



# one body

1 Corinthians 12-16

SCPC term 4 2008

## sunday 14th december 2008

### study 9 ONE BODY, ONE GIFT 1 Cor 15:58-16:4

KEY VERSE FOR SERIES: "the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12

**BACKGROUND:** The collection that Paul refers to here was actually a big part of his second missionary journey. Wherever he went, planting churches amongst the GENTILE regions of Greece, he urged these new converts to contribute to the needs of the struggling JEWISH Christians in Jerusalem. For some reason (probably either famine, persecution or both) the Jerusalem church was doing it tough and Paul took it upon himself to ease their suffering through this collection. But its important to understand that Paul's concern was even deeper than to meet the physical needs of the Jerusalem church. He also knew that this gift of money would be a compelling witness to the unifying power of the gospel. He hoped that the gift would remind both Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians that they were one in Christ Jesus. For more about the collection, see also 2 Corinthians 8, Romans 15:25-28 & Acts 24:17.

AT FIRST GLANCE THIS PASSAGE—'THE COLLECTION FOR GOD'S PEOPLE' (NIV HEADING) - APPEARS TO STAND APART FROM WHAT COMES BEFORE AND AFTER. A CLOSER LOOK REVEALS THAT THIS IS NOT TRUE AT ALL. THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING WHY PAUL BRINGS UP THIS COLLECTION NOW CAN BE FOUND AS HE MOVES FROM GENERAL PRINCIPLES IN THE LAST FEW VERSES OF CHAPTER 15 TO THE SPECIFIC ISSUES IN 16:1-4.

Q1-2. Paul tells us that 'God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' and then immediately draws the following conclusion: 'THEREFORE... always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord...'. This is a classic example of Paul's 'gospel logic': GOD GIVES US (the victory), THEREFORE WE GIVE OURSELVES (fully to the work of the Lord). It's the same logic that we see all through Paul's letters, for example you might recall 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "you were bought at a price, THEREFORE honour God with your body'.

Q3. According to the writer of Ecclesiastes, death renders all work "under the sun" ultimately "meaningless" or literally "vanity" or "in vain". But if death has been defeated then it is possible for our labour to have enduring meaning. But note the qualifying phrase—'your labour IN THE LORD". Life and work 'under the sun' is always in vain but life and work 'under the Son' is not!

Q4. No hints for this one... wrestle with it yourselves! It'll be good for you!!!

Q5. Jesus teaches on numerous occasions that money is his greatest rival in the battle for the hearts of men. Here Paul reminds us that in response to the gospel we can turn a potential enemy into a great slave for the gospel (see also the notes above on 'background').

Q6. Paul has previously taught the Corinthians about the foolishness of having divisions in their midst on the basis of which leaders or teachers they follow. Here he shows them that the unity achieved by the death and resurrection of Jesus knows no bounds—extending even to this radical expression of reconciliation (a substantial financial gift) between Jews & Gentiles. The kingdom of God is open to all who trust in Jesus!



Q7-9. One of the constant battles when it comes to 'application' is to encourage the group to GET SPECIFIC. If your group suffers from this problem (and it does!) there are two things you can do as their leader. The first is to model getting specific. This is essential because you can't expect the rest of the group to do something that you're not willing to do. The second thing you can do is to ask questions that PUSH group members to be more specific. For example, "what actual difference will that make?". Don't want to be 'pushy'? It's your job (see Hebrews 10:24 and think of yourself riding a stubborn horse)!

small group bible study leaders' notes