



1 CORINTHIANS 8–13

PAUL'S Q&A:

THE CORINTHIANS' QUESTIONS, AND PAULS' ANSWERS

In the next chapters, Paul answers more of the Corinthians saints' questions and corrects their misunderstandings. He focuses on discerning dietary choice vs. idolatry, not giving offense, following the example of the Israelite wanderings as a type of Christ and His plan, the sacredness of the sacrament, the need for the gifts of the Spirit, and the preeminence of charity (1 Corinthians 1–7 has the introduction).

1 CORINTHIANS 8

Questions About Idolatry

1 Corinthians 8:1–13

1 Corinthians 8:1 “Now concerning food offered to idols” (ESV) Paul addresses another question from their letter (7:1) about eating meat offered to idols. As background behind this question, in most cities across the Roman Empire, one bought meat from the market. The market meats had been slaughtered at the pagan temples.

1 CORINTHIANS 8–13 OUTLINE

8:1–11:1 Idol Sacrifices

11:2–16 Women Veiled in Prayer

11:17–34 The Lord's Supper

12–14 Spiritual Gifts

Animals were sacrificed to idols and then eaten at temple feasts. The priest took the surplus meat to market to sell. Jews did not buy or eat meat from gentile markets because it may have been contaminated with idolatry. The Corinthian Christians questioned this too, knowing that since an idol meant nothing, was the meat okay to eat. Their knowledge of the gospel allowed them to see beyond the cultural baggage and realize the meat was not changed or unsafe to eat. This must have been a significant problem, as Paul dedicates much space to it.

Some early saints (“the weak” as Paul calls them) put down other members who worried about idols and asserted their “knowledge” to buy the meat without fear. Paul was willing to buy meat in the market, as long as no one was offended, and he could avoid the public association with idolatry. In the middle of the verse, it appears that Paul quotes their question, “all have knowledge.” Paul corrected them, “it is love that builds up; knowledge without love puffs up or inflates or is proudful.”¹ Those Christians with knowledge of the gospel may eat the market meat, but only if it does not offend others.

1 Corinthians 8:2 “If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not” (ESV) Paul repeatedly attacked the pride of his audience, as did Jesus (Luke 11:37–54; 22:24–27). He asked them to address problems with meekness. In this case, those who thought they understood the gospel, had “knowledge,” but they offended their fellow saints. Their higher understanding of the gospel allowed them more “knowledge,” which, unfortunately, led to pride. This reminds me of a statement in *Screwtape Letters*. A demon writes to his protégé, “Your patient has become **humble**; **have you** drawn **his attention** to the fact?”²

1 Corinthians 8:3 “if anyone loves God, he is known by God” (ESV) Paul contrasts the Christian God with pagan Gods. Paul identifies our God as one who knows and loves His creations. I love Jesus’ similar message in the footnote, I “know my sheep and am known by mine” (Jn 10:14).

1 Corinthians 8:4 “we know that an idol is nothing” Idols only have the power and honor we give them. Our generation has a similar problem with idolatry. We do not have temples to Diana or Jupiter, but we have temples of sports, consumerism, drinking, gambling, pornography, entertainment, soap operas, sleazy books, laziness, food, electronics, and self-indulgence—all of which can become false worship. Anything that distracts us spiritually from our God and His work is idolatry. We need to keep our priorities clear and avoid every temple of the devil.

1 Corinthians 8:5 “There be gods many and lords many” This is often described as referring to pagan gods. But the Prophet Joseph Smith saw this phrase as coming from Paul’s beliefs in conjunction with the One great Father God. His scribes recorded, “Paul says there are Gods many and Lords many; and that makes a plurality of Gods, in spite of the whims of all men. . . . You know and I testify that Paul had no allusion to the heathen gods. I have it from God, and get over it if you can. I have a witness of the Holy Ghost, and a testimony that Paul had no allusion to the heathen gods in the text.”³

1 Corinthians 8:6 “There is but one God the Father . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ” Paul’s world was saturated with multiplying gods. His understanding of one God did not negate “the Son of God, Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:19; and 1 Corinthians 1:9; 15:28; etc.).

1 Corinthians 8:7–9 “But food does not bring us closer to God: We are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do” (BSB) The meat was not the problem; believing in idols was. The meat did not entreat God. In the pagan world, it was not even a sign of the promised Messiah. For Paul, the issue was brotherhood and charity. If someone’s behavior becomes a stumbling block to the “weak,” it is better to avoid it.

1 Corinthians 8:10–13 “when ye sin so against the brethren . . . ye sin against Christ” As Jesus’ at-one-ment has bought Christians, they should be nurturers, not offenders. Rather than focusing on the food, Paul looks at the broader picture and asks Christians to be less selfish and live, so we do not offend others. He followed Jesus’ teachings: “as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done *it* unto me” (Matthew 25:40). This also sounds similar to King Benjamin, “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

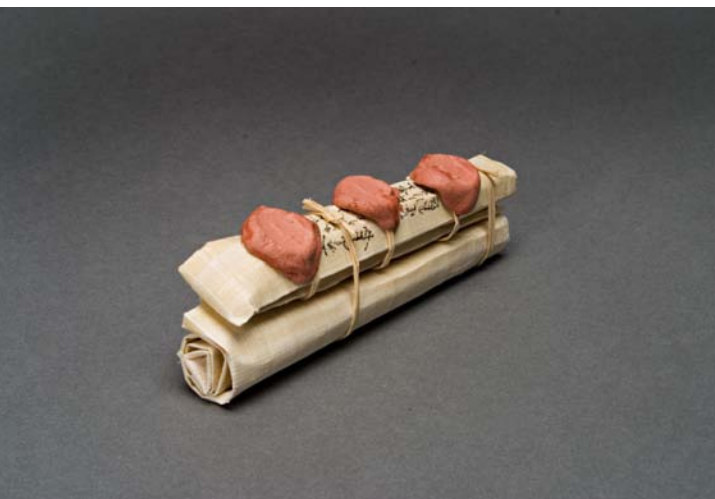


Altar that represents twelve gods of the Roman pantheon, 1st century CE. Images via Wikimedia Commons.

1 CORINTHIANS 9

Paul's Answer the Question of Apostolic Authority and use of Church Funds

1 Corinthians 9:1–2 “Am I not an apostle? . . . are not ye my work in the Lord?” The next question from the Corinthians saints deals with Paul’s authority to direct them. Paul defends his apostolic calling with the Corinthian saints as that evidence. In addition to the meaning of the Greek word “apostle/*apostolos*/sent,” Christians added a special qualification for their apostles. These were men who been called of God, seen the resurrected Savior and received a commission to testify of His resurrection (Acts 1:15–26; 22:14; Galatians 1:14–16). Paul felt as though the saints in Corinth were evidence of his missionary work and testimony.



Replica of ancient document with clay “seals” authenticating the document. Photograph courtesy of John W. Welch.

Those who were baptized were proof, or “*the seal*,” of his holy calling. What did Paul mean by this? The word “seal/*sphragis*” meant, “a seal, signet ring, the impression of a seal, that which the seal attests, the proof.” It is found sixteen-times in the New Testament—thirteen of which are in the book of Revelation (i.e. “sealed with seven seals” 5:1), and three times by Paul (i.e. “he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith” Romans 4:11). Most often it is used as a witness of who closed the document or as a witness of something that is sealed or closed for a time. With this definition, we can

understand that Paul reminded the Corinthians whom he had introduced and welcomed into the fold, that they are proof that he worked as God’s witness. They saw him use the gifts of the Spirit, heard his testimony, and felt the Spirit while he spoke.

