by any items which are seen as instructions. "Is there any name we can give to the rest of these items together, or are they in more than one category?" Discuss what titles work.

"The author suggests 'warnings' as an appropriate category. Notice that even the comment about Jesus as Eve's seed in verse 15, which we take as a promise of hope, is directed to the serpent as a warning rather than to Eve as a promise."

**Lesson 4 September 23, 2012**  
**Christian Women in Corinth: Part Two**  
**1 Corinthians 11:2-16**

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. Do you think the Church is as accessible to unbelievers today as it was meant to be? What might be some barriers?
2. It was the author's impression that in the six verses where Paul used the word *kephale* the idea was of the *kephale* aiding growth on the part of the body – how do you perceive those verses (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:10 and 19)?
3. Do you think 1 Corinthians has been approached in ways that made service in the Church seem less accessible for girls and women? Does the Church have a responsibility to deal with this proactively?

**Notes related to the translation on page 16 of the quarterly:**

There should have been a letter “D” to the left of verse 10, as part of the notes related to chiasm. Hopefully its absence is not too confusing.

In verse 3 the phrase “Christ is the head of every believer” treats the word “*andros*” as used about being among the “mature” (as with 1 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:13; James 3:2) rather than for its usual meaning of maleness. This goes with the theology Paul lays out in Ephesians and Colossians about Christ being *kephale* of the Church.

Clearly Paul was using wordplay in how he set up several parts of this passage (the translation doesn't even try to show most of this), and perhaps this phrase was actually about every “man” (male), meaning the males within the category “believers”. The effect on the overall passage need not be large. Given that verse 3 comes from teaching Paul explained to the Corinthians in person, and not in this letter, we lack the background to have certainty about his use of the word. (Compare Philippians 2, or various other passages which seem to pull from teachings, hymns, etc., known in the early church. Often they are confusing to understand now.)

**Bible Learning**

Work through the Bible Learning section by section. Try to avoid argument during this part. Note that the author acknowledges this interpretation may not be fully accurate (in fact, the author expects to be wrong about at least some things with such a complicated text).

**Note on Chiasm:**

You might be interested to look at some examples of chiasm which use a central theme. The discussion at <http://www.opensourcetheology.net/node/3103> is brief, and pretty cool. It explains a 15-pair chiasm to be found in Genesis 6:10–9:19 centered on the phrase “God remembered Noah” (8:1). It also lays out a chiasm in Ecclesiastes 11-12. A larger chiasm has also been proposed for that book as a whole, emphasizing a theme in 5:18-20.

**Bible Application**

You might point out to your class that we cannot really avoid having assumptions about Bible texts. Even for us to treat one passage as not being in conflict with how we read another passage involves assumptions regarding how we will read each text. But we can try to avoid having *unexamined* assumptions. We should try to guard against them, considering not just *what* we think but *how we arrived at* our thoughts.

Much of this lesson emerged from the basic assumption (an examined one) that Paul would not have taught against men having long hair if he had long hair himself while at Corinth. But the details may not all be correct. As the lesson itself says, discussion is encouraged.

You might choose to use question 2 from the *Questions for Discussion* as part of the discussion here, or you might ask students to talk about how they have previously understood verses 2-16, or how they have heard / seen them taught in the past. Can they identify some of the assumptions of those teachings?

**Life Response**

Read the *Life Response*.

You might use question 1 from the *Questions for Discussion* connected to the idea of Paul wanting to be all things to all people to save some. The lesson assumes that our text is about a situation where Jewish customs were interfering with the relationships of believers in Corinth. The situation of our congregations is not much like the one at Corinth, but are there ways that as Christians we have developed a culture apart from the culture of our surroundings which may make it more difficult to become a Christian and to be part of the Christian body than was originally desired?

You might share the following with your class:

“Paul took time to comment about many people in scripture, some of whom were his fellow-workers. They encouraged him. In some cases their inclusion in his letters may have been an effort to encourage and thank them. At

times he seems to be pointing others toward these people, suggesting they be looked to for help.

