



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 9, March 3, 2015 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

***** SPRING CLOCKS FORWARD ONE HOUR ON SATURDAY NIGHT! *****

GOD'S WORD to Churches and Families through First Corinthians!

"So look at Apollos and me as mere **servants** of Christ who have been put in charge of explaining God's mysteries. Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful. As for me, **it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you** or by any human authority. I don't even trust my own judgment on this point. **My conscience is clear, but** that doesn't prove I'm right. **It is the LORD Himself** who will examine me and decide.

So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time— before the LORD returns. For He will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due." (1 Cor. 4:1-5, New Living Translation, Emphasis added)

The Church at Corinth was a troubled church with troubled families! Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the Apostle Paul writes boldly and with genuine love, addressing critical issues in the Corinthian church. **Today, even in Bible-believing circles, troubled churches and families abound.** Like the church at Corinth, we need to hear and receive the Word of God! **For the various problems, the Holy Spirit gave and still gives a three-fold solution:**

1. The preaching of the cross, Jesus Christ crucified: 1 Corinthians 1:17-18; 2:2
2. The more excellent way of God's love: 1 Corinthians 13
3. Specific doctrine, rebuke, correction, and exhortation: This is found throughout the Epistle as Paul confronts the sin problems in the church and in their homes.

WE COULD SAY that these Christians lived in 'Sin City'... AND they lived in a world not so friendly to the New Testament Church. However, the Holy Spirit did not have Paul to lament/mourn over the evils of culture... or even the failings of SOME OTHER church. The focus was upon the Christians at Corinth. This article is for the pastor and congregation at Southside, Gallatin— may the LORD be pleased to apply it each of us as He knows is good... and to any others reading it!

IMPORTANT: In every chapter **as the Holy Spirit unveils** various situations in the church at Corinth, there is ONE CLEAR NECESSITY: Each of us must allow the Holy Spirit to speak to our own hearts and leave others with GOD! [*"IT'S ME, IT'S ME, O LORD... STANDIN' IN THE NEED OF PRAYER... NOT BY BROTHER, NOT MY SISTER, BUT IT'S ME.....!"*]

1. Chapters 1-4: One of Corinth's problems was STRIFE. The root problem of strife and all manner of selfishness is pride. In fact, the Bible tells us that **it is only by pride** that contention comes! (Prov. 13:10) As to differences— families and churches have differences from time to time! That's no problem. That's life! But how we handle our differences can be a problem, resulting in strife, etc.

GODLY PERSPECTIVE: Our differences constitute a grand opportunity to show a strife-filled world the supernatural reality of God's love! CHRISTIANS are divinely empowered to do more than others! (Matthew 5:44-48) There is room for differences over various matters over which one can be wrong and still get to heaven— but words and attitudes of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21; James 3:14-15) are never from the LORD. The key reality of genuine Christianity is supernatural love by which the world has evidence that we are truly the disciples of Jesus Christ! (John 13:34-35)

2. Chapter 5: They were tolerating gross sin in the church. **Again, the root problem was a lack of love— for they did not value holiness and they had refused to give the love of discipline! God's love never compromises holiness!** Holiness is not an option! (Hebrews 12:10-14) SADLY, there is a deepening lack of holiness and love in many

Christian homes and churches. **Each of us** must be judgment day honest: How is it with me?

3. Chapter 6: They were taking one another to court, presided over by the unsaved, (I Cor. 6:1). There was no willingness to suffer for righteousness sake and no willingness to forgive! *They were keen on pointing the finger of accusation at others; but they were unwilling to judge their own sin.*

Today, many flee the pure Word of God and flock to churches, counselors, and courts that gladly take their money and tell them what they want to hear. **God's love is missing. We must each ask, 'How is it with me?'**

4. Chapter 7: They were having marriage problems and a number of them were looking for excuses to end their marriages. Love was lacking. Interestingly, this chapter sets forth a clear **NO DIVORCE policy— 1 Corinthians 7:10-14; 27; 39 — Wow! (1)** If separated, be reconciled or remain unmarried. **(2)** Don't divorce; you may win the unbeliever to Christ. **(3)** You are bound in marriage until there is a DEATH— then there is liberty to marry a believer.

Sadly, many skip and/or reject those clear verses and instead focus on verse 15; and then interpret verse 15 so as to agree with their divorce plans. What verse 15 actually means is much debated. HOWEVER, if you interpret verse 15 in a way that cancels out the very clear emphasis of **1 Corinthians 7:10-14; 27; 39**— have you not wrongly interpreted verse 15?

QUESTION: IN MY HOME, am I majoring on loving as Jesus loves?