1 Corinthians 9:3–4 “Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, have we not power to eat and to drink?” Paul tried to answer his critics’ questions about his authority and his apostolic station that allowed him to share food and housing with the saints. The word “power” (KJV) is also translated, “right” (ESV), and authority” (BLB). The broader context suggests that the question they struggled with was the housing and feeding church leaders. This is interesting in light of Acts 18:3 when it described Paul first coming to Corinth, moved in with Aquilla and Priscilla as a fellow “tentmaker . . . and he stayed and worked with them” (NIV). Repeatedly, the New Testament includes references to Paul working to provide for himself and not living off of the contributions of church members, “You yourselves know that these hands of mine have ministered to my own needs and those of my companions” (Acts 20:34; also see 1 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:8; etc.).

1 Corinthians 9:5 “Have we no right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the Lord’s brothers and Cephas?” (BSB) He compares himself to Peter, the other apostles, and brothers of Jesus (i.e. James, Joses, Jude, and Simon, Mark 6:3). In an attempt to defend himself, Paul voices his statement regarding his marriage and family. This is our strongest evidence that he had a wife—even though earlier in this letter it sounded as if he were a widow or serving as a missionary for a period without his wife by his side (1 Corinthians 7:8). We learned of Peter’s (Cephas) marriage when Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:30). The vast majority of all Jewish young men married by the time they were twenty, and young men across the Roman Empire by twenty-five, or else they had to pay an extra tax.⁴

1 Corinthians 9:6 “is it only I and Barnabas who lack the right to not work for a living?” (NIV) Paul and his first companion, Barnabas (Acts 9:27), were not serving together in Corinth, nor when Paul wrote the letter in Ephesus. It sounds as if they had plenty of means and skills, so they still chose to work for their living. This set a great example for the Saints.⁵

The Servant is Worthy of his Hire

1 Corinthians 9:7–14

1 Corinthians 9:7–9 “who serves as a soldier” (NIV) Paul likens himself to the military who received pay for their services to the state. As an apostle, because he, too, protected people and worked for them, he felt justified in receiving their financial help at times. Likewise, he gives examples of a farmer, herdsman, and the Law of Moses that states one had to make sure the oxen are fed. Certainly if God cared about His animals, He will care for His special servants (Deuteronomy 25:4 and 1 Timothy 5:18). Paul had “sown spiritual seed among” the Corinthians, but he did not “reap a material harvest” (1 Corinthians 9:11, NIV).

1 Corinthians 9:12 “If others have this right to your support, shouldn’t we have it all the more? But we did not exercise this right” (BSB) We do not know the full problem, but Paul sounds frustrated. He worked to avoid being a financial burden to the saints, “lest we should hinder the gospel,” while other leaders were financially supported. Repeatedly, Paul states that he earned his living without expressing the same exasperation (see the list in vs. 3), which suggests something else was going on here. He also says that he was not asking for any payment either (“I am not writing this to suggest that something be done for me. Indeed, I would rather die” 1 Corinthians 9:15, BSB).

1 Corinthians 9:13–14 “Don’t you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple” (NIV) Paul shares an example from the Jerusalem Temple at the time, where the priests and Levites received one-fourth of the sacrificial meat and grains as their share of the tithes for their sustenance. Jesus likewise taught “the laborer deserves his wages” (Luke 10:7). Jesus initially sent the Twelve out without purse and script, so that they would live off the people they taught (Mark 6:7–10), but this was changed at the Last Supper (Luke 22:36).

Paul the Servant to All

1 Corinthians 9:16–23

1 Corinthians 9:16–17, “When I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach . . . I am simply discharging the trust committed to me” (NIV) Paul is not bragging, rather he felt obligated to magnify his calling as an apostolic missionary. He was entrusted “with a commission” (RSV), or “stewardship” (ESV), but not necessarily a “dispensation” (KJV).⁶

1 Corinthians 9:18–19 “Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more” Paul did not receive any local financial support from the church; he wanted to serve—which gave him freedom. Luther also used this paradox, “A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a most dutiful servant to all, subject to all.”⁷ We can become spiritually and physically free when we submit to live within the Lord’s bounds.

1 Corinthians 9:20–23 “To the Jews I became as a Jew, . . . To those not having the law I became like one not having the law . . . I have become all things to all people” (NIV). Paul was flexible so that it helped his missionary service. We have no evidence that he flipped back and forth between beliefs, but rather in an attempt to not offend Jews, when with them, he adopted their dietary laws (i.e. extra washings, and kosher foods). Yet, he felt no compulsion to obey the Law of Moses, unless it helped his missionary service (and vice-versa for Gentiles or “those without the law”). He was a versatile missionary.

Titus Quincticus Flaminius Granting Liberty to Greece at the Isthmian Games by Jean Pierre Saint-Ours, 1780. Image via Wikimedia Commons.



Run for the Eternal Reward

1 Corinthians 9:24–27

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 “Run in such a way as to get the prize” (NIV) Paul used an athletic metaphor that was very familiar to the Corinthians (as he did eleven other times).⁸ The Isthmian Games were held there every other year (from 40 BC to ca. AD 390). At these Corinthian games, only the winner of the race received a prize, but in the Christian contest, all may run (or live) and receive God’s prize if they try (D&C 76:50–70).

1 Corinthians 9:25 “Everyone who competes in the games trains with strict discipline” (BSB) Paul called on the saints to live with as much discipline and self-control (or “temperance,” KJV) as an Olympian-level athlete. The perishable wreaths used for the Isthmian games were made from parsley or wild celery, and later from pine boughs.⁹ Yet in the race of life, where we train spiritually, the prize from God is incorruptible.

1 Corinthians 9:26–27 “I do not run aimlessly . . . but I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest . . . I myself should be disqualified” (ESV). Paul’s example of disciplining his body is intense. He uses the image of a boxer. The word “discipline/*hupópiázō*” actually meant: “I strike under the eye, hence: I bruise, treat severely, discipline by hardship.” The extreme image of beating himself up or giving himself a black eye, assures his audience that he means business when he says to “subdue the body.”

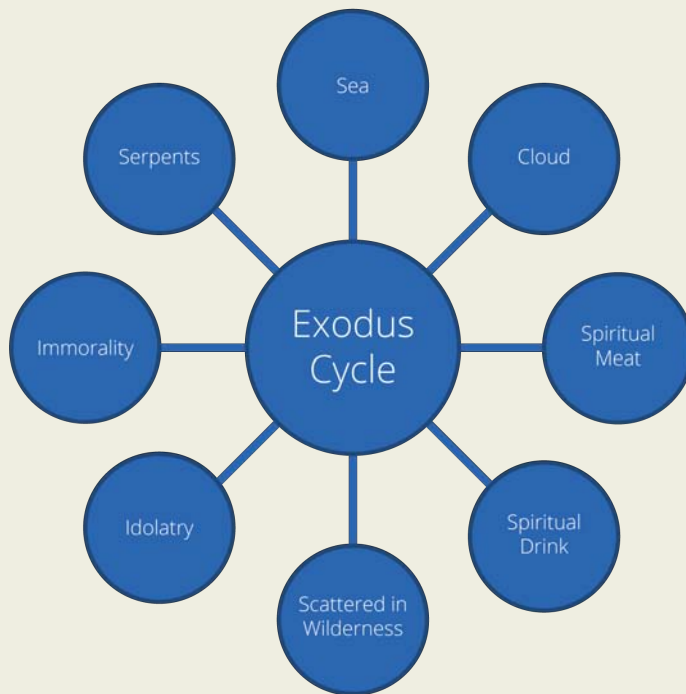
As we aim to run to the finish line, Christians live their daily lives with the goal of developing Christlike characteristics and serve Him. At the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph prayed that when the Lord comes again, we may become pure spiritual Israelites, “that our garments may be pure, that we may be clothed upon with robes of righteousness, with palms in our hands, and crowns of glory upon our heads, and reap eternal joy for all our sufferings” (D&C 109:76).