Likely we would generally say we should do right for the sake of right. But are we less likely to continue in a particular type of ministry over the course of years if we do not find that it receives appreciation from other believers? I think that is one way we measure whether we are doing well in something – that others say they appreciate it or see God at work in it.”

Following on those thoughts, or skipping over them to save time, ask your students:

“When you see ministry done by a young person, are you more likely to appreciate that ministry if it is done by a

boy than if it is done by a girl? Are you more likely to appreciate ministry if it is done by a younger versus an older person? How about if it is done by someone whose Church role or ‘title’ could make it seem *expected* of him or her? In which of these circumstances are you more likely to *comment* to that person about your appreciation of the service?” Trying to understand why we act as we do about encouragement could be an interesting discussion on its own.

At this point you can ask question 3 from the *Questions for Discussion*. (Or just skip the preceding paragraphs and use the question near the end of the lesson time.)

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## Lesson 5 September 30, 2012

### Not the Lord’s Supper

#### 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. How do factions affect the Church and its ministry?
2. Are there “Church Ordinances” and if so have they become traditions of men?
3. What did Jesus instruct his disciples the night before he was betrayed?
4. What is the New Covenant and how does it relate to communion?
5. How can the practice of the communion service be made a more spiritual experience?
6. What did Paul instruct the church when he came again in person (2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1, 10)?

**Golden Text:** “Do this to remember me”  
(1 Corinthians 11:24b)

## Introduction

Ask the students to consider the different ways of describing the same thing which are listed in the Introduction, and which of those names or titles hold meaning to them. You might use a dictionary to look up some of the terms used here.

## Bible Learning

Read the *Bible Learning* and use *Questions for Discussion* 1-4, 6

## Bible Application

Ask your students to discuss some things they have thought about when “remembering” Jesus.

Use question 5 from the *Questions for Discussion*.

**Lesson 6    October 7, 2012**  
**God's Gifts to Us**  
**1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 27-31a**

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. Do most churches operate by utilizing spiritual gifts? Does yours?
2. Why are some leaders or officers selected who are not a good fit for their office?
3. What basis is used in selecting who should be leaders in your church? Does it often depend on how they may be gifted by God?
4. How might you discover what your gift or gifts might be, since all Christians are gifted?
5. Can a church today actually operate by utilizing gifts?
6. What changes would have to be made in your church to better utilize gifts in ministry?

**Golden Text:** "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

**Key Thought:** Paul explains the source of spiritual gifts.

**Editor's note:** There are five lessons in this series on spiritual gifts. If you would like to help your class discover spiritual gifts there are some good tools available.

I have taught and really appreciate *The Three Colors of Ministry*, a stand-alone study which is part of Natural Church Development. The workbooks it uses are \$12 each and a copy of *How to Implement the Three Colors of Ministry in Your Church* is \$15. It is available from ChurchSmart Resources (800-253-4276, or online at <http://www.churchsmart.com>).

Another good tool is the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire. The guides for these five lessons use that in their "second option" entries. It is free to download at [http://exchristian.net/images/wagner\\_modified\\_houts.pdf](http://exchristian.net/images/wagner_modified_houts.pdf).

**Lesson Aim**

*To Know:* that God gives gifts through the Holy Spirit to individuals in the church.

*To Respond:* by using our gifts in the church.

**Life Need**

Option 1: Read the *Introduction* and use question 1 from the *Questions for Discussion*.

Option 2: Ask your class, "What do you know about spiritual gifts?" Ask, "What gifts have you heard about?"

List them on a whiteboard if one is available.

**Bible Learning**

*Option 1:* Read the *Lesson Text* and use the *Bible Learning* to discuss it.

*Option 2:* Read the *Lesson Text*. Match the list of gifts you made in option 2 for the *Life Need* with the gifts listed in the text.

