



What do you call a group of baptized believers who are confused on everything except the one crucified for them? Paul calls them the church of God at Corinth. He is deeply concerned and wants them to grow in grace. And the first thing he wants them to fix is their desire for division. For unity is sound doctrine. And, according to Jesus, complete unity is the way the city will know that God sent Christ into the world.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Ice-Breaker:

(1) What are some funny things you and your spouse disagree about?

(2) How would you define what a "church" is?

A CONFUSED (UN)HOLY CHURCH. Read 1 Cor 5:1-2; 6:6-8; 11:17-2. Name some of the things the Corinthian church was either wrong about, confused about, or ignorant about. Are these "big deals" or "small deals"?

Read 1 Cor 1:1-9, 26-30. How does Paul describe the church in Corinth? List key words. Is this surprising to you?

SHOULD VS. IS. Nathan said "don't confuse what you believe something *should* be with what something *is*." Can you think of examples where something can be less than the ideal, but still meet the definition (ex: father; athlete; etc)? Do we sometimes define a "church" by a list of right actions and ideals? Discuss.

DIVISION. Read 1 Cor 1:10. Have you ever been in perfect agreement with someone else? Paul later talks about how to live together in spite of differences (1 Cor 8-10). How has church division over differences been more problem than solution?

Read John 17:20-23. Jesus says unity is sound doctrine and a city light. Discuss.

FACTIONS. Read 1 Cor 1:11-12. Consider 4 possible sources of these quarrels, and discuss how they might be problems for us today:

Religious division. Suppose these are religious differences (outside the 7 ones of Eph 4:4-6). While respecting conscience, how can we avoid division or discounting other believers despite our differences?

Political division. Suppose these are political differences. How are we prone to circle our wagons around similar political beliefs? How can we avoid division or discounting other believers despite our differences?

Personalities. Suppose these quarrels surround big personalities. How can we divide over favorite teachers? How can we avoid division or discounting other believers despite our preferences?

Socio-Economic. Suppose these are related to class, culture, or race. How has this been a problem in the past? How can we avoid division or discounting other believers despite our backgrounds?