1 CORINTHIANS 10

The Exodus Cycle: Foreshadowing the Plan of Salvation

1 Corinthians 10:1–5

1 Corinthians 10:1–2 “Brothers and sisters . . . our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized . . . in the cloud and in the sea” (NIV) Earlier, Paul connects the Passover with Jesus as the Pascal lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). In this chapter we find eight more connections between the “Exodus Cycle” and Jesus’ mortal ministry as well as a mini-Plan of Salvation. The Jews were familiar with these scripture accounts. Paul uses them as “examples” (10:6) or signs and shadows— not only to avoid idolatry, but also to testify of Jesus as the promised Messiah. His list touches on only a few of the parallels we find in the same Exodus Cycle that symbolically point us to Christ’s plan.



EXODUS CYCLE

Passover Lamb Slain

Moses called Prophet, High Priest

Crossed the Sea

Cloud by Day + Pillar of Fire

Mt. Sinai-Received the Law

Idolatry-Immortality Lust after Evil

Tabernacle¹⁰

Serpents on Staff-Look + Healed

Battle of Rephidim-raised arms
(Battle of the Dead Ones)

40 Years Wandering in Wilderness

Joshua leads into the Promise Land

FULFILLED IN CHRIST

Son of God Slain

One like unto Me, Great High Priest

Baptism

The Spirit

Sermon on the Mt- Higher Law

Temptations

Opens Veil to Holy of Holies

Suffered on Cross

Triumphed over Death-raised up
(Released Spirit Prisoners)

40 days of Fasting-Purifier

Jesus leads to Eternal Promises

PLAN OF SALVATION FOR US

At-one-ment of Jesus

Be Like Him

Baptism

Spirit's Guidance, Protection

Live the Law of the Gospel

Temptations

Temple covenants to See God

Faith in Redemption of Christ

We will be raised to Resurrection
(Immortality or Exaltation)

Probationary State

Follow Lord to Promised Heaven

Paul points out the symbolism of going through the sea as a baptism. They left their old life in Egypt (symbolic of the world and worldliness), and started anew to serve God as their King. The Israelites' physical journey became a forty-year cleansing process (Forty was the number of purifications after childbirth¹¹).

We can see their wanderings typifying our journey from our first estate through immortality, starting with Exodus 19:10–11, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come.” The *Legends of the Jews*, referred to this experience as their “baptism.”¹² Yet when it was time to see the Lord, the frightened children of Israel asked Moses to go for them. They rejected this opportunity to enter into his presence and were given the lower law of the administration of angels instead.

1 Corinthians 10:3 “They all ate the same spiritual food” (NIV) Their “food/meat/*brōma*,” was described as coriander-seed like honey-wafers, but it had no name, so they called it, “*manna*/what is it?” (Numbers 11:7). This food as well as their month of meat, was divinely provided in abundance just as God’s spiritual food is given. Symbolically, it represented the “bread of life,” the Lord and His teachings.

1 Corinthians 10:4 “and drank the same spiritual drink . . . the spiritual rock that accompanied them . . . was Christ” (BSB) As Moses struck the rock and God’s gift of water flowed out, it symbolized the living waters that Jesus described to the woman at the well that sustain us eternally (Numbers 20; Jn 4). The bread and water can also symbolize the body and blood of the Savior’s atoning sacrifice as used in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

1 Corinthians 10:5 “God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness” (NIV) God *called* all the children of Israel, but many were not *chosen* because they would not soften their hearts and obey God. All of the children of Israel (but two, Joshua and Caleb), who were over twenty years old, died in the wilderness for disobedience. Paul pled with the Christians to not fall into the same tragic ending that their forefathers had. (Paul expanded on this theme in Hebrews). Symbolically, mortal life is seen as wandering in the wilderness for a purification period, as in Lehi’s Tree of Life Vision as well (1 Nephi 8).

Warnings from Israel’s Past

1 Corinthians 10:6–15

1 Corinthians 10:6–7 “Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things” (NIV) Paul had already described the Exodus stories as examples of Christian ordinances and teachings (i.e. baptism, the Spirit, etc.), and here adds a message to glean: beware of idolatry. As the children of Israel fell with the golden calf and complaining, Paul warned the Corinthians (and future audiences), of the dangers of idolatry (in its largest definition, see notes from 1 Corinthians 8:4). Paul quotes Exodus 32:6, as an apt summary of idol feasts that Corinthians attended.

1 Corinthians 10:8–10 “We should not commit sexual immorality . . . test Christ . . . [nor] complain as some of them did” (BSB) Paul references their sins of fornication, the biting serpents; and murmuring (Numbers 25:1–18; 21:5–6; 16:14, 49).

1 Corinthians 10:11–12 “these things happened to them as examples . . . as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come” (BSB) Jesus was that great fulfillment. Hosea 12:10 explained that God “used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets.” God used the history of Israel as examples for future generations and to identify Jesus as the Christ (also see Mosiah 3:15; 2 Nephi 25:24, 27). Paul repeats that the history was recorded for a purpose. Later generations can learn from their lessons to not duplicate their bad examples.

1 Corinthians 10:13 “God . . . will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able” What a great empowering promise! We have an omniscient God who knows our capabilities better than we do—trust Him and overcome. Yet, many times humans succumb to their temptations from either fear, pride, or poor mental and physical habits. Fortunately, we also worship a God that gives second chances when we need to repent.



The Passage of the Red Sea by William Hole, 1925.

“God . . . will with the temptation also make a way to escape” The second half of the verse addresses our need to avoid temptations in order to escape their influence. It also addresses those times when we sin, but God provides escape plans. Through our Redeemer’s Atonement, we can find healing and cleansing.

The Sanctity of the Sacrament

1 Corinthians 10:16–21

1 Corinthians 10:16 “Is not the cup of blessing that we bless a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?” As we flee from idolatry, we can run to the source of safety and truth, our Savior. The sacrament symbols from the Lord’s Last Supper, also share symbols with the Passover tradition. The cup at the end of the meal is known as the *“cup of blessing”* (Psalm 16:5). For thousands of years, Jews have held the cup and prayed something similar to, “Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe who created the fruit of the vine.” Paul ties the Passover symbols to Christ as we remember Him and “share in” (NEB) “communion of the body of Christ” (KJV).

1 Corinthians 10:17 “We are all partakers of the one loaf” (BSB) Paul emphasizes “one loaf” as a sign of spiritual unity among the saints, who strive to become one with God through the blessings of His sacrament. If we repent and take on Christ’s name, our desires can become one with His desires. This offers profound theology as a sign of spiritual unity with our God. He also wrote this to include gender, age, and national differences—all can be unified through the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 10: 18 “those who eat the sacrifices fellow partakers in the altar” (BSB) Paul reminds his audience that at the temple in Jerusalem, Israelite priests and Levites, shared the sacred sacrifice as a sacred meal with God. It shared teachings and covenants consistent with the sacrament.

1 Corinthians 10:19–21 “I do not want you to be participants with demons” (BSB) or **“devils”** (KJV) Even the Greeks and Romans had a sacred table fellowship tradition. But Paul warns them not to try to drink, eat, or live in a way that tries to combine the Lord and the devil (as the counterfeit gods in pagan worship did).

Do All to the Glory of God

1 Corinthians 10:23–11:1

1 Corinthians 10:23 “I have the right to do anything, you say—but not everything is beneficial. ‘I have the right to do anything’—but not everything is constructive” (NIV). Paul returns to the list of the saints’ questions that he quoted earlier (1 Corinthians 7:1). This verse begins with a false statement, “all things are lawful . . .” (KJV), followed with, “but.” These statements return to the ideas from 1 Corinthians 6:12, on freedom, and 8:1, on things offered to idols. These modern clarifications in the meaning are consistent with the JST: “All things are not lawfull for me, for all things are not expedient, all things are not lawfull, for all things edify not.”

1 Corinthians 10:24 “Let no man seek therefore his own, but every man another’s good” (JST). The last word in the KJV is, “*wealth;*” but it is also translated, “good” (RSV, NAS, NIV, JST), “interests” (NEB), “advantage” (JB). The idea speaks to looking out for each other’s eternal good.