5. Chapters 8-10: In **Chapter 8**, they were arguing over whether or not to eat meat that had been sacrificed to heathen gods. In **Chapter 9**, they were arguing over whether or not Paul was a true apostle. In **Chapter 10**, Paul needed to warn this church about lust, idolatry, fornication, tempting God, and murmuring. LOVELESSNESS HAS MANY EXPRESSIONS!

To escape LOVELESS strife— start here:

1 Corinthians 4:5— “So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to

each one whatever praise is due.” (New Living Translation, Emphasis added)

Romans 14:10-13a— *“But why do you judge your brother?... For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: “As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.” So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore,...”*

1 John 1:8-9— *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess OUR sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us OUR sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Chapter 10: The Holy Spirit scans the history of the people of God in the Old Testament and zeros in on the **FIVE PRIMARY SINS** which destroyed them over and over; and then, tells us that (1) this is especially written down for those of us who live in the end times; (2) and that we must TAKE HEED lest we fall into the same sins; (3) and then, we are shown the way of escape.

PRESENT REALITY: Many churches and homes are being destroyed by the same FIVE sins: Lust. Idolatry. Fornication. Tempting God. Murmuring.

Note: Murmuring against circumstances and/or people is ultimately MURMURING against God!— FOR GOD in His sovereignty either brought or allowed GET THROUGH HIS SCREEN whatever it is that is troubling us!

HERE IS SUPER GOOD NEWS: EVEN IF PEOPLE intentionally do EVIL as did Joseph’s brothers— the only thing that can MAKE ME MISERABLE is MY wrong response! **JESUS, of course, is the PRIME example:** No one ever had MORE EVIL done to and against Him; yet no one ever had MORE JOY! **HOW was this possible?** It was possible because He maintained the focus of PLEASING HIS FATHER IN ALL THINGS. He LEARNED obedience through the things He suffered! **We must each ask:** HOW IS IT WITH ME?

***** JOHN 15:1-14— ABIDING IN CHRIST IS THE ONE, SUPREME, and OPEN SECRET TO A LIFE OF SUPERNATURAL JOY FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN! *****

6. Chapters 11, 12, 14, 15 & 16: In Chapter 11 Paul warned them of gross selfishness and wickedness which was being practiced at their fellowship suppers and Lord’s Supper. In Chapters 12 and 14, Paul

addressed this church on the issue of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how the church should function as a body. Their worship services had become chaotic because many in the church were **misusing** the gifts of the Spirit — primarily, the gift of tongues and the gift of prophecy. They were using them for self-glorification, self-gratification, and personal excitement. **Chapters 15 & 16:** With all the above selfishness and sin, it is no wonder that they were doctrinally confused about the resurrection and needed some instruction as to giving. **AGAIN, they were drowning in lovelessness— WE MUST EACH ASK: HOW IS IT WITH ME?**

NOTE: All of the above is the context of First Corinthians 13, which shows God's better way! Let each of us ask: **Had I been a member of that church, would I have been a part of the problem or a part of the solution?**

SOLUTION: The house of Chloe was a part of the solution— I Corinthians 1:11. They loved Jesus so much that they wanted to have LOVE and HOLINESS in the church— thus, they refused to let SECRET SIN CELLS thrive. They reported the facts to someone who was responsible before God to deal with it. At least a portion of the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians was the result!

SOLUTION: The house of Stephanas was a part of the solution— I Corinthians 16:15-16. They ADDICTED themselves to the ministry of the saints! **What saints?** Those fighting, feuding, selfish, pride-filled, sinning saints of the church at Corinth!

Many today are 'too spiritual' to commit to an imperfect church body! "I am not about to plug in and faithfully serve the LORD at this or that church— because they got this problem and that problem and I don't like or agree with this or that! No, sir, I ain't going to be addicted to the saints at those churches! I'll just stay home... or just 'float' from church to church... and on occasions I'll **come in and 'critique'** one of these troubled churches; and then I'll go tell others how lacking the folks are at Corinth, or Southside, or wherever!"

DEAR SUPER SAINT— when you love Jesus, He will have you to be ADDICTED to ministering to and with an imperfect, Bible believing local church, even as the house of Stephanas!

SOLUTION: The Apostle Paul was a part of the solution. How? He gave them tough love, living truth from a sacrificial heart! (2 Cor. 12:15)

The infallible Word of God to a congregation is the true source of hope and comfort, (Romans 15:4); **and it is profitable to** teach the faith, correct error, reset direction to be well pleasing to God, and instruct in right living so that we will be completely equipped for all good works to the glory of God! (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How would we have responded to the many problems in the church at Corinth?

