

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Seeing Gifting in God's Imperfect People

TEXT: *1 Corinthians 1:1-9*

Instructions: - *Let the above passages be read each time you come together to study this topic so that everyone could participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on the topic and come up with follow-up questions. Participants should be brief in their responses and use relevant Bible references to illustrate their points. They should be careful not to dominate the discussion to allow everyone to have an equal opportunity to participate.*

Introduction: The image of the church as presented in the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians is extremely ambiguous. There is a paradox at the heart of the church. It is the painful tension between what the church claims to be and what it seems to be; between the divine ideal and the human reality; between the romantic talk about "the bride of Christ" and the very unromantic, ugly, unholy, and quarrelsome Christian community we know ourselves to be. It is the tension between our final, glorious destiny in heaven and our present, very inglorious performance on earth. This is the ambiguity of the church—and it creates a challenge for us as leaders. It's hard to write a letter to a troubled church—but the apostle Paul rose to that challenge.

Discussion Questions

1. Paul spoke of the church in Corinth as called to be "sanctified," "holy," "blameless"—necessary goals for all churches. Yet, as his letter later reveals, the church at Corinth had a long way to go in reaching those goals. What are some areas that your own church needs to address as you travel the road toward being sanctified, holy and blameless in God's sight? Discuss how you could become a part of the process?
2. Paul begins his letter to the Corinthians by describing himself as one called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (v. 1). What difference did that make in Paul's leadership?

3. Assuming you are in the leadership team of your church. What difference would it make in your own leadership to remember that God was the one who called you into your role?
4. As you examine the wording of this passage, what connections do you see between Paul, the church at Corinth and God?
5. Look more carefully at Paul's description of the church in verse 2 and his hopes expressed in verse 8. What would you expect to find in a letter that opens with these ideals?
6. Focus more carefully on verses 4-7. What assets were already present in the church of Corinth and what were the sources of these assets?
7. What skills, gifts, talents, interests, or abilities do you see in the church of today? (Consider spiritual as well as practical gifts—or the blending of these.)
8. What does this collection of gifts in the church of today suggest about potential ministries that God may be equipping your church to do?
9. Look again at verses 2 and 9 and notice several forms of together-ness. How can these various connections strengthen the church?
10. What personal encouragement do you take from God's character and his actions as described in verse 9?