

134. Resurrection: This Family is Forever (1 Cor. 15-16)

Study Guide

Overview

869

The belief in a personal, bodily resurrection is basic to biblical faith. While one of the Jewish theological traditions (the Sadducees) rejected the concept, it *is* taught in the Old Testament (see [Job 19:25](#); [Psalm 17:15](#); [Psalm 49:7-12](#); [Psalm 73:23-26](#); [Isaiah 26:19](#); [Daniel 12:2](#)).

Jesus affirmed the resurrection in His teaching (see [Matthew 22:29-32](#)), and demonstrated His personal power over death by raising Lazarus (see [John 11](#)). Yet the raising of Lazarus and others by Jesus (see also [Matthew. 9:18-26](#)) was merely a restoration of earthly life. It was not the total transformation exhibited in Jesus' own resurrection—and promised believers when Christ returns. What we do know is that when Christ returns the believing "dead will be raised imperishable, and we [who live then] will be changed" ([1 Cor. 15:52](#)).

Then, the limitations of our present nature will be lifted, and we who are now perishable will be imperishable; we who are weak will be filled with power; we who are mortal will be immortal. Forever and ever, Amen.

Resurrection

◆ Because the idea of resurrection was foreign to Greek thought, there existed no technical words in Greek to describe it. The Bible uses two common words, one meaning "to raise, to arouse" and the other "to awaken."

■ See discussion of difficult verses in [1 Cor. 15](#) in the Victor [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#).

Commentary

Christ promised the believer an inner transformation. And there *was* transformation.

Believers found striking changes were taking place—within themselves, and in one another. The attitudes and ideas and ways of paganism died hard. Yet, there was clear evidence of God's work within the Corinthian body.

In spite of differences and divisions, and in spite of lax discipline, people were being delivered from superstition and fear. The bondage of idolatry was shattered; an exciting new freedom was experienced. God's presence in Corinth was abundantly demonstrated; all the spiritual gifts were operating in the body, and the church was excited about each new experience of the Spirit. The Corinthian's attitudes and values were changing too. They took very seriously Paul's teaching on marriage—and even went beyond what he intended in some cases.

The believers appealed to Scripture and to God's Word for guidance (through the apostolic teachings), and were praised for holding to the practices which Paul taught them. Women were breaking out of their servitude, rejoicing in their liberation, and asserting themselves in bold (if sometimes misdirected) ways. In general, the Corinthians seemed very responsive to truth; Paul always expected that they would respond obediently to his instruction.

Each of these facts give witness that transformation had begun. These believers *were* changing and growing, becoming new and different persons.

At the same time, their growth was retarded, apparently because of a lack of that vital quality Paul spoke of so often in his letters to the Thessalonians. To the church at Thessalonica Paul could say, "About brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other" ([1 Thes. 4:9](#)). But to the Corinthians, Paul had to say, "knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" ([1 Cor. 8:1](#)), and then go on to show them how to handle their differences lovingly. It was to the Corinthians that the great exposition of love in [1 Cor. 13](#) was addressed, and one of Paul's last reminders to them was, "Do everything in love" ([1 Cor. 16:14](#)).

A process

All this helps us realize again that growing toward Christian maturity is a process. God does work His transformation in our personalities, but that work takes place over time, and sometimes over more time than we desire!

Sometimes growth seems slow as we face problems like those that plagued the church at Corinth. We need to keep three things in mind here. First, as newness comes, there will be tension between the old and the new. Transition times are sure to bring problems.

Second, building the climate of love in the body will ease tensions. Love, like truth, is essential. By affirming our love for each other in spite of differences and strains, and by affirming together our commitment to truth, we *will* grow. We are being freed from the world's mold—that old way of thinking, of valuing, and of perceiving ourselves and others. We are being transformed in a process to which God has committed Himself. Words Paul would later pen to encourage the Philippians hold as well a promise for the Corinthians—and for us! "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 1:6](#)).

And this brings us to the third thing. A day of completion is coming! In the day that Christ Jesus returns, our transformation will be complete.

● **Link to Life 1: Youth / Adult**

Review Corinthians with your group. Brainstorm together: "What evidences do we have of spiritual immaturity in Corinth?" Then: "What evidences do we have of spiritual growth and personal transformation?"

To help your group in this review, you may wish to duplicate and distribute the ["theme" chart](#).

Chart: Themes of 1 Corinthians

Passage	Theme	Principles
1 Cor. 1-4	Overcoming Barriers to Division	Reject pagan approaches, seeking to understand God's patterns of thought. Regard human leaders as servants; reserve glory for God.
1 Cor. 5-6	Discipline	Deal firmly with sin in the family. Act to resolve disputes equitably.
1 Cor. 8-10	Doctrinal Disputes	Love and truth are both required for resolution. Being "right" does not remove love's obligation to build up our brothers.
1 Cor. 12-14	True Spirituality	Possession of certain gifts is not evidence of spiritual achievement. Love is the key indicator of spiritual maturity. As a body, family members are interdependent; each gift is important, and each person's ministry is needed.
1 Cor. 7; 1 Cor. 11	Women's Identity	Affirm the worth and value of women. Equality as persons does not mean "sameness." Each person finds fulfillment in the role God has sovereignly chosen for him or her—and is <i>called</i> to that place. Because women are affirmed as equally valued persons in the body of Christ, no woman needs to deny her womanhood.
1 Cor. 15	Resurrection	Ultimate transformation is assured.