

Purpose:

- Guide conversation
- Encourage discovery
- Keep focus on Christ
- Help participants speak more than the leader

Day 1 Afternoon

Day Theme: The Call to Unity

One memorable sentence: A divided world desperately needs to see a united church.

Poll: When conflict happens in a group, what is your typical response? A. Pick a side and fight for what is right. B. Avoid the conflict and stay quiet. C. Try to mediate a compromise. D. Leave the group entirely.

Opening Engagement: Have you ever watched a group, a team, or a family fall apart because of internal drama? The church in Corinth was tearing itself apart with rivalries, and Paul knew he had to intervene immediately.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 1:10, NKJV) "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- An urgent appeal: "beseech you... by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- A negative command: "that there be no divisions among you."
- Three positive commands: "speak the same thing," "be perfectly joined together," and be of the "same mind" and "same judgment."

Guided Discussion:

- Why do you think Paul invokes the name of Jesus right at the beginning of his plea for unity? (Allow discussion)
- What does it mean to "speak the same thing" in a diverse group of people with different backgrounds? (Invite multiple responses)
- How is being "perfectly joined together" different from simply tolerating one another on a Sunday morning?
- Where in our own community or church do we most need to apply this command to have the "same mind" today? (Ask follow-up: What is one practical step to get there?)

Discovery Insight: True unity isn't just about avoiding open fights or pretending to agree; it is a deep, intentional aligning of our minds and purposes around Jesus. When Christ is the absolute center, our petty differences fade into the background.

Christ Connection: Before He went to the cross, Jesus prayed that His followers would be one, just as He and the Father are one, showing that true unity is a reflection of the divine nature.

Life Response: Identify one relationship where you have experienced friction recently, and pray specifically for that person's blessing this week.

Encouragement Bridge: Last week we discovered that the cross shatters human pride. This week, we see what happens when we must fight to keep that pride out of our fellowship!

Day 2

Day Theme: The Danger of Cliques

One memorable sentence: Are you stuck in a spiritual clique?

Poll: Why do people naturally form cliques? A. To feel safe and belong somewhere. B. Because they share common interests or backgrounds. C. To feel superior to outsiders. D. It just happens by accident.

Opening Engagement: Have you ever felt left out by a clique at church? You aren't the first. The Corinthians practically invented church drama by forming rival fan clubs around their favorite preachers.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, NKJV) "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- Four distinct factions are named: Paul, Apollos, Cephas (Peter), and Christ.
- Paul asks three sharp, rhetorical questions.
- He mentions the crucifixion and baptism as unifying markers.

Guided Discussion:

- Why is it so tempting for believers to attach themselves to charismatic or eloquent leaders? (Allow discussion)
- How do you think the group claiming "I am of Christ" might have been just as divisive and arrogant as the others? (Invite multiple responses)
- How does Paul use the imagery of the cross and baptism to immediately shut down this hero-worship?
- In what ways do modern Christians still divide themselves into "fan clubs" today? (Ask follow-up: How can we appreciate good teaching without idolizing the teacher?)

Discovery Insight: When we elevate human leaders, theological camps, or our own opinions above the cross, we fracture the body of Christ. Our primary loyalty must always be to the Savior who was crucified for us.

Christ Connection: Jesus wasn't torn in pieces for us; His unified sacrifice demands a unified body. We find our identity in His name, not the name of any human leader.

Life Response: Check your own heart: are you giving any pastor, speaker, or influencer the loyalty and allegiance that belongs only to Jesus?

Encouragement Bridge: Jesus wasn't torn in pieces for you, so stop tearing apart His church.

Day 3

Day Theme: Carnal Christianity vs. Spiritual Maturity

One memorable sentence: Arguing with other Christians doesn't make you deep; it makes you a baby.

Poll: What is the clearest sign of spiritual immaturity? A. Not knowing enough Bible verses. B. Constant arguing, jealousy, and drama. C. Sporadic church attendance. D. Struggling with personal doubts.

Opening Engagement: The Corinthians prided themselves on being intellectual, advanced, and "wise." Paul's assessment of their actual spiritual level was a massive reality check.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, NKJV) "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- A contrast between being "spiritual" and "carnal" (babes in Christ).
- A contrast in diet: "milk" versus "meat".
- The specific evidence of being carnal: "envying, and strife, and divisions."
- The result of carnality: they "walk as men."

Guided Discussion:

- What does Paul mean when he compares these believers to "babes in Christ"? (Allow discussion)
- Why does Paul point to their behavior (envying, strife) rather than their theological knowledge to prove they are immature? (Invite multiple responses)
- How does a "carnal" mindset naturally lead to divisions in a community?
- How can a church group successfully transition from spiritual "milk" to "meat"? (Ask follow-up: What does a spiritually mature disagreement look like?)

Discovery Insight: True spiritual maturity isn't proven by how much deep theological knowledge we have or how loudly we can argue a point, but by how well we love and maintain peace. Jealousy and division are proof that we are still acting like the unspiritual world.

Christ Connection: Jesus offers the "solid food" of a transformed life, inviting us to grow out of our selfish, worldly habits into His perfect image of love.

Life Response: The next time you are tempted to argue a point just to prove you are "right," choose to prioritize the relationship and peace instead.

Encouragement Bridge: Winning an argument might mean you're actually losing spiritually. Let's aim for true maturity today.

Day 4

Day Theme: Leaders as Servants

One memorable sentence: Stop treating your pastors like celebrities.

Poll: What is the most important quality for a church leader? A. Charismatic speaking ability. B. Strong administrative and organizational skills. C. Humble servanthood and integrity. D. Deep theological and academic knowledge.