Our *Lesson Text* is one of three lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament, with Romans 12:3-8 and Ephesians 4:11-13 (also 1 Corinthians 7:7 suggests there is a gift of celibacy). The three lists present a diversity which may be reflected in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6: our *Lesson Text* focuses on the Holy Spirit as the giver of gifts, Romans says God gives the measure of faith, and Ephesians says Jesus gives gifts to the Church.

Using the three passages, add any gifts you missed to your list of gifts. For the purpose of this study, I will not differentiate among talents, abilities and supernatural gifts. Instead the focus will be on seeing all these things as from God, and seeing how they can be used in Christian service.

**Bible Application**

*Option 1:* Read the *Bible Application* and use questions 2-6.

*Option 2:* Ask the following questions:

1. What gifts do you see being used in our church?
2. What gifts do you see in your classmates?
3. What gifts might you have?
4. What gifts, not now being used in it, are needed in our church?

**Life Response**

*Option 1:* Read the *Life Response*. Ask, "How can you use your spiritual gift(s) in the church?"

*Option 2:* Distribute the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire. Explain how to fill out the questionnaire and calculate the score. Have the class do steps one and two before next Sunday.

**Truths to Emphasize**

1. The Holy Spirit gives a variety of gifts to Christians.
2. The gifts are given for the good of the Church.
3. Not everyone has all the gifts.

**Lesson 7    October 14, 2012**  
**By Way of Illustration**  
**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. Why is it that churches have so many squabbles within that minimize their effectiveness?
2. Why would operating as Paul suggests minimize differences among “brethren”?
3. Is it difficult to accept having what seems to be a lesser gift? How can we honor the giftedness of each person?
4. If you are utilizing a gift from God, are you satisfied doing so? How have you seen evidence of this being your gift, or area for service?
5. How does it make you feel to know that God wants you to have a special role in ministry with the Body of the Church?
6. Why do some people remain ignorant of this teaching by Paul?

**Golden Text:** “Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. . . . But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.” (1 Corinthians 12:14, 18)

**Key Thought:** God’s Plan for the Body of Christ is clear.

**Lesson Aim**

*To Know:* that each Christian has been placed into the Church and that the Church functions with many members just as the human body functions with many parts.

*To Respond:* by respecting the other members of the Church and serving as we are called to serve.

**Life Need**

*Option 1:* Read the *Introduction*. Review the four points from last week’s lesson.

*Option 2:* Go over the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire and help your students complete the first two steps if they haven’t done so. Have your students share their results. Ask, “What did you learn from this exercise? What surprised you?”

Use step three to discuss each of the gifts. With each ask your students if anyone scored 10 or higher.

**Bible Learning**

*Option 1:* Read the *Lesson Text* and use the *Bible Learning* to discuss the text.

*Option 2:* Read the *Lesson Text*. Many have considered this text to be describing multiple gifts in the body of Christ but actually it is focused on people, not gifts. It is people who are placed in the body of Christ. It is people who can be honored or even dishonored. It’s this editor’s belief that the members of the body that need attention are the less mature members of the body, rather than people with gifts that are considered less significant. The “honor” such people receive is the greater attention that is paid to them, just as a baby in the house demands greater attention from the parents. Discuss this idea with your class.

**Bible Application**

*Option 1:* Read the *Bible Application* and discuss the *Questions for Discussion*.

*Option 2:* Ask, “In light of this text, what should we think about individual gifting?”

**Life Response**

*Option 1:* Read the *Life Response*. Ask, “How do you see yourself functioning in the church? What can I do to increase my effectiveness?”

*Option 2:* Assign your class to do step four of the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire.

**Truths to Emphasize**

1. The Spirit places each Christian into the Body of Christ.
2. The Church has a diversity of functions just as the human body does.
3. Each member of the Church is to be valued.

