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Divisions in the Church at Corinth

1:10 to 4:21



The **Corinthian** church had many serious problems, one of which was being **split into factions (1:10)**. After **Apollos** had ministered in **Corinth** for a time, some of the believers developed a special loyalty to **him**. Friction began to develop between them and those who were loyal to **Paul**. Others were loyal to **Peter (Cephas, his Aramaic name)** and still another group identified itself as belonging only to **Messiah**. **The apostle** strongly rebuked all of them for quarreling and having such immature and unspiritual divisions (**to see link click Aj - Splits and Division in the Church at Corinth**).

Their most serious problem, however, was in not detaching themselves from the worldly ways of the culture around them. They could not understand, and perhaps did not want to understand, the principle of: **Do not love the world or the things of the world (First John 2:15)**. They could not get “decorinthianized.” In **his** previous “lost letter” (see **Ag - Founding of the Church at Corinth**), **Paul** specifically had warned them **not to associate with people who engage in sexual immorality (5:9)**. Some of **the Corinthians** thought **he** meant for **them not to associate with** unbelievers who were immoral. But the sexually corrupt, the covetous, swindling, and idolatrous people to whom **Paul** referred to were fellow church members who refused to give up, or had fallen back into, the debauched life-style of **Corinth (5:9-11)**. The faithful believers **were not to associate with** such as those. Such wicked believers were, in fact, to be put out of the fellowship in order to purify the church (**5:13**).

Like many believers today, **the Corinthian** believers had great difficulty in not mimicking

the unbelieving and corrupt society around them. They usually managed to stay a little higher than the world morally, but they were moving downward, in the same direction as the world. You can't swim in the toilet and come up smelling like a rose! **They** wanted to be in **God's** Kingdom while keeping one foot in the kingdom of this world. **They** wanted to have the blessings of the new life, but hung on to the pleasures of the old. **They** wanted to have what they thought was the best of both worlds, but **Paul** warned **them** that that was impossible **(6:9-10)**. **The Corinthians** had gotten **their** principles confused. **They** continued to openly associate with arrogant and sinful church members, with whom **they** should have broken fellowship. And, on the other hand, **they** mimicked, but refused to associate with **their** unbelieving neighbors, to whom **they** should have been witnessing.²²