Opening Engagement: In ancient Greek culture, people loved to follow famous philosophers like celebrities to boost their own status. The early church had to fight off this toxic "influencer" culture to survive.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, NKJV) "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- Leaders are described with two terms: "ministers of Christ" and "stewards of the mysteries of God."
- The primary requirement for a steward is to be "found faithful."

Guided Discussion:

- How does the word "steward" (a household manager who owns nothing) completely change the way we view leadership? (Allow discussion)
- Why is being "faithful" more important to God than being popular, eloquent, or visibly successful? (Invite multiple responses)
- What happens to a church when its leaders act like celebrities instead of servants?
- How can we properly honor and support our spiritual leaders without turning them into idols? (Ask follow-up: How can you encourage a leader in your church this week?)

Discovery Insight: Christian leaders are simply servants and stewards entrusted with God's message. They are not the masters of the house. The power, the growth, and the glory belong entirely to God.

Christ Connection: The ultimate Master of the universe became the ultimate Servant, showing us that true greatness in God's kingdom is found in serving others.

Life Response: Pray for your local church leaders today, asking God to help them remain faithful, humble, and protected from the pressure of spiritual pride.

Encouragement Bridge: Our leaders are simply servants planting seeds; it is God alone who makes the church grow.

Day 5

Day Theme: The Ultimate Antidote

One memorable sentence: What is the absolute best way to kill your own ego before it kills your relationships?

Poll: When you are wronged or offended, what is the hardest thing to do? A. Forgive and forget. B. Apologize for your part in the mess. C. Give up your right to get even. D. Treat the person with genuine kindness.

Opening Engagement: To cure the pride and division in Corinth, Paul doesn't just give them a list of rules. He points them to the most mind-bending example of humility in the universe.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read Philippians 2:5-8, NKJV) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- A command: "Let this mind be in you."
- Christ's original status: "in the form of God," "equal with God."
- His downward actions: "made himself of no reputation," "took... the form of a servant," "humbled himself," "became obedient unto death."
- The final destination: "the death of the cross."

Guided Discussion:

- What does it mean practically to have the "mind of Christ" when dealing with people who annoy or oppose us? (Allow discussion)
- Why is it so significant that Jesus didn't cling to His divine privileges and rights? (Invite multiple responses)
- How does Christ's choice to become a servant challenge our modern obsession with demanding our own "rights"?
- In what specific way can adopting this self-emptying mindset heal a fractured church or family? (Ask follow-up: What is one "right" you might need to give up for the sake of unity?)

Discovery Insight: The root of all disunity is pride, self-interest, and demanding our own way. The only cure is the mind of Christ—a radical, self-emptying love that chooses to serve rather than to be served.

Christ Connection: Jesus gave up the glories of heaven and embraced the shame of the cross solely out of love for us, bridging the ultimate divide between God and humanity.

Life Response: Find one hidden, thankless task you can do for someone else this week to practice "making yourself of no reputation."

Encouragement Bridge: When we serve each other like Jesus did, divisions melt away and true fellowship begins.

Day 6

Day Theme: A Lifestyle That Reflects the Cross

One memorable sentence: A unified church doesn't mean a painless life; it means suffering together for the gospel.

Poll: How do you view hardships in your Christian life? A. A sign I'm doing something wrong. B. An inevitable part of life on earth. C. A direct attack from the enemy. D. An opportunity to grow closer to Christ and others.

Opening Engagement: Following Jesus doesn't guarantee a life of comfort. In fact, true unity is often forged in the fires of shared hardship. When we suffer for the gospel, we follow the pattern of the cross.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read Colossians 1:24, NKJV) "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: "

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- Paul's emotion regarding suffering: "rejoice".
- The purpose of his suffering: "for you" and "for his body's sake".
- He identifies the body as "the church".

Guided Discussion:

- Why would someone actually "rejoice" in suffering for a group of people? (Allow discussion)
- How does enduring hardship or working through difficult times together strengthen the bonds of a community? (Invite multiple responses)
- What does it mean to live a life that reflects the sacrifice of the cross rather than the comfort of the world?
- How can we support believers who are currently suffering for their faith or facing severe trials? (Ask follow-up: How does bearing someone else's burden create unity?)

Discovery Insight: Authentic Christian unity is cross-shaped. It requires us to lay down our comfort, endure hardships, and willingly bear burdens for the sake of Christ's body, the church.

Christ Connection: Just as Christ suffered to build the church, we are called to embrace self-sacrificing love to sustain, protect, and unify it.

Life Response: Reach out to someone in your church who is going through a difficult time and offer to carry a specific burden for them this week.

Encouragement Bridge: When we share in the sufferings of Christ, we also share in His unbreakable fellowship.

Day 7 Summary**5 Weekly Takeaways:**

- Centered on Jesus: True unity is impossible if we center our faith on human leaders or opinions; Christ must be the undivided focus of the church.
- The Danger of Factions: Forming cliques and playing favorites with spiritual leaders destroys the harmony and witness of the body of Christ.
- Maturity Over Carnality: Arguing, envying, and strife are signs of spiritual immaturity (babes in Christ), no matter how much theological knowledge a person has.
- Servant Leadership: Pastors and leaders are not celebrities to be worshiped; they are humble stewards who must be found faithful to God.
- The Mind of Christ: The ultimate antidote to pride and division is adopting the self-emptying, sacrificial servanthood of Jesus.

Final Reflection Question: Looking at the factions and pride that threatened the Corinthian church, what is one specific attitude or behavior you need to surrender to Jesus today to help build unity in your own church family? (Pause for responses)

Closing Appeal: We have seen this week that a divided world desperately needs to see a united church. The cross of Christ shatters our pride, our cliques, and our need to be "right." Let us choose today to put on the mind of Christ, making ourselves of no reputation, and loving one another with a humility that proves to the world that we belong to Jesus.