1 Corinthians 10:25–26 “Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience” (BSB) The KJV, “shambles,” were the meat markets (which in Corinth, included other foods as well). Paul’s *cart blanche*: “eat whatever is sold,” demonstrated how completely emancipated Paul was from Jewish food obligations. Paul followed both Peter’s example in eating with Cornelius in Acts 11:2, and Psalm 24.

1 Corinthians 10:27–32 “If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you . . . But . . .” Paul repeats his accommodating counsel from 1 Corinthians 8, which directed the early saints to judge by the higher law of love and consideration for other’s needs. If a new convert or a pagan neighbor misunderstands your allegiance to God, then do not eat the offensive foods.

1 Corinthians 10:33 “I am not seeking my own good but the good of many” (NIV) Paul had pure motives, not trying to “please men” (Galatians 1:10) but willing to adapt in order to build the Kingdom of Heaven.

1 CORINTHIANS 11

1 Corinthians 11:1 “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (NIV) Paul admonished the Corinthians to imitate (Greek for “*follow*”) him as he tried to imitate Jesus. The Lord gave Himself to others; so too should disciples serve others. Paul uses this same phrase in 1 Corinthians 4:16, when he encourages others to be self-sufficient and work with their hands as he did.

Commendation: Unveiling the Veil

1 Corinthians 11:2–16

1 Corinthians 11:2 “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you” Paul opens another of the saints’ questions, by commending them for keeping the “ordinances” (KJV) or “traditions” (NRSV), that he had passed down. The word “ordinances” carries significant meaning in the restored church, but the Greek word “*paradosis*” has a broader definition that includes “handing over, delivery, hence teaching committed to a

“ORDINANCE/ PARADOSIS”

Instruction, tradition, trans-mission, handing down or over, delivery, hence teaching committed to a pupil. Very few translations choose the word “ordinances,” because it had overtones of the seven Catholic sacraments, and most English translations stem from a Protestant theology. Yet Paul taught the need of several saving ordinances.

Statue of a mourning Roman woman.
Image via Wikimedia Commons.

pupil” or “transmission.”¹³ Many modern English translations of this verse read: “directions” (DBT), “traditions” (RSV, ESV, NASV), or “teachings” (NIV). In the Old Testament of the day (LXX), “*paradosis*” also described specially teachings that were handed down orally.¹⁴

To understand Paul’s definition it helps to look at his context, especially to examine how Paul uses the same word, as a noun, in his Epistles five times.¹⁵ Just a few verses later he uses the verb form of the word in 1 Corinthians 11:23, when he speaks of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper: “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered/*paradidomi* unto you” (1 Corinthians 11:23).¹⁶ Whatever type of teachings Paul refers to with “*paradosis*,” he passed down the practice of women praying in public with a veil over their faces.

1 Corinthians 11:3 “**But I would have you know . . .**” or “**I want you to understand**” Paul uses this phrase four times in this Epistle to correct a misunderstanding (1 Corinthians 7:32; 10:20; 14:5). There must have been one ordinance that saints had—at least partially—misunderstood. Rather than restating the Christian dress code, Paul explains the underlining doctrinal background of the imagery of the head covering.

“the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” He begins with the source of human creation: God-Christ-man-woman. God the Father was the starting point, “source, or origin” of Christ, who was the origin of man, and man,





“**Head/kephale**” has multiple meanings in both Greek and English. Most often it referred to the physical head (as part of the body). Figuratively, it meant the origin or source (as the head waters of the Nile). According to the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, this section dealt with the relationship of man and woman “at the very foundations of their creaturehood.” Outside of these verses, we find “head/kephale,” 49 times in the New Testament to describe either a physical head or the Savior.

Above: The Veiled Woman by Raffaello Monti, 1854 via Wikimedia Commons.

Below: Veiled woman, ca. 1860 via Wikimedia Commons.



via his side-rib, the origin of his partner, woman.¹⁷ We find confirmation of this throughout the Bible, including: John 1:3; 20:17, and Genesis 2:22. In a few sentences, Paul takes this order of creation and then reverses it, honoring woman as a co-creator with God as the source of the next generation (1 Corinthians 11:12).

This chain of interlocking relationships links humanity with their Creators and becomes the foundation of Paul’s instruction. He does not intend this order of creation to demean women.¹⁸ In the ancient world, linking someone with deity honored and empowered them. Three times in this section he describes the origin of intertwining genders (1 Corinthians 11:3, 8, 12). Throughout the section Paul describe men and women as connected to their Creators through a symbiotic mutuality where they shared responsibility for one another.¹⁹

Paul does not make a case for male superiority. In verses 10–12, he speaks of woman as privileged with authority and indispensable to men, and vice versa. The section encourages a positive interrelationship between the genders. This is why I do not agree with those who interpret these verses as men “ruling” over women. I do not find evidence for that in the Pauline Epistles at large, nor specifically in this section. Whenever Paul refers to a “ruler,” he uses different words—i.e., “rulers/*archon*” (Romans 13:3), “rule/preside/*proistemi*” (1 Timothy 3:5; 5:17), “rule/govern/*brabeuo*” (Colossians 3:15), and “rule/leader/*hegeomai*” (Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24)—never “*kephale*.” Furthermore, Jesus denounced unrighteous dominion and superiority of any kind (Matthew 19:16; Mark 10:17).

1 Corinthians 11:4 “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.”

In the setting of this “ordinance” or teaching, men who covered their heads, dishonored God.²⁰ Paul uses the dual meaning for head—first physically, if they cover it, they dishonoureth God, or their figurative head. Jewish men did not cover their heads at that time (that practice came well after the temple was destroyed).²¹ In verse 7, Paul explains that because God had created man in His image and glory, if he covered himself, he would not acknowledge that affiliation (Genesis 1:27). In other words, if man covered his head in this special prayer setting, he dishonored his origins. This devalued their Christian beliefs. However problematic male head covering was, it appears that the bigger issue was that woman were not covering their heads, as this becomes Paul’s subject for the next five verses.

1 Corinthians 11:5 “But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head”

If you read the inverse of this statement, Paul declares that women were allowed to “pray and prophesy/propheteuo/to speak forth under inspiration” in the early Christian Church. This is a huge breakthrough from Judaism’s refusal to allow women to worship with men. Yet, Paul’s argument for women is exactly the opposite of that for men. Men honor their relationship to God by uncovering their heads, and women honor their husbands and God by veiling their heads. Paul explains this dichotomy in verse 7.

1 Corinthians 11:7–9 “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man”

What did Paul mean, “woman is the glory of man” in the context of man being the glory of God? Paul changes the statement in Genesis that said both genders were created in God’s image and limits it to males.

GENESIS 1:27

God created man in his own image,
in the image of God created he him,
male and female created he them.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:7

...he is the image and glory of God.

It appears that Paul wanted to accentuate woman as the “glory of man,” as something different from the “glory of God”—which caused this reader to ask *why*? Some limit the discussion to gender-distinctive clothing, but I see Paul exploring the theology behind human interactions with God.

Within the context of this chapter, letter, and New Testament at large, we can safely assume Paul did *not* mean that God created women solely to glorify men, nor that men could use women for glory in a manipulative or disrespectful manner.²² Paul described woman as a symbol of human potential as she facilitates human reproduction and glory. In this sense, women represent the glory of humanity because she allows humanity to achieve their glory. Nevertheless, in the hierarchy of God, the glory of humanity should not overshadow the glory of God. As children are born to a woman, she represents the “glory of man[kind].”

