

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS
for the Week of April 30, 2017

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| <p>LIFE TOGETHER IN A DIVIDED WORLD <i>“Grace and Peace to You!”</i> 1 Corinthians 1:1-9</p> |
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1. Share a time when you felt especially united to your church family. Was it during a particular church service (e.g., Maundy Thursday, Easter, Christmas, etc)? Was it during a time of personal crisis or challenge when you felt lovingly supported by your brothers and sisters in Christ? Was it an experience in a small group?

How much do you value church unity? What does it mean to you personally, and why is it so important?

Have you ever experienced conflict or division in a church you've belonged to? If so, how did it affect you? What lessons did you learn from it?

2. We live in a combative world where the present climate is more divisive and polarized than ever. Edward Wasserman, dean of Graduate School of Journalism at UC Berkeley, writes: “Mainstream media have made a fortune teaching people ***the wrong ways to talk to each other***, offering up Jerry Springer, *Crossfire*, Bill O'Reilly. People understandably conclude rage is the political vernacular, that this is how public ideas are talked about.” In 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul is addressing a church experiencing deep conflict and division. **Read 1 Cor. 1:1-9.** What are some adjectives you would use to describe the tone and tenor of Paul's opening words to this very proud and arrogant church?
3. Paul uses the name of Jesus *eight times* in the opening nine verses of this letter! Is this just a coincidence? What is Paul trying to get across to the Corinthians?

4. How does Paul demonstrate in 1:1-9 that Christ is involved in the Corinthians' past, present, and future? Why is this so significant?

Past:

Present:

Future:

5. People often romanticize the era of the early church and talk as if the first-generation Christians enjoyed a pure, untroubled honeymoon period; but there is no evidence for this in the New Testament. Why do you suppose divisions have always been a problem among God's people from the very beginning?
6. Why do you think Paul reminds the Corinthians of their sacred calling in 1:2? What does it mean that they have been "sanctified" in Christ Jesus and "called to be his holy people"? What does this have to do with the divisions they are facing?
7. "Grace" (v. 3) reflects the conventional Greco-Roman form of greeting, while "peace" is the typical Jewish salutation. How do these two words take on an even deeper meaning from a Christian perspective? What is Paul hoping to express?
8. Why would Paul thank God for the very things that are now a source of problems in the Corinthian church (see vv. 5-7; cf. 1 Cor. 8:1-2; 13:1; 14:9, 12)? What do we learn from this opening passage (1:1-9) about *the right way to talk to each other* when we are addressing issues of concern?