

1 CORINTHIANS

gospel formed worship



OVERVIEW FOR PART 5: GOSPEL FORMED WORSHIP

Paul has been addressing the liberties and freedoms God has afforded the Corinthian Christians in regard to their everyday lives in the world. Now, he is going to address how they enjoy and practice their liberty and freedom in the gathering of the Church together.

The dominant theme throughout these four chapters is honor. Paul wants them to consider how they honor God and one another in their gatherings. The gathering of the Church is not meant to be a place where we exalt self and primarily seek opportunities for self-expression or fulfillment. The goal of our gathering together is to glorify God, make much of Jesus and consider how we might encourage or equip others. Of course, as we do this, we will also benefit ourselves since we were made to serve and it is in serving that we also thrive.

In each section Paul wants the Corinthians and us to remember how the Gospel forms our worship. We need to consider how the truths of who God is, what he has done in Christ and who he has created us to be as his Church should shape how we gather together for worship. The gospel of Jesus Christ deeply impacts how we gather together as his people.

PART 5: WEEK FIVE - The Way of Love

Text: 1 Corinthians 13

Spiritual gifts are an important way we are empowered to proclaim “Jesus is Lord,” but without love as the end goal, these gifts can turn up empty. Paul ends his instructions on spiritual gifts with “And I will show you an even better way.” This is the way of love.

No matter how perfect the message, how intelligent the person, or impressive the action - all are meaningless without love. Paul draws on powerful imagery to drive home the point. Spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, and incredible faith can be reduced to a clanging symbol and gaining nothing, in the absence of love.

Paul’s message to the Corinthians is still very needed today - if we don’t walk in the way of love, no one will hear the message of love. Think about how might God change our coworkers, neighbors, and the greater Seattle area if we all operated out of love!

Paul challenges the Corinthians by speaking to what love is and is not. Love is not rude, self-seeking, irritable, it does not keep a record of wrongs, or find joy in unrighteousness. Instead, love is patient and kind, it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. God is love, and Jesus is the perfect example of love. Just as Christ loves us, so we should love one another (1 John 4).

Paul then speaks to the eternal nature of love. Spiritual gifts exist for the purpose of love and will only rightly be expressed and used when we understand that they are not the end but the means. Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge are all incredible gifts, but love never ends.

Read: 1 Corinthians 13

1. What does this passage about love reveal about God and His character?
2. In what ways did Jesus live out the attributes of love?
3. The love that Paul speaks of can only come from God Himself... How has God given us the ability to be like Jesus?
4. God is constantly refining us through his Spirit. In what ways have you noticed the Spirit leading you further into the way of Love?
5. Impressive speech, knowledge, and actions can build up the giver and not the receiver if love is not at the center. Share an experience where action was taken with or without love and the resulting fruit.