To some readers it does not seem appropriate that the man takes on a vicarious role of representing the “image and glory of God,” while a woman represents “glory of supplicating humanity.” Yet this is consistent with the biblical depiction of woman as God’s bride, people or the church.²³ The underlining principle that sheds light on these verses is in Moses 1:39. If God’s work and glory is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man,” then the same should hold true for humanity’s work and glory. Without the union of man and woman, they cannot achieve their work and glory. The union is a glorious thing. Nevertheless, in the hierarchy of God, the glory of humanity should not overshadow the glory of God, so glorious woman covers her face out of respect to God.²⁴

1 Corinthians 11:10 “For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels” The KJV reads, “power” but the NIV more accurately translated the veil as a sign of her “authority.” Paul repeatedly addresses the topic of authority in this epistle. He returns to the subject again this time to focus on women’s authority in the Church. Angels were mentioned in Eden, to guard the Tree of Life. Paul adds that angels also watch over women and give them authority/power. In early Christianity, females donned their prayer veils, as “priestesses.” The biblical scholar, F. F. Bruce, explained:

The veil is not a sign of the woman’s submission to her husband’s authority, nor even of her social dignity and immunity from molestation; it is a sign of her authority. In the synagogue service a woman could play no significant part. . . . In Christ she received equality of status with man: she might pray or prophesy at meetings of the church, and her veil was a sign of this new authority. Its ordinary social significance was thus transcended. As a man in public worship manifests his authority by leaving his head unveiled, so woman manifests hers by wearing a veil. . . . By discarding the veil Corinthian women were ignoring the [blessings set up by Christ for women].²⁵

Joseph Smith made only one change to chapter 11. The JST changed “power” (11:10) to “covering.” In Joseph’s mind, a woman was to have a covering on her head as a sign to the angels. Wearing a veil opened the door to a female version of the ministry of angels (see Moroni 7:29, 37; D&C 109:76). Brigham Young taught that angels guard the entrance to heaven where both women and men give them “signs and tokens” to return to the presence of God.²⁶ This is also interesting as the Hebrew word for at-one-ment is “covering.” Eve and her children became covered through the Savior to again commune and return to God.



Roman wedding ceremony, ca. AD 250 via Wikimedia Commons.

1 Corinthians 11:11–12 “Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman” Paul ends his explanation by stressing the complete interdependence of men and women—woman was created from man, while man is born of woman. The description encompassed the Edenic creation and birth process. Each mother opens the veil to mortality, just as Jesus opened the veil of immortality. A woman’s womb symbolizes a veil of life as spirit children pass from heaven to earth through her.

“**but all things of God**” Paul intimates a covenantal relationship with God (also see D&C 132:15). Through this trio of unity, we understand the mutuality of eternal marriage.²⁷ Paul’s promotion of marital interdependence is consistent with statements made earlier in the same epistle (1 Corinthians 7:2–3, 12–14).²⁸ The interrelationship of genders speaks to the worth of women as equals to men.²⁹ I see that Paul’s request for a woman to wear a veil during prayer has nothing to do with gender inequality and everything to do with her relationships, and authority to participate in Christian worship.

1 Corinthians 11:13: “Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman [prays] unto God uncovered?” In this new Christian order, Paul taught that it was proper for women to pray and prophesy or testify. Her veil witnessed to her authority to act in that proper manner. The word “comely/*prepo*” also meant “fitting, to stand out, to be conspicuous, eminent, becoming, seemly, or fit.”

Paul concluded this subject by reminding the contentious Corinthian saints (1 Corinthians 11:16), that clothing worn during ordinances signifies the relationships between God, Christ, men, and women. They were not a law unto themselves on this matter. He calls for a unity of the faith among all the churches of God—even in the practice of women wearing veils when praying and prophesying.

1 Corinthians 11:14–16 “If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God” (NIV) These hair customs and cultural practices are not the current directions from our living prophets. Modern prophets emphasize modest dress, no excessive piercings and tattoos.

The Sanctity of the Lord’s Supper

1 Corinthians 11:17–34

1 Corinthians 11:17–19 “In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good” (NIV) Paul addressed another problem or question, relating to the Lord’s Supper. The early Christians enjoyed more than just a piece of bread, but had a meal or feast of small barley loaves and diluted wine for their sacrament.³⁰ Paul’s answer suggests they had forgotten the purpose and symbols of the Lord’s Supper, and saw it as a common meal or Linger Longer. This problem had become another “division/*schismata*,” (which Paul first addressed in 1 Corinthians 1:10). But this time, it was because of “heresies/*hairesis*.”

1 Corinthians 11:20–22 “For as you eat, many of you proceed with your own meal to the exclusion of others. While one remains hungry, another gets drunk” (BSB) Their sacrament was a meal or feast of bread and wine, but the problem sounds like they did not reverently take it together in honor of the Lord, but used it as a meal which began as soon as some arrived—even to the extent of getting drunk off the sacramental wine. While some indulged their appetites, others were left hungry.

Fresco of a Christian agape feast in the Catacombe di Priscilla, Rome, 2nd to 4th century AD. Image via Wikimedia Commons.



Some scholars suggest that everyone brought some food, but did not share. Whatever they were doing, it was not in keeping with the sacred nature in remembrance of the Lord’s body and blood.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 “I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread . . .” (NIV) This is the oldest account we have of the sacrament. Paul claimed he learned this of the Lord, but Paul was not at the Last Supper. He learned about it afterward, but we do not know if that means through other apostles or directly from the resurrected Lord in vision. Paul rehearsed the sacred text to teach the offenders reverence for the Lord’s Last Supper. Paul includes its parallels to the Passover feast, “after supper he took the cup.”

1 Corinthians 11:27–29 “Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup” (NIV) Paul taught the early Christians (and us), the necessity of a personal examination of our covenants with God, filled with humility and meekness, so that we can repent *before* we partake of the covenants, remembering Jesus’ passion or suffering on our behalf. The Greek word for “examine/*dokimazo*” also means “to test, by implication to approve.” When we examine or test ourselves, we have the perspective engage with the process of returning our whole heart to God. We can ask, “Are we aware of our sins, and are we trying to overcome them? Are we truly repentant? Are our hearts filled with hatred or anger or bitterness toward another, or do we feel at peace? Are we living more righteously this week than last? Do we truly appreciate what the Savior did for us?”³¹ In the restored church the Lord taught Joseph Smith, “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:43).

1 Corinthians 11:33–34 “So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together . . . when I come I will give further directions” (NIV) Paul admonished them to practice more order and respect—both for each other and for God, by waiting to begin the Lord’s Supper together (In defense of the early church services, I can only imagine what it would have been like to live without clocks. Start times would have been harder). The other challenges Paul hoped to address in person.

1 CORINTHIANS 12

The Constitution of the Church—Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1–11

1 Corinthians 12:1 “Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters” (NIV) Paul addressed another problem from either his list of questions or reports (1 Corinthians 7:1). Paul wanted to inform the new converts about the importance of identifying gifts of the Spirit and counterfeit manifestations from the devil. Jesus had promised that the power of the Spirit would be manifest, but the early saints were confused as to what a spiritual manifestation was and what a counterfeit from the devil was. The same problems plagued other generations, too.

Understanding spiritual gifts was an enormous problem during the Second Great Awakening in 19th Century America (1801–1837).³² Experimentation with spiritual manifestations flooded religious debate. Methodist ministers had hundreds of people experimenting with uncontrollable barking and convulsing episodes and claimed they were from God.³³ Thus, the Lord also gave Joseph a revelation on them in D&C 46, the 7th Article of Faith, and in Moroni 7 (the most extensive of the four is D&C 46).

1 Corinthians 12:2–3 “ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols” The relatively new Corinthians saints were both Judaic and Gentile converts. It appears that they confused part of their idolatry with Christian ideals. Paul referenced a pagan practice where a victim felt transported in a hypnotic or ethereal state through poppies, or something else. These rituals included “trances, seizures, rantings, and ecstatic utterances.”³⁴ They felt a frightening feeling or demonic presence that only left once they would curse the pagan god. Also, in classical Greek literature, we can read of several people speaking in strange languages—like Apollo, Cassandra of Troy, priestess of Delphi, Sibyl of Cumae, just to name a few.³⁵ The Greeks attributed fortune telling to their pagan gods. We can read a little of this “spirit of divination” and “soothsaying” in Acts 16:16. All of these are demonic counterfeits of the gifts given by God’s Holy Spirit. Paul tried to teach them the difference between divine and satanic spirits.

