

1 Corinthians 1:10–17

Getting Behind the Divisions

Introduction

- Conflicts often stop at surface behaviour without addressing the heart.
- Root issue: loving self rather than loving God and others (Prov 26:21).
- The Spirit devotes four chapters to deal with this first—showing its importance.

Context of the Letter

- Other issues in the church (addressed later):
 - Resurrection (ch. 15)
 - Spiritual gifts (ch. 12–14)
 - Worship practices (ch. 11)
 - Christian liberty (ch. 8–10)
 - Marriage (ch. 7)
 - Sexual sin (ch. 5–6)
 - Lawsuits among believers (ch. 5–6)

Misunderstanding the Church

- We import ideas from school, work, or clubs—approaching church “in a human way.”
 - But church operates by the Spirit, not by human systems or strategies.
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1. The Problem of Divisions (v. 10)

a. Paul’s Appeal

- In the Name of the Lord Jesus
- “I exhort you...”

b. His Urgent Commands

- All speak the same thing
 - No divisions among you
 - Be perfectly joined in the same mind and judgement
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2. Examples of Divisions (v. 11–16)

a. Blindness to Division

- Thinking “we’re not quarrelling” until God reveals our hearts

b. Misplaced Loyalties

- “I follow Paul / Apollos / Cephas...”
 - Is Christ divided?
 - Was Paul crucified for you?
 - Were you baptised into Paul’s name?
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3. The Fallacy Behind Divisions (v. 17)

a. Trusting Human Wisdom

- Relying on human means (power, numbers, wealth, strategy)
- “Unless the Lord builds the house...”

b. Valuing Rhetoric Over the Cross

- Corinthians prized persuasive speech
- Paul warns the gospel can be “emptied” by human methods
- Ministry must not hollow out the message of the Cross

Conclusion: Division stems from thinking in human ways.