

DON'T FOLLOW THE LEADER!

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Times characterized by rebellion & fighting.

Drive-by shootings Bombings "Road Rage"

Lawsuits People fight for rights

Even in Church there's fighting & quarreling

"Church on every corner"=> people think we'll stay in present church as long as "our" needs are met,

Church splits are increasingly common

When we came back from Guate, we spent time in our home church. It was hurting! Pastor left under difficult circumstances. Church split. We had friends on both sides who were angry & hurting.

After mos. helping people through healing process, God called us to SLC. Church hurting from loss of previous pastor. He was forced to resign. Church divided. Some thought pastor was wonderful; others couldn't stand him. People hurting & angry.

Gene Edwards writes about church splits: **"About 5% of churches split every year. That means 15,000 splits per year in America alone."**

"Most people can only take so many splits before bailing out. Christians survive 1 split. Few survive 2. Handful survive 3. That's about limit of human endurance."

Paul deals with this issue in 1 Corinthians.

This 1st C. church has a problem

Church in 21st century has a problem too!

Satan has lots of experience tearing churches apart

Contemporary problems aren't unlike problems facing church at Corinth!

Church has *forgotten how to love each other!*

Introduction 1:1-9

Paul thanks God because of things he's sure are true of them
[us too!]

They've received EVERYTHING.

God has made them rich in every way!

They understand God's truth;

All the spiritual gifts are evident

They're *only* lacking love!

1st problem: most obvious affecting them: ***divisions***

Concerning Divisions in Church 1:10-4:21

Exhortation to Unity 10 *"I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, & that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind & the same judgment."*

1. That we agree—that all say the same thing

He isn't asking us to be parrots.

He isn't asking us to give up differences of opinion.

He's calling for *balance* between unity & diversity.

That we express differences, in spirit of unity.

Unity on essentials; diversity on non-essentials.

2. That there be no divisions among us.

Isn't dealing with *doctrinal issues*.

Phil 1: lay aside *personal* issues—preferences.

Gal 1: people teach different *doctrine*=>accursed

3. That we be united—knit together

Ralph Earle: "*fitted together* as fragments of mosaic

DESCRIPTION OF CONDITIONS 11-12

Two kinds of problems among them:

1) They're quarreling **11** "*It has been reported to me... that there's quarreling among you.*"

Quarrels issue related, as evidenced in book.

Drinkers vs. non-drinkers

Do we eat meat offered to idols or not?

Haves vs. have nots

Charismatics vs. non-charismatics ...*on & on* ...

2) They're following "gurus" **12** "*What I mean is that each of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."*

In *their* culture, philosophers looking for *followers*.

Everyone wants to be identified with great teacher

Some commit to follow...

Paul – Apostle to Gentiles

Church founder – special to "charter members"

"I remember when Paul used to preach here."

Apollos – Eloquent preacher

Alexandrian => Hellenistic => Grk/Jewish thinker

Cephas (Peter) – Apostle to Jews

1 of "the 12" => Authority established by Jesus

Tends to react precipitously at times.

Man's Man – powerful

Jewish/"Mother Church" Party

Christ – "*spiritual*" party

"We don't follow any man!"

“We follow Jesus!”– subtle form of pride!
 Contemporary: MacArthur, Stanley, Piper, Swindoll
 It isn't wrong to have a *preference*.

What's wrong is ***attitude!***

“We're followers of _____!” “I don't like _____!”

Focus on personality; belittle people who don't agree

“I want what I want!” “I like what I like!”

Eye on messenger, instead of on God who gave them the message!

CORRECTION OF CONCEPT 1:13-17

Paul corrects idea of following human leaders in competition with each other.

3 questions to get us thinking: 13 “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”

Focuses on those who claim to follow *him*

If Paul were like most people, this is the group he'd be encouraging. They're on HIS side!

He corrects those on his side!

That's group HE can most effectively speak to.

Principles for *his* followers—true for *ALL* parties.

* **Christ hasn't been divided up among us, has He?**

“He isn't cut up for people to distribute as *they* see fit, is He?”

* **Paul wasn't crucified for us, was he?**

(why follow him?)

* **We weren't baptized in Paul's name, were we? 14-**

17 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus & Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one may say that you were baptized in my

name. ¹⁶(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, & not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”

Nothing wrong with baptism! *Christ ordained it!*

Problem is *their perspective*.

"In Christ's name" or "my name" => identification

They aren't *Paul's* followers!

They're identified with *JESUS!*

Get your eyes off the messenger and on Him!

Each represents *Christ-not himself*.

Jesus is the One Who died.

We're baptized in *Jesus' Name*.

Leaders are united in *following Jesus*.

Apollos & Paul aren't feuding

Paul tries to get Apollos to help straighten mess

but Apollos is staying away from that place!

Each has his own calling from *God*

We should ALL be serving GOD;

NOT following people!

Paul doesn't go around looking for followers.

He doesn't want them identified *with him*,

but *with Jesus*.

Paul's concern: *to announce good news 17*

He doesn't do it like popular philosophers

He isn't trying to be anyone's guru.

He wants us to focus on the cross.

Human strategies distract from gospel;
make it meaningless (useless, empty).

Human wisdom, a la Greek philosophers, evaporizes the cross.

Godly wisdom isn't like human wisdom

Godly wisdom takes our eyes off **people**

Godly wisdom places our eyes on Jesus.

HE deserves glory; NOT us!

They're fighting over *their* preferences

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH US? Our church is *capable* of following same path.

Great churches fall from greatness due to pride; desire to have it *OUR* way.

I've seen churches where people *USED* to say, "**We go to *THIS CHURCH!***"

when God humbles them: "**We go to *this church***"

Then God can make us a **GREAT church!**

Our church is a gifted church.

It's grounded in truth; **We have it all!**

But, we must pull together (v. 10)

We've got to **be united so God gets all the glory**

Paul urges us to get our act together:

–rally together around common cause

So we get on with job God called us to:

* Announce good news about Jesus in our community

* Encourage 1 another to love & good deeds!

When we focus on *God's* work=>***making disciples***, Satan will do everything he can to distract us,
to get us to focus on people!
–to follow a preferred leader!
–to distract us from following Jesus.

God wants us...

- to take our eyes off people–off *human* leaders
- to follow **JESUS!**
- to glorify **HIM!**