“No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (NIV) The early saints did not differentiate between a true witness of the Holy Spirit and the devil. So, Paul started with the basics—how the Spirit witnesses to indi-

viduals that Jesus is the Lord God. Some might be able to say that phrase without a witness of the Spirit, but to know that deep inside must come from the Holy Spirit's witnesses.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 “there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone” (ESV) Paul begins with some general background and instructions about the workings of the Spirit of God. Even though God assigns different disciples different gifts, or “ministries” (BSB), they are all of God.

***1 Corinthians 12:7** “the Spirit is given for the common good” This key point helped the saints understand that the Spirit will only give the gifts to bless others and to build the kingdom. (D&C 46 repeats this qualification five times 46:9, 10, 12, 26, 29.) No selfish motives will work; the gifts exist *only* further God's work. When we are serving others, disciples can call on the Spirit to help in a special and powerful way.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11	MORONI 10:7-8	D&C 46:8-31	7TH ARTICLE OF FAITH	ROMANS 12:6-12
Testify of Jesus		Know Jesus the Son Believe others' testimony	Revelation	Exhort
Administrations		Administrations		Rule/Preside
Operations		Operations		Ministry
Wisdom	Teach Wisdom	Wisdom		
Knowledge	Teach knowledge	Knowledge		
Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophecy
Miracles	Miracles	Miracles		
Discerning of spirits	Ministering spirit	Discerning of spirits		
Interpretation of Tongue	Interpretation of Tong	Interpretation of Tongue	Interpretation of Tongues	
Tongues	Tongues	Tongues	Tongues	
Healing	Healing	Faith to Heal	Healing	
Faith	Faith	Faith to be Healed		Faith
Hope	Hope			Hope
Charity	Charity			Charity/love
	Beholding angels		Visions	
				Teaching

1 CORINTHIANS 12

D&C 46

MORONI 10

12:3 testify that Jesus is the LORD	46:13 know Jesus is the Son	
12:8 word of wisdom	46:17 word of wisdom	10:9 wisdom
12:8 knowledge	46:18 knowledge	10:10 knowledge
	46:14 belief on others' words	
12:9 faith	46:20 faith to heal	10:10 faith
12:9 healing	46:19 faith to be healed	10:11 heal
12:10 miracles	46:21 miracles	10:12 miracles
12:10 prophecy	46:22 prophesy	10:13 prophecy
12:10 discerning of spirits	46:23 discerning of spirits	10:14 ministering Spirit
10:14 behold angels		
12:10 tongues	46:24 tongues	10:15 tongues
12:10 interpretation of tongues	46:25 interpretation of tongues	10:16 interpret tongues
10:16 interpret languages		
12:13 baptism and confirmed with the Spirit		
12:28 apostles, prophets, teachers, helps, administrators, government	46:29 head 46:15 operations, administration	
13:1 charity		10:20 charity
13:13 hope		10:20 hope

1 Corinthians 12:8–11 “**To one there is given through the Spirit . . . to another gifts of . . .**” (BSB). Paul organized the gifts in pairs (except for faith), even though our verses cut those pairs. The gifts of the Spirit are so important to Christian disciples that each of the Standard Works contains a section on them. Prophets from many dispensations have encouraged believers to seek them wisely and regularly.

The Body and its Members

1 Corinthians 12:12–26

1 Corinthians 12:12 “**For as the body is one, and hath many members . . . also is Christ**” Paul used the image of Christ’s body again to explain that unity in the church depends on oneness of purpose (also in 1 Corinthians 6:15; 10:17; 11:29). Perhaps this verse initiated the practice of referring to the saints as church “members.” Paul asked the “members” to appreciate their diversity in manifestations of the different gifts of the Spirit, while he emphasized the need for individuals to cooperate for the well-being of the whole church.

1 Corinthians 12:13 “For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free” (NIV) This is the one place in the Epistles that alludes to the baptism of the Spirit. It appears that Paul may have paraphrased Jesus’ words from his sermon in Jerusalem at the Feast of the Tabernacles when Jesus invited “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink . . . rivers of living water” (John 7:37–38). After John recorded Jesus’ call, he explained, “He said this concerning the Spirit, whom those having believed in Him were about to receive” (BLB) Paul similarly explains, “we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (NIV). The Savior, His Spirit, and His teachings become the Living Water.

1 Corinthians 12:14–21 “If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?” Paul applied an analogy of body parts to the functioning of the church. He playfully explains that to fully function, the church needs all people and gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:23 “And those parts of the body that we consider less honorable, we clothe these with greater honor . . .” (CSB) Even the less obvious parts are *indispensable* (RSV). The symbolism of one phrase is especially meaningful. “We take special care to dress up” (CEV) or the Lord clothes or “bestows” (KJV) His disciples with gifts to make them better. This image is especially meaningful when we remember the Hebrew word for at-one-ment is “to cover/*kaphar*.” The at-one-ment can cover and enable the saints with God’s grace and gifts. In Genesis 30:20, the Hebrew word for “endowed” (NAS) or “endued” (KJV) can also be translated “bestowed” or clothed. The Atonement and the Spirit are given to cover and protect us as an endowment from God. God’s omniscience has everything perfectly arranged.

1 Corinthians 12:25–26 “there should be no division in the body, but that its members should have mutual concern for one another” (BSB) As our body works in harmony and inter-dependently, so should the church function. There should be no discord (RSV) or “schism” in the body or else it will become unhealthy.

The Exercise of Spiritual Gifts In Church

1 Corinthians 12:27–31

1 Corinthians 12:27 “You are the body of The Messiah and members in your places” (ABPE) This Aramaic translation kept the name Messiah rather than the Greek, Christ. Paul opened this section by using the Greek emphatic form, “YOU!/hymeis/ye.” He wanted the saints to actively work together and build the kingdom. He hoped to empower them to seek these spiritual blessings.

1 Corinthians 12:28–30 “God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second fits, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues” (NASB) Paul included in his discussion of gifts, a list of eight different church responsibilities or callings as examples (elsewhere, like Ephesians 4:1, his list varies). The early church referred to “*prophets*” as one inspired to speak from God (but not

the head or president of the church as we currently do). “*Helps*” is also translated, “*helpers*” (RSV), or “assistance” (NAB), or those with the ability to help give relief to the poor, weak or sick members. “*Governments*” or “good leaders”(JB) or “administrators”(RSV) were local authorities who supplemented the church-wide leadership. In a parallel fashion, Paul repeats the same list (only skipping helps), as seven questions.

1 Corinthians 12:31 “**Now eagerly desire the greater gifts**” (NIV) Other translations read: “earnestly desire” (RSV) “be ambitious for” (JB), “covet” (KJV), and “earnestly pursue” (JB2000) the higher spiritual gifts. I like F.F. Bruce’s translation of this verse: “And yet beyond all this I am showing you a way (to reach the highest goal).”³⁶

CHAPTER 13

Charity, the Supreme Gift of God

Paul’s thesis purports that the ability to have Christlike love surpasses the richest spiritual endowments. Richard Anderson wrote, “This is the most moving chapter in the New Testament outside of Jesus’ teachings. Like the Sermon on the Mount it teaches the disease not the symptom.”³⁷ The Greek word, “*agape /love*” is translated in the New Testament 86 times as “*love*,” 27 times as “*charity*.” (There are other Greek words used for love, but I will focus on *agape* here.) Outside of the New Testament, *agape* alone does not have the force that Paul attached to it as “divine love,” or as Moroni 7:47 defined charity, “the pure love of Christ.”