1. In lovelessness contribute to the problems? **2.** Sit and watch while lives are destroyed? **3.** Fuel the flames of destruction with gossip and talebearing? **4.** Pack up and leave? **5. OR... when needed, like the house of Chloe,** communicate with the under shepherds who are responsible for the flock? **6. Or, like the house of Stephanas, be addicted to the ministry of imperfect saints?** **7. Or, like Paul, welcome or unwelcome, preach the pure Word of God?**

SITUATION: Over the last 42 [NOTE: this article was written and sent out 4 years ago... and even previous...-- it is now 46] **years of serving in two congregations**, on A FEW occasions, FOLKS have come to me and said, “Oh, Pastor, there’s trouble in the church. Unnamed ‘So and So’ is upset! You must do something about it!” **And I would ask, “Who? Where? When? What?”** **And they would say,** “Oh, now Pastor, we couldn’t tell you the answer to those questions. That would be breaking confidence! But there’s trouble and you’d better fix it! We’ve told you because we love THE LORD and our church.”

REALITY: Do you know what would have happened if they had told me who/what/when/where? **The secret love destroying and/or holiness destroying sin cell and any affiliates** would have been dealt with— in a fashion like unto the way the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul! Thank God for the house of Chloe & the house of Stephanas! Every church in America needs such families. **Am I a part of the problem or part of the solution?**

Further Question: Had I been a member of one of the New Testament Churches— would my name be listed in one of the Epistles? And if so, would it be a positive or a negative reference? **In letters to be read in churches, several church folk got named:**

1 Cor. 16:15-18— **Positive**...the house of Stephanas: Addicted to serving imperfect saints!

Phil. 4:2— Negative... Euodias and Syntyche: Stop your fussing!

2 Tim. 4:10— Negative... Demas has forsaken... loves this present world!

2 Tim. 4:11— **Positive**... Mark is profitable to me for the ministry!

2 Tim. 4:14— Negative... Alexander did me evil!

Rom. 16:17-18— Negative... mark those who cause divisions!

3 John 1:9— Negative... Diotrephes loves to have preeminence and won't receive us!

Romans 16:17— Negative... "Now I beseech (exhort, urge, beg, entreat) you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences...and avoid them."

NEWS FLASH: Beginning next Sunday Morning in Bible believing churches when pastors and members walk into the church auditorium/worship centers—the real truth about each one of us [All we have thought, said or done the previous week!] will be printed out and shown on a giant screen... and this will be done every Sunday!

If this were to be the case— what would happen to church attendance?

THIS WILL TAKE PLACE: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. (2 Cor. 5:10-11; Rom 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-17)

Here's a summary of God's bottom line ULTIMATE SOLUTIONS to the church at Corinth and to any Bible believing congregation:

1. Doctrine and exhortation that deals with the specific problems and needs in a church to EXPOSE LOVELESSNESS and/or UNHOLINESS! **(1 Corinthians 1-16)**

2. A call to be rooted in Calvary love! **(1 Corinthians 1:17-18 / 2:2)**

3. A call to the more excellent way of God's love! **(1 Corinthians 13:1-13)**

4. The examples of those [The house of Chloe and the house of Stephanas] **who while members of a very carnal church, were in**

the midst of it all a part of the solution and not a part of the problem! They REMAINED addicted to godly ministry!

To be a part of the solution, FIRST, make sure you have received the love of God. This kind of love is impossible without God's love first being shed abroad in your heart. You cannot express love until you have first experienced it. (Romans 5:5)

Jesus on the cross as the sinner's substitute and sin bearer is the greatest display of unconditional love ever exhibited! He did it for you and for me.

He did it so that we can be LIVING DEMONSTRATIONS

of His love to the imperfect people in our lives!

May grace abound to one and all! / James Bell /
www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

****** SPRING CLOCKS FORWARD ONE HOUR ON SATURDAY NIGHT!**

**** WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room**

**** NOTE:** Jody Allen is ministering to **young Children**, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service. **YOUTH GROUP: this Wednesday @ 6:30pm at David and Claudette Hulme's home!**

☐ **LADIES BIBLE STUDY— March 5, 11:00am**, The Life of David! - 1 Samuel 18 - Cindy Bell, teaching. {Meet in Ladies Sunday School Room: Come in FRONT doors of the church auditorium or the SIDE door at the top of the IRON STEPS!}

* **EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!** {Study in 1 Thessalonians}... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!}

SUNDAYS— MARCH 8, __, 22, 29

1. **9:30am** Sunday School
2. **10:45am** Worship Service
3. **Noon**— Fellowship, Covered-dish lunch
4. **1:00pm**— Early afternoon worship service

SUNDAY, MARCH 15:

1. 9:30am - Sunday School
2. 10:45am - Worship Service and LORD'S SUPPER

No noon meal or Afternoon Service

Sunday Evening HOME FELLOWSHP/BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

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