

**“A UNITED AIM AND FOCUS FOR THE
CHURCH”**
1 Corinthians 1:1-17

INTRODUCTION

Paul was addressing a culture that was technologically advanced, religiously diverse, but morally corrupt. Though the Church had many, many good qualities, there was an illness. This is about getting the Church back to health. Ultimately, that's what Jesus wants for every local Church. He wants it to be spiritually healthy!

THEIR BLESSINGS (V. 4-9)

Paul greets them with affection, they are saints (saved). The moment someone gives their life to Jesus, they become a saint. **Grace and peace** – as an introduction to every letter, to every church. That's God's introduction to every person and what He offers to everyone. It's what He wants us to have and knows we need it. NO WONDER people want to serve Him! For our hostility, for our anger, for the damage we cause, for our arrogance, rebellion, stubbornness – grace; peace, harmony. They were enriched by Him in speech & knowledge. Paul said he was enriched by them.

THEIR MAIN PROBLEM OF DIVISION (V. 10-12)

Paul uses the title “Apostle”. This is authoritative to correct them, even though he loves them. Their attitude towards their gifts had gone to their heads. There were divisions in the Church. They had their personal favorite pastors but there was a prestige attached to their egos and pride, and it caused disagreements. One group favored Paul, others Peter, and still others Apollos. They were prone to this on many levels and it was unhealthy.

CONSIDER

*Do we have strong opinions? We don't have to agree on everything, but disagreements shouldn't turn into an argument. Today, it doesn't take much for people to get angry with each other. This is one of the things that will hold a church back. **Opinions turning into personal preferences.** Church members have an unbiblical devotion to things that really don't matter to the aim/focus of the Church, such as the building/property. (Heaven isn't really impacted by it). The order of the worship service or the kind of worship. (That's not how we've done it here, ever!) These can be sacred cows with people so devoted to them and HIGHLY resistant to inconsequential changes. **Perfectly joined together, v.10** – A united aim/focus, the same opinion about what this Church's purpose is all about and should be focusing on. *Which is?... **The Glory of God & the Good News of Jesus Christ.*** A unified Church is resilient and powerful!*

Notice **v.13-17**. We should have an *outward* focus, reaching others, inviting others. So let's deny ourselves, our unimportant preferences, and not argue over opinions. Let's be unified together around our purpose, **The Glory of God, the Gospel!**

PRAY

- That each member would recognize their own sacred cows that have to die.
- That the each member of the Church would have a more outward focus.
- That we'd be unified around the Gospel.