We have evidence that part of Paul’s poem on charity in 1 Corinthians 13, actually came from an earlier Christian record of Jesus’ sayings. Clement of Rome wrote a letter around AD 97 quoting Jesus as saying, “love endures all things” and nine other statements about love.³⁸ Furthermore, Jesus gave parallel priority to love, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35); and “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). If these ideas were originally from Jesus’ teachings, then perhaps He may have shared them with His other sheep. This would help explain why Mormon included similar, though not identical, phrases in a sermon, now recorded in Moroni 7:44–47.

1 Corinthians 13:1–3 “**Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal . . .**” Paul compares seven examples of great spiritual gifts with the gift of charity, to teach that no matter how wonderful other gifts and attributes may appear, without charity in one’s heart, the gift or service was not as meaningful.

1 Corinthians 13:4 “**Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself is not puffed up**” Paul progresses from *prioritizing* charity to *developing* charity. His list became a handbook on “how

to cultivate charity.” He wanted to help the saints develop Christlike love. The character of Christ is patient or “long suffering.” The next trait, “kind,” has a broader meaning than just kindness, as the Greek roots mean “useful.” Then Paul denounces jealousy or unhealthy competition that belittles another’s success. He asked the saints to avoid envy. There is no room for boasting/“vaunteth not itself,” or speaking or behaving with selfish motives. A person with charity “is not puffed up” with arrogant pride or self-centered motives. Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught that selfishness was the root of sin.³⁹

1 Corinthians 13:5 “Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” A charitable person behaves properly, not rude, crude, and “unseemly.” To develop charity, one “is not self-seeking” (BSB) or “does not insist on its own way” (ESV) and looks outside one’s self to the needs and interests of others. If the saints have developed patience, as listed in verse 4, then they are “not irritable or resentful” (ESV), nor prone to anger or take offense. They take responsibility for their emotions without blaming another. The final phrase in this verse has many meanings. “Thinketh no evil” can apply to deliberately conjuring up problems against others, or inferring falsehoods, and gathering defamatory resentful data to stir up contention. This also includes when one figuratively steps onto another to build up oneself. This includes pornography, and other self-satisfying habits that demean others. In this way, Paul’s phrase sounds similar to Zechariah 8:17, “Let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor” (ASB). Love includes being trustworthy—emotionally.



Jesus Christ exemplifies the kindness and compassion of which Paul teaches. Image from *The pictorial Bible and commentator: presenting the great truths of God’s word in the most simple, pleasing, affectionate, and instructive manner*, 1878. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

1 Corinthians 13:6 “Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth” Someone who has felt Christlike love does not rejoice in injustice or evil but finds joy in truth. Love includes a social dimension, too.

1 Corinthians 13:7 “Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” Charity “is always supportive” and “protects” all things (CEV, NIV). “Beareth/*stegó*” also means “to cover closely (so as to keep water out), generally to bear up under” and is used to “conceal, ward off, bear with, endure patiently.” If someone “believes the best in all” (ISV), then they eagerly give others the benefit of the doubt, and put the most favorable conclusion on them. They give people repeated chances (Matthew 18:22). Charity opens the way for hope. The Lord’s love steadily trusts or endures challenges.

1 Corinthians 13:8–9 “Charity never faileth” While other gifts come and go—such as prophecy and knowledge which can be known temporarily—charity, the pure love of Christ, will abide eternally.

1 Corinthians 13:9–10 “when completeness comes, what is in part disappears” (NIV) Christ’s Second Coming and the end of the earth will fulfill the needs of some gifts (i.e. tongues). Paul wrote with an eschatological emphasis through five verses (1 Corinthians 13:8–13). His point was that developing charity has eternal importance.

1 Corinthians 13:11 “When I was a child, I spake as a child . . . but when I became a man, I put away childish things” The Corinthian saints needed to grow up spiritually and realize what they thought was so important was not as substantial as the highest values of charity that will endure forever.

1 Corinthians 13:12 “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face . . . then shall I know even as also I am known” In Greek the word for “glass/*esoptron*/mirror” was a mirror made of highly polished metal. Their surfaces obscured the view so one had only a rough portrayal of reality. Another translation begins this verse, “now we see a dim reflection in a mirror” (JB).

1 Corinthians 13:13 “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” Paul repeats this triad—faith, hope, and charity—in seven other places, and we also find it written by other early Christians.⁴⁰ Its prevalence gives more substance to the theory that these ideas belonged to a more primitive record of Jesus’ teachings. Certainly the message rings of divine truth.⁴¹

Header Image: Scene of dextrarum junctio, the ritual joining of hands of husband of wife during the wedding ceremony, with the Genius Populi Romani standing behind the man, and Venus Felix crowning the woman. Detail from the front panel of a sarcophagus with togate men and female figures. Sarcophagus circa AD 250 from the Naples National Archaeological Museum. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

ENDNOTES

1. F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (London, England: Oliphants, 1971), 79.
2. C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters* (NYC, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 62–63.
3. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:475.
4. *Mishnah, Kiddushin*, 29b. Jewish rabbis taught, “a man who does not marry by the age of twenty has sinned.” For the Roman taxes levied on single adults for not marrying, see Ken Campbell, ed. *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 144.
5. John W. Welch and John F. Hall, *Charting the New Testament* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 15–5. Welch listed 25 biblical examples as evidence of Paul’s wealth, including his education in Hebrew and Greek, he had the means to hire a scribe, pay for papyrus or parchment, ink, etc., Felix detained Paul, hoping to get a bribe from him” (Acts 24:26).
6. The KJV word, “dispensation/*oikonomia*” in Greek meant: “management of household affairs, stewardship, administration.” It is found nine times in the New Testament—six in the traditional Pauline epistles and three times in Luke, where it is most often translated “stewardship.”
7. Herman J. Selderhuis, J. Marius J. Lange van Ravenswaay, ed. *Luther and Calvinism: Image and Reception of Martin Luther in the History of Calvinism* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck, 2017), 389 (spelling modernized)..
8. Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 1:30; 2:16; 3:14; Colossians 1:29; 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:2; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3; 4:7; Hebrews 12: 1. “There were two-hundred-seventy professional athletic festivals in the Greco-Roman world. Ron Clark, *The Better Way: The Church of Agape in Emerging Corinth* (Eugene, OR: Resource Pub, 2010), 82.
9. *Ibid.*, viii, 90.
10. Leviticus 12:3–4, for a male, and twice that time for a female birth. Their rationale for this came from Eve’s creation as the second human, so the Jews have twice as much “maternity leave” or time of rest, after for delivering a daughter. Even more interesting than the use of the number forty, is the way the Old Testament text highlights the number thirty-three with birth and purification. The tie to the length of Jesus’ life, cannot be lost as the key number, in addition to the circumcision as assign of the covenant. “And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.
11. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days.” In our math this would add up to 41 days, but they counted both the first and last day, so it is our forty.
12. Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews, vol III: Bible Times and Characters from the Exodus to the Death of Moses* (Oxford, MS: Project Gutenberg Literary Archive), 3.88. “Judaism must first submit to the three ceremonies of circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice, so Israel did not receive the Torah until they had performed these three ceremonies. They had already undergone circumcision in Egypt. Baptism was imposed upon them two days before the revelation on Mount Sinai.”
13. G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 1014. Italics original. Strong’s New Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible defines *paradosis* as “from; transmission, a precept; spec. the Jewish traditional law” (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990).
14. The term *paradoseis* is found thirteen times in the New Testament, as a noun, and several more times in different forms

(Matthew 15:2, 3, 6; Mark 7:3, 5, 8, 9, 13; 1 Corinthians 11:2; Galatians 1:14; Colossians 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6). Some of these traditions passed on refer to ritual behavior not found in the written law, but in the ten-thousand oral laws. Pharisees and others claimed that these oral laws began with Moses and were passed down for hundreds of years. They came into practice after the Babylonian captivity. Other teachings passed down may be new Christian “ordinances/teachings” as described in 1 Corinthians 11:2–12 and 15:29.

