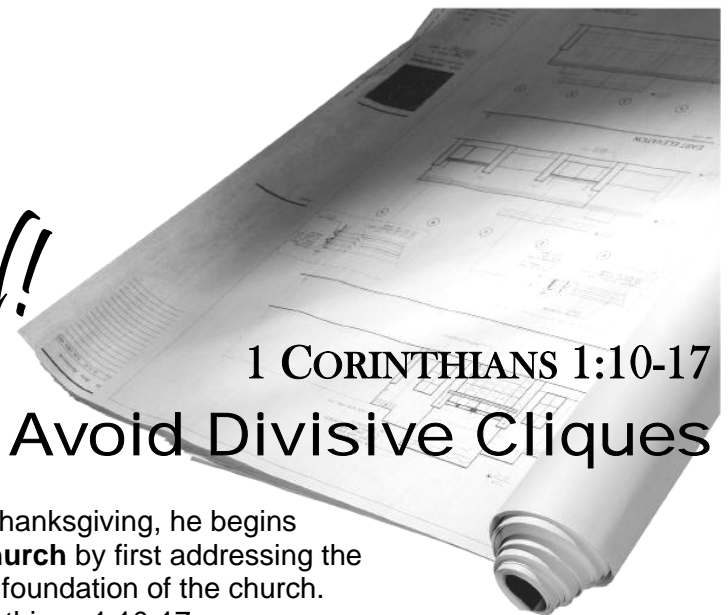




Blueprint for the Church:

Live the Gospel!

Small Group Study Guide



1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-17

Avoid Divisive Cliques

After Paul's introduction and prayer of thanksgiving, he begins addressing God's **Blueprint for the Church** by first addressing the problem of cracks that can weaken the foundation of the church. This is the point of this study on 1 Corinthians 1:10-17.

1. What is the specific issue that Paul addresses in this passage?
2. This passage is calling for the elimination of divisions within the church. Below are a number of statements related to issues brought out from this passage. All of them come from commentaries dealing with this passage. Read each one then circle "Agree" or "Disagree" and be ready to give an explanation for your answer.

¹David Prior,
*The Bible Speaks
Today: Message of
1 Corinthians*
(Downers Grove:
InterVarsity, 1985)
pp. 30-36.

- Whenever Christians give their allegiance to any human personality, such as a gifted teacher or pastor, they have taken their eyes off Jesus Christ and there will inevitably be disunity.¹

AGREE

DISAGREE

- Vanity and self-will are almost always the cause of divisions and factions in a congregation.²

AGREE

DISAGREE

- Very often what happens in a local church today is the differences grown around personalities (either from within the church fellowship or from the wider church) and then become articulated around matters of doctrinal dispute.¹

AGREE

DISAGREE

- So-called "clashes of personality" often, on analysis are nothing much more than a failure, or even a refusal, to let God's love change us in our attitudes toward another.¹

AGREE

DISAGREE

Don't Forget:
Discuss the Sermon Notes from this week

²John MacArthur,
*The MacArthur New
Testament Commentary:
1 Corinthians*
(Chicago: Moody, 1984)
pp. 29-30.

3. What is the danger of putting particular teachers on too high of a pedestal? How is too much allegiance to a particular teacher or pastor an unhealthy practice?
4. Paul urges the church to have “agreement.” This word means to speak the same thing, or to be knit together. What Paul doesn’t want is “division.” This word metaphorically means to have divided opinions.
- What is the difference between harmony and uniformity?
 - What is Paul calling for in this passage?
 - Why is unity an important building block in God’s **Blueprint for the Church**?
5. We don’t know much about the various parties, except that the first three seem to be built around respective leaders of the church. Paul was the founding pastor, who planted the church. Apollos served as a pastor of the church after Paul. We don’t know if Peter has ministered directly in Corinth or if some had just developed an affinity to him and his “style”. With this in mind, describe some of the “personality cliques” that can emerge in the church today. How can you guard yourself from falling prey to the temptation of entering such groups?
6. The challenge in this passage is to identify what Paul means by the party that says they are “of Christ”. By the context, it does not seem as if he is using this in a positive sense. Some have suggested that this group were those who did not want to submit to human authorities and took a more “hyper-spiritual” position that surpassed listening to the leaders in the church. Based on this understanding, what is the danger of those in the church who take this type of position and exhibit a brand of spiritual elitism?
7. Rupert Meldenius, a seventeenth-century Lutheran theologian, once stated:
“In necessary things - unity; in unnecessary things - tolerance; in all things - love.”
- How does this statement apply to this passage?
 - What doctrines do you see as being necessary?
 - How does Paul’s ministry relate to “things” that are necessary (v. 17)?

BIBLE MEMORY:

Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1 Corinthians 1:10

For Next Week:
Prayerfully meditate and study the following: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25