**Lesson 8    October 21, 2012**  
**The Fundamental Principle**  
**1 Corinthians 12:31b–13:13**

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. Why might we rate some people's gifts as more worthwhile than others'?
2. Which characteristics of love (v. 4-7) seem hardest for you to exhibit? Which one(s) have been easiest?
3. Paul says "Love never fails". Contrast that to the notion of romantic love that seems to come and go, are we talking about different kinds of love?
4. Paul states that love is the greatest among faith, hope and love – how do we go about helping people around us increase their love for others? How do we do that in ourselves?

**Golden Text:** "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."  
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

**Key Thought:** Before determining what our gifts may be, we need first to understand the basic principle of *agape* love.

**Lesson Aim**

*To Know:* that Godly love is the greatest gift of all.

*To Respond:* beyond all else, by letting love guide us in all things.

**Life Need**

*Option 1:* Give your students pencil and paper, and have them write as many popular song titles as they can in two minutes that have the word "Love" in them. Have them share their answers, and note every title that was only written by one person. See who has the most unique titles.

Ask, "Why is 'Love' such a popular topic?"

*Option 2:* Use Option 1.

**Bible Learning**

*Option 1:* Read the *Lesson Text* and use the *Bible Learning* to discuss it.

*Option 2:* Read the *Lesson Text*. Ask the following questions:

1. How does this relate to what we have been learning about spiritual gifts?
2. What 15 things are said about love in 13:4-8? What seems to be the most rare?
3. What does it mean that one day we will "see face to face"?

**Bible Application**

*Option 1:* Read the *Bible Application* and discuss the *Questions for Discussion*.

*Option 2:* Using the list of gifts from the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire, for each one ask: "What difference does love make in exercising this gift? What would it look like without love? What will it look like with love?"

**Life Response**

*Option 1:* Ask your students, "What characteristic of love would you like to grow in? Write down at least one thing you can do this week to focus on growing in that aspect of love."

*Option 2:* Say to your students, "Think of your highest-rated gift from step 4 of the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire. How will growing in love help you better exercise that gift? What aspect of love would help the most?"

**Truths to Emphasize**

1. Love is greater than anything.
2. Everything but love will one day fail.
3. Today we know only in part.
4. One day we will see face to face.

**Lesson 9    October 28, 2012**  
**Receiving and Using Wisely**  
**1 Corinthians 14:1-19**

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. How would you define a spiritual gift, as opposed to a natural talent?
2. Do you think tongues could be done in your church in a non-divisive way?
3. Does the fact that Paul spoke in tongues more than all of those in Corinth help you think of tongues speaking more positively?
4. How would speaking in tongues edify oneself?
5. Do the problems this passage addresses with spiritual gifts make you less comfortable with them for your church?
6. Have you ever been involved with others that spoke in tongues? How did being with them make you feel? Did you or another have an interpretation?

**Golden Text:** “Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” (1 Corinthians 14:39-40)

**Key Thought:** Understanding Jesus’ plan for his Church, we need to understand our gift(s), allow them to develop, with the guidance of God’s Spirit, and then serve as we’ve been designed.

**Lesson Aim**

*To Know:* that Jesus’ plan for his church includes the giving of spiritual gifts to each member to be used in service.

*To Respond:* by using our gifts in Christian service.

**Life Need**

*Option 1:* Read the *Introduction* to review the previous lessons.

*Option 2:* Ask, “Since doing the survey to discover your gifts, how do you view your ministry in the church?”

**Bible Learning**

*Option 1:* Read the *Lesson Text* and use the *Bible Learning* to discuss the text.

*Option 2:* Read verses 1-6 of the *Lesson Text*. Ask, “What does this passage say about spiritual gifts? What is the purpose of a spiritual gift?”

**Bible Application**

*Option 1:* Read the *Bible Application* and discuss the *Questions for Discussion*.

*Option 2:* Have your students turn to step 4 of the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire. Have them share their dominant and subordinate gifts. Discuss *Questions for Discussion* two and three.