15. 1 Corinthians 11:2; Galatians 1:14; Colossians 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6. with the exact same tense is only found in: 2 Thessalonians 2:15; “hold fast to the traditions which you were taught” (INT). In the same verb form Paul, used it in 1 Corinthians 11:2, 23; 15:3, 1 Timothy 1:20. In other forms Strong’s Concordance lists 120 other words that share the same root. https://biblehub.com/greek/paredo_ka_3860.htm (accessed 8/16/19)
16. Looking beyond Paul into other early Christian sources, we find *paradosis* generally referring to unwritten sacred “tradition given by Christ, preached by apostles, guarded by fathers.” These teachings handed down through words or example, and included the sacrament of Jesus’ Last Supper and “the later activities of the Twelve.” Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1014–1015.
17. Ben Witherington, III, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (Cambridge, England, NYC: Cambridge Press, 1990), 168.
18. Paul’s orderly line-up did not disrupt the other scriptural admonition for men and women to work side by side as companions, “suitable partner[s],” “counterpart[s]” (Genesis 2:18, CEV, YLT), or “yokefellow[s]” (Philippians 4:3). By working in the same direction with God, men and women assist in building God’s kingdom on earth. Whether this team effort was described as an alignment, from the order of creation, or as working side-by-side, the end result is the same.
19. John 17:21–23; 1 Peter 3:7; Romans 8:17, and others described Christ, Peter, and Paul teaching husbands and wives to work together toward the same goal to become joint heirs. Paul advocated mutually supportive relationships (1 Corinthians 11:11).
20. For more information on men wearing veils in the first century AD, both the social and liturgical, see, Mark Finney, “Honour, Head-coverings and Headship” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 33, no. 1 (2010).
21. Evidence for this is seen in the murals from the Dura-Europos synagogue in old Damascus. Frescoes dating from the third-century have the men’s heads uncovered, and women’s heads covered. In addition we have statements from the Mishnah prohibiting men covering their heads—except for the priests, and high priest who wore a special priestly turban or miter (Exodus 28:4; Leviticus 8:9).
22. Paul repeatedly states that woman is not inferior to man (1 Corinthians 11:7, 11, etc.). Although Josephus spoke for many when he said: “A woman is inferior to her husband in all things” (Josephus, *Against Apion*, II. 25).
23. Isaiah 50:1; 66:8; Hosea 1; 3:1; Jeremiah 3:8; 33:11; John 3:29; Revelation 21:9; etc.
24. Paul’s words about the order of creation can also be interpreted typologically. Later in this epistle, Paul refers to Jesus as the “last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45). Likewise, Paul teaches that the Church is “subject unto Christ” (Ephesians 5:24) as Eve is subject to Adam (Genesis 3:16; Moses 4:22). Alonzo Gaskill demonstrates how the Edenic Adam and Eve are types of Christ and his Church—the Bridegroom and Bride. Gaskill shows how Adam takes on characteristics of Christ and how Eve takes on characteristics of the Church. He explains that this typology has significant implications as to why Paul depicts women as he does. First, in the Creation accounts of Genesis, Moses, and Abraham, we read the

commandment, “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat” (see Genesis 2:16–17; Moses 3:16–17; Abraham 5:12–13). Yet God gave this commandment only to Adam before Eve was created. Second, Adam conveyed the command to Eve, who had to walk by faith. Gaskill explains, “Again, according to scriptural accounts, Eve had less information than Adam—she could not see as clearly, as it were—and thus Adam was to be her guide, to whom she was to cling. Similarly, you and I have less information about the things of salvation than do Christ and His prophets—we labor under a veil, as it were—and hence they must be our guides, to whom we must cling. To take matters into our own hands is to bring heartache and trials into our lives (as Eve did metaphorically into hers)” (*Savior and the Serpent*, 119). In this typological scenario, Eve as the Church, works through the mediator Adam as Christ. For the longer version of my argument see Lynne Hilton Wilson, *Interpreter*, May 2018, 148–149. <https://www.mormoninterpreter.com/unveiling-womens-veils-of-authority/> (accessed 8/12/19)

25. F. F. Bruce, *1&2 Corinthians*, 106.
26. Brigham Young, et al, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool, England: F. D. Richards, 1855), 2:31.
27. Hugh Nibley, *Old Testament and Related Studies* (Provo, UT: FARMS and Deseret Book, 1986), 93; describes the covenantal partnership between God, a husband and wife as a system of checks and balances: “There is no patriarchy or matriarchy in the Garden; the two supervise each other. Adam is given no arbitrary power; Eve is to heed him only insofar as he obeys their Father—and who decides that? She must keep check on him as much as he does on her. It is, if you will, a system of checks and balances in which each party is as distinct and independent in its sphere as are the departments of government under the Constitution—and just as dependent on each other.”
28. Perhaps Paul repeated his messages on unity and equality within marriage, to combat the culture where the average middle and upper-class Roman divorced four to five times each. David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 73.
29. Hugh Nibley, *Old Testament and Related Studies*, 93. Hugh Nibley describes the covenantal partnership between a husband and wife as a system of checks and balances. “There is no patriarchy or matriarchy in the Garden; the two supervise each other. Adam is given no arbitrary power; Eve is to heed him only insofar as he obeys their Father—and who decides that? She must keep check on him as much as he does on her. It is, if you will, a system of checks and balances in which each party is as distinct and independent in its sphere as are the departments of government under the Constitution—and just as dependent on each other.”
30. Richard Holzapfel, Eric Huntsman, Thomas Wayment, *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament* (SLC, UT: Deseret, 2006). Wine was usually diluted, 10 parts water to one-part wine was for most use by the average worker or poor. For holy days like Passover, wine was only diluted with three-parts water to one-part wine. A “strong drink” in the Bible was one-part water, one-part wine. And “new wine” was not fermented, thus more like grape juice.
31. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/1983/09/q-and-a-questions-and-answers/when-should-i-not-take-the-sacrament?lang=eng> (accessed 8/13/19).
32. Different scholars adjust these dates give or take a few years. The range extends from 1790 to 1844.
33. Many first hand source examples of bizarre behaviors attributed to the Spirit come from the early 1800s. For example, the renowned Methodist minister, Peter Cartwright, wrote: “A new exercise broke out among us, called the jerks, which

was overwhelming in its effects upon the bodies and minds of the people. No matter whether they were saints or sinners, they would be taken under a warm song or sermon, and seized with a convulsive jerking all over, which they could not by any possibility avoid, and the more they resisted the more they jerked. If they would not strive against it and pray in good earnest, the jerking would usually abate. I have seen more than five hundred persons jerking at one time in my large congregations. . . . I always looked upon the jerks as a judgment sent from God, first, to bring sinners to repentance; and, secondly, to show professors that God could work with or without means . . . to the glory of his grace and the salvation of the world.” See Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright* (1856; reprint, Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1984), 21. Also see Lynne Hilton Wilson, “New Pneumatology: Comparing Joseph Smith’s Doctrine of the Spirit with His Contemporaries and the Bible,” *BYU Studies*, 2012, 51,1. <https://byustudies.byu.edu/file/1643/download?token=Uwd0LYb7> (accessed 8/13/19).

34. Bruce Bickel, Stan Jantz, *1 & 2 Corinthians: Finding Your Unique Place in God’s Plan* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House , 2004), 98; also see F.F. Bruce, *History of the New Testament*, 303.
35. F.F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 117.
36. *Ibid.*, 124
37. Anderson, *Understanding Paul*, 117.
38. *Ibid.*, 117.
39. Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, “Repent of [Our] Selfishness” May 1999.
40. Romans 5:1–5; Galatians 5:5f; Ephesians 4:2–5; 1Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8; Hebrews 6:10–12; 10:22–24; 1 Peter 1:3–8, 21; Barnabas 1:4; 11:8; and Polycarp 3:2.
41. Interestingly, Joseph Smith did not feel inspired to include charity among the gifts of the Spirit (D&C 46), but often spoke of its need. I wonder if this is because he felt it stood in a category by itself, or if it should be developed for rather than received. The Book of Mormon account includ