

Exodus 18:13-16 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. 14 And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? 15 And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God: 16 When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.

Grace be with you...

Romans 16:20 — “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”

1 Corinthians 16:23 — “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

2 Corinthians 13:14 — “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

Galatians 6:18 — “Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.”

Ephesians 6:24 — “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”

Philippians 4:23 — “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

Colossians 4:18 — “Grace be with you. Amen.”

1 Thessalonians 5:28 — “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”

2 Thessalonians 3:18 — “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

1 Timothy 6:21 — “Grace be with thee. Amen.”

2 Timothy 4:22 — “The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.”

Titus 3:15 — “Grace be with you all. Amen.”

Philemon 25 — “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.”

Corinth sat on the isthmus linking northern and southern Greece. That made it:

- a trade hub (money, migrants, ideas constantly moving) (Acts 18:1–3; 1 Cor 7:20–24 implies varied social backgrounds)
- socially fluid but unstable - people reinvented themselves, status was earned and flaunted (1 Cor 1:26–29; 7:17–24)
- aggressively status-conscious (public honor, patronage, rhetoric mattered) (1 Cor 1:20–29; 2:1–5; 4:6–10)

This matters because the church absorbed those instincts whole (1 Cor 3:3–4; 4:6–7).

The people groups inside the church

The community mixed groups that rarely mixed well:

- Wealthy patrons and poor laborers (1 Cor 11:17–22 makes clear this wasn't theoretical)
- Former pagans comfortable with temples, feasts, and sexual license (1 Cor 6:9–11; 8:1–10:22; 12:2)
- Jews shaped by Torah and synagogue discipline (Acts 18:4–8; 1 Cor 7:17–19; 9:20)
- Educated rhetoricians and ordinary artisans (1 Cor 1:26; 2:1–4; Acts 18:2–3)

Paul didn't gradually integrate these groups; he baptized them into one body almost immediately (1 Cor 12:12–13). That tension never settled (1 Cor 3:1–4; 11:18–19).

Competing ideas of authority

Corinth prized eloquence, charisma, and visible power. That produced:

- loyalty to impressive teachers (“I follow Paul... Apollos... Cephas”) (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4–9)
- suspicion of Paul’s weakness, suffering, and plain speech (1 Cor 2:1–4; 4:9–13; 2 Cor 10:10)
- openness to “super-apostles” who looked successful and sounded impressive (2 Cor 11:5; 11:12–15; 12:11)

So, leadership became a status competition, not a pastoral one (1 Cor 3:3–7; 4:6–8).

Spiritual gifts as weapons

The Corinthians were genuinely gifted-but immature (1 Cor 1:5–7; 3:1–3):

- tongues, prophecy, knowledge became markers of superiority (1 Cor 8:1–2; 12:21; 14:4–6)
- worship gatherings turned chaotic (1 Cor 14:23, 26–33, 40)
- “freedom” was used to override concern for weaker believers (1 Cor 8:9–13; 10:23–24)

Paul isn’t anti-gifts; he’s anti-gifts used without love (1 Cor 13:1–7; 14:1).

Moral chaos plus theological confusion

They tolerated:

- sexual practices the surrounding culture normalized (1 Cor 5:1–2; 6:15–20)
- lawsuits between believers (1 Cor 6:1–8)
- denial or misunderstanding of bodily resurrection (1 Cor 15:12–19)

All of that points to a church trying to be Christian without unlearning Corinth (1 Cor 3:1–3; 5:1–2; 6:9–11).

Why Paul sounds so intense with them

1 Corinthians confronts disorder head-on (1 Cor 1:10; 5:1–5; 11:17–22; 14:26–40).

2 Corinthians reveals the emotional cost-Paul is hurt, defensive, transparent, and pleading (2 Cor 1:23–24; 2:1–4; 7:2–4; 10:1–12; 12:15).

Love of the Father

Agape – from the Hebrew word agab.

h5689. אָגַב 'âgab; a primitive root; to breathe after, i.e. to love (sensually): — dote, lover.

John 15:9-14 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Fellowship with the HS

g2842. κοινωνία koinōnia; from 2844; partnership, i.e. (literally) participation, or (social) intercourse, or (pecuniary) benefaction: — (to) communicate(-ation), communion, distribution, fellowship.

Galatians 2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of **fellowship**; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.