Ask, “What are some needs that our church is currently experiencing? How could any of these gifts help with these needs? What additional gifts do we need to exercise in our church to meet these needs?”

**Life Response**

*Option 1:* Read the *Life Response*. Ask, “How can I do everything I do for the common good of the Body of Christ?”

*Option 2:* Have your students consider their gifts and the needs of your church. Have them complete this sentence as a prayer: “In light of the needs of the church and the gifts that I have been given, I need to . . .”

**Truths to Emphasize**

1. The purpose of spiritual gifts is to edify the body of Christ.
2. Tongues are only to be spoken in the public service if an interpreter is present.
3. Prophecy builds up the whole body of Christ.

## Lesson 10 November 4, 2012

### Instruction for the Church

#### 1 Corinthians 14:20-40

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. Why are tongues so disturbing?
2. Have you had the chance to express a teaching you received from your study of the Bible? Has it only been in preparing a lesson, or in another way?
3. How would Paul's teaching regarding more participation work in your church?
4. Why would a church have a paid pastor if everybody was doing a prophecy or teaching?
5. If you are a Christian, have you been able to determine how God spiritually gifted you?
6. The idea of love permeating and undergirding the Church seems absolute. Why then are some churches so filled with anger and disagreements?

**Golden Text:** "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." (1 Corinthians 14:39-40)

**Key Thought:** Understanding Jesus' Plan for his Church, we need to understand our gifts, allow them to develop with the guidance of God's Spirit, and then serve as we've been designed.

#### Lesson Aim

*To Know:* that everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way in the church.

*To Respond:* by fitting in.

#### Life Need

*Option 1:* Read the *Introduction* to review the previous lessons.

*Option 2:* Give your students several colors of "sticky notes." Have them write on one color individual notes with songs they like to sing, i.e., one song per note. On a different color write individual notes with favorite Bible texts. On a third color, have your students write things that they would like to do in a service, e.g., sing or lead a song, play an instrument, read, preach, take part in a drama, dance, etc.

Put the sticky notes on the wall, grouped by color. With the first two groups, look for common songs or texts, to see if there is a general theme. Now look at the notes from the third group and talk about how each type of contribution could be used in a service to enhance the theme of the song or texts that have been identified.

#### Bible Learning

*Option 1:* Read the *Lesson Text* and use the *Bible Learning* to discuss the text.

*Option 2:* Read verses 26-33 from the *Lesson Text*. Ask the following questions:

1. How would you describe what you think a service at a Corinthian church would look like?
2. How could our introductory exercise contribute to this kind of service?
3. How can we be sure that everything in a service leads to building up the church?
4. Why should people weigh what prophets say? Is that different from the Old Testament prophets?
5. Why might more than one person be involved in receiving a revelation from God?
6. How is this like brainstorming? How is it different?
7. Verse 33 and 40 both talk about things being done in an orderly way in a church. How structured should a service be? Is there room for spontaneity? If so, how?

#### Bible Application

*Option 1:* Read the *Bible Application* and discuss the *Questions for Discussion*.

*Option 2:* Look back to step 4 of the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire. Ask, "Which of your gifts can contribute to the worship service? How? What about indirect contributions?"

#### Life Response

*Option 1:* The writer suggests that it seems absurd to limit the role of women in the church, yet wonders if the church is currently in line with Paul's teaching about women in the church. Discuss this in light of what you learned from lessons three and four regarding what Paul meant when he wrote about women in the church.

*Option 2:* Last week you asked your students to pray about using their gifts. Have them share any insights or experiences they have had since looking at their gifts these past five weeks. Conclude the class by praying for your students and church, that the gifts that have been given will be used and that God will send more gifts to increase the ministry of your church.

