



Paul's answer to the divisive factions in Corinth is a call to unity: one body, centered on one Lord, sharing one baptism. Experience a call to dive deeper into your baptism. The more we die to ourselves, the clearer stands the cross before our eyes, and the greater our hunger for brotherhood rooted in the finished work of Christ. If we have become wrapped up in our own devices that hide the light of glory, let baptism be our undoing.

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) How are walls and bridges similar and different?

(2) Are we more tempted to find differences or similarity with those with whom we differ (political, religious, etc)?

DOES PAUL DOWNPLAY BAPTISM?.

Read 1 Cor 1:14-17. Some commentaries claim Paul argues here that baptism is not required or essential and is not connected to the gospel or the preaching of the cross. But Nathan argued that Paul is downplaying the baptizer, not baptism. Do you agree?

Read 1 Cor 1:15. Paul thanks God he didn't baptize very many in Corinth "so that no one may say you were baptized in my name." What was the problem in Corinth that would lead to such a claim?

THREE SIMPLE QUESTIONS. Read 1 Cor 1:13. Paul seeks to unify a divided church by reminding them of three "ones":

- (1) One Body: "Is Christ divided?"
- (2) One Lord: "Who was crucified for you?"
- (3) One Baptism: "Into whose name were you baptized?"

Think back to your baptism. Were you asked one question? What do these three questions imply about unity, about who is a Christian, and about what is a church?

A WALL OR A BRIDGE?. **Read 1 Cor 1:12.**

Talk about the possibility of a 4th "party" in Corinth: the "Christ" party. How could there be a "Christ" party that falls under Paul's condemnation? (This is a controversial interpretation). Can a group of Christians become exclusive in a way that does not include other Christians?

How can talk about baptism be used as a "wall" or a "dividing wedge"? How can talk about baptism be used as a "bridge"?

WHICH BAPTISMS COUNT? Discuss all the reasons for (or purposes of) baptism given in Scripture (ex: to fulfill righteousness, to put on Christ, to have sins forgiven, to receive the Spirit, to give an answer of a good conscience, etc). How many (and how well) did you know at your baptism?

Read 1 Cor 1:17-31. What does Paul say about wisdom, strength and knowledge compared with foolishness, weakness, and the cross? What does it teach about humility?

Read Eph 3:3-6. What is "one baptism"?