#### Truths to Emphasize

1. Prophecy is more beneficial than tongues in the worship service.
2. Both tongues and prophecy are to be limited in the church service.
3. Everything in the church service should be done to build up.
4. The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.
5. Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

**Lesson 11 November 11, 2012**  
**Is Bodily Resurrection Real?**  
**1 Corinthians 15:1-34**

**Golden Text:** “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:13-14)

**Key Thought:** God’s promised means of salvation for us mortals involves raising our dead bodies to life. His design is not about us having immortal, immaterial souls to rise out of our bodies when our bodies die.

**Lesson Aim**

*To Know:* that Yahweh has established bodily resurrection as his means to restore life to dead bodies as evidenced in his raising Jesus from the dead.

*To Respond:* by accepting God’s good news message that he raised Jesus from the dead and he will raise our dead bodies to life again at the return of Jesus.

**Introduction**

One way to start your class would be to ask them to respond to this agree / disagree statement: “People convince themselves they will live on after they die.” After they have responded to that statement and briefly discussed it, read to them “(God has) set eternity in (men’s) heart”. Identify the statement as from Ecclesiastes 3:11. Ask the class: “What does this statement mean to you?”

As an alternative introduction (or an added one, if you have time) launch interest in the lesson subject with this question: “Why do most Christians choose to believe their soul is going to heaven when they die?”

**Bible Learning**

The following questions relate to the Bible text and can be used to stimulate interest in the subject.

Why does Paul talk about the witnesses who saw alive the resurrected Jesus?

Why would Paul’s preaching be vain and the Corinthians’ faith be vain just because they don’t believe in bodily resurrection (v. 14)?

What effect does the teaching of going to heaven when you die have on the message of God raising Jesus from the dead?

What does Paul mean by saying, “Christ has been raised from the dead, the *first fruits* of those who are asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20, see also v. 23)?

What is Paul’s meaning of “in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:15)?

Why does Paul say his teachings make him a false witness against God (1 Cor. 15:15)?

How does the Corinthian accusation that the dead cannot be raised affect our salvation from sin and death (1 Cor. 15:17, 18)?

**Bible Application**

Here are some thought-provoking questions to consider asking your class. Choose the ones that seem most relevant to your students’ understanding and interest in the subject.

Why does the idea of the immortal soul going to heaven at death lack credibility as evidenced in the power of God to save us from sin and death?

Paul did not acknowledge belief in an immortal soul when he had the perfect chance to do (see lesson text on verses 12-19). If he believed and taught that doctrine, why do you believe he chose to ignore this opportunity?

Paul is very clear in stating his belief in God’s ability to raise the dead. In his letter to the Romans he even ties the concept of conversion to the death, burial and resurrection experience (Romans 6:3-4). Can you think of a way in which this conversion illustration can be related to going to heaven when you die? How well does your description fit the illustration?

How do you respond to Paul’s teaching of the resurrection of the dead?

What is appealing about being raised from the dead?

How does the resurrection of Jesus relate to our salvation from sin?

**Life Response**

You will not be able to discuss all the questions below. Pick the ones that fit most appropriately with the way your class discussion flows.

The Corinthians expressed disbelief in the very idea of people being raised from the dead. What might cause disgust with the idea of bodily resurrection?

What makes belief in the immortal soul more attractive than the resurrection of the dead?

Why would God choose to save us from death by raising our dead, decayed bodies to life again?

Why is the resurrection of the dead a comforting work of God?

How will your belief in your resurrection from the dead affect the way you live your life today?

**Truths to Emphasize**

1. The resurrection of Jesus is absolutely essential to God’s plan to save believers from sin and death.
2. Without being raised from the dead we have no hope of life ever again.
3. A soul going to heaven at death was not Paul’s teaching of life after death.

## Lesson 12 November 18, 2012

### What Kind of Body is Raised?

#### 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

**Golden Text:** “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;” (1 Corinthians 15:42-43)

**Key Thought:** The resurrection body has a different nature than the bodies we possess in this life. In the resurrection our bodies are changed to never again be subject to death.

#### Lesson Aim

*To Know:* Paul taught that our salvation from sin and death depends solely on our bodies being raised from the dead and changed to an immortal nature.

*To Respond:* by living in the absolute trust that God can and will raise our bodies from the dead at the return of Jesus.

#### Introduction

This lesson is on God’s plan for how man will live forever in His eternal kingdom, so ask your class members to respond to this question: “If God gave you the right to decide in what nature you could live throughout eternity, what nature would you possess?”

Next, to get the class thinking about what the Bible says about our promised resurrection body, ask: “What questions do you have about the nature of the resurrection body?”

Discuss the responses to that question for a few minutes, then say: “Let’s look at what Paul had to say about the new physical nature we will possess when we are changed at the return of Christ.”

#### Bible Learning

Ask the class to state the Corinthian church’s main concerns about bodily resurrection, as stated in verse 35 (Paul was responding to questions from them).

Paul answers the first of the Corinthians’ questions by referring to a scene very familiar to farmers. Explain the scene. Then ask, what point is Paul trying to make by introducing the agricultural illustration of plants that produce seeds that then die, sprout, and grow into new plants (vs. 36-38)?

Paul then uses two other illustrations from nature, one from the world of mammals and the other from astronomy. Ask the class:

What is Paul trying to illustrate by talking about living creatures and heavenly bodies in space (v. 39-41)? What is the purpose of Paul’s use of these items?

Next, Paul uses yet another illustration, but he is getting much closer to the subject of concern to the Corinthians.

What is Paul’s point in saying there is a natural (earthly) body and there is a heavenly (spiritual) body (v. 42-49)? Why is Paul talking about two kinds of bodies?

What does Paul mean when he says, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (v. 50)? What is the limitation of flesh and blood? What do you imagine will be the replacement for flesh and blood for our bodies to be able to live in God’s kingdom? What must those bodies be like in order to be suitable for that kingdom?

Why does Paul use the word “perishable” five times in this chapter (v. 18, 42, 50, 53, 54)?

How do the words “perishable” and “mortal” relate to each other in Paul’s use of these words (vs. 53, 54)?

By contrast explain what Paul means when he uses the words “imperishable” and “immortal” in verses 52-54. Another New Testament writer talked about Jesus now possessing an “indestructible life” (Heb. 7:16). So what exactly does that mean?

Why does Paul talk about a change taking place at the resurrection?

#### Bible Application

Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians did not contain any other questions or concerns about the resurrection of dead bodies. If you were one of those Corinthians originally concerned about the nature of the resurrection body, what is it in Paul’s writing that would most convince you that God’s plan for restoring life by raising dead bodies was not only true but wise?

#### Life Response

Why should Paul’s explanation of our receiving a changed nature at the return of Christ give us comfort in our current lives? How should it affect the way we live and think and feel?

How will your belief in the resurrection from the dead affect the way you respond to the death of family members who are believers?

#### Truths to Emphasize

1. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.
2. God’s plan of resurrection includes changing our mortal nature to an immortal nature like his.
3. God gives us the ultimate victory over sin and death by the power of an indestructible life.

## Lesson 13 November 25, 2012

### “Come Right on In!”

#### 1 Corinthians 16:5-24

**Key Thought:** As God has shown us hospitality by welcoming us into his family, so should we show such grace to others – in our homes, in our churches, and anyplace else where the love of God in Christ needs to be expressed.

#### Lesson Aim

*To Know:* that God rejects sin.

*To Respond:* trust God’s mercy which frees us from sin.

For your convenience in using the *Questions for Discussion* from the lesson they are reprinted here:

1. As you grow older, do you find your heart creating more prejudices against people, or knocking down old walls of prejudice? Do you feel less welcoming of others, or more gracious? Either way, why do you think this is?
2. Explain ways in which your church has made you feel welcome in the Lord’s presence. In your estimation, are there some things that could be done better?
3. On a human level, what are some things that might make others feel unwelcome with us, even though they’re not really unwelcome at all? Something going on in their lives? In our lives? Some nagging distraction? Illness? Worry? What?
4. How can we challenge someone’s wrong choices, and still make them feel welcome? with us? with the Lord?

#### Introduction

NOTE: Consider the following options to be simply that. Make use of your own resources as well (personal experience, libraries, websites, your own creativity, Divine Inspiration, prayers for vision and grace). Follow your own spiritual instincts, empathize with the unique needs of your class, and remember to monitor your own growth through it all.

#### LEADER DISCOVERY /

- (a) Search YouTube for: MercyMe – “Beautiful”. How does the song make you feel?
- (b) Go to [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) and do a word study on the lesson text. Especially note Strong’s meaning for the word “refreshed” (NIV) in verse 18. How does this word enhance the beauty of today’s text?
- (c) Look back on your personal Life Experiences. Are there any that help you better lead today’s discussion?

#### Lesson Background

- (1) If you have a recording of “Beautiful” by MercyMe play it for the class. Ask: “Do you think this song confronts? welcomes? both? Explain.”
- (2) Read the Lesson Background and ask the You Truth questions for each section.
- (3) Ask: Think about your favorite restaurants. List some specific things about the eateries that especially bring you joy. What are some “church fellowship” equivalents for each item on your list? For example, what would be the spiritual equivalent of “good food?” Is “hospitality” on your list?
- (4) Ask: Do you think that making others feel welcome (in our homes, in our church) is a gift, or is it a basic responsibility for all of us? Why? > Read through the Lesson Background.

#### Bible Learning

1. Read through text (comparing various Bible versions, if you like) and answer any or all of the You Truth questions along the way.
2. Read through the text and Bible Learning. Ask: What are some ways in which the world regularly makes us feel unwelcome? (Write each answer down as it’s shared. During the week, you might search for visual examples which answer the question: photos, internet images, material you can use in a PowerPoint presentation.) Ask: How does today’s text reveal a different reality for the Christian than that which the world would recognize?
3. Pre-arrange a little classroom drama. Have one member of your class stand up and pretend to slap another member of the class (making the whole thing look real). Then have all members of your class stand up and shake hands with or hug one another. Read the text and lesson Background and ask: Which of our group actions – the slap or the gentle greetings – reminds you most of this text? Why?

#### Bible Application

- (1) Ask: What are some places or cases where you’re groan inwardly because you can’t wait to leave? How about places or cases where you moan because you HATE to leave?
- (2) Discovery: If your class is musically inclined, sing through the song lyrics included. Ask: What are some things about this church that make you personally feel welcome in “the Lord’s arms?”
- (3) Do an overview of Paul’s process of transformation. (Acts 6:8-15; 7:54-8:2; Chapters 9-10) Ask: Why do you think would God welcome a man like Paul into the fellowship of the apostles? Is there someone you’ve been avoiding, for one reason or another, who could become a blessing to the church if given the opportunity? Could this person be another Saul-to-Paul case?

**Life Response**

- (1) Go through the Questions for Discussion together.
- (2) Take time at the end for the class to silently pray for the strength, compassion and will to welcome others into our hearts, homes, and churches.
- (3) Give the class one word to hold in their hearts this week. Have them repeat the word often and take note of any situations arising through the week wherein this word finds special meaning. You can write the word on paper for each class member, or you can simply share the word verbally. Examples: care, love, welcome, hospitality, peace, (any other word you might think of). Share with the class why you chose this word for this lesson.

**Truths to Emphasize**

1. The first love of all is God's love. God's love, issued through Jesus, welcomes us into HIS presence.
2. With God's love in our own hearts, we are challenged to welcome others into our own presence in many ways, at all times.
3. To welcome others is to offer them physical, emotional and spiritual "refreshment."