



The unfolding of your words gives light.

## The Temple of God

### An Exposition of 1 Corinthians

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<sup>4</sup>I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus<sup>a</sup>, <sup>5</sup>that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge<sup>b</sup>, <sup>6</sup>even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you<sup>c</sup>, <sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>d</sup>, <sup>8</sup>who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>e</sup>. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> 1:4 **I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.** “Always” looks like a pretty exclusive word, but Paul often used hyperbole to make his points. Paul frequently thanked God for His grace among the Corinthians. Knowing what we know of some of the problems of this congregation, it may seem odd for Paul to begin by thanking God for them. But that was the point. He was not thanking God for the performance of the Corinthians. He was thanking God for the performance of God.

This kind of written thanks to a deity was common in Paul’s day, but his carried some important distinctions.

- Paul’s greeting was sincere. He did much more than introduce his letters with the name of God. His letters were entirely God-centered.
- Paul did not believe he could “butter up” the living God in order to gain favor.
- This greeting thanks God for benefits given to others. That God-focus and other-focus took Paul out of the mainstream.

Paul thanked God for His grace, but here for a particular aspect of His grace. What made Paul thankful was that God had chosen to pour out specific blessings on the church at Corinth. Not everyone is thankful at seeing others blessed of God.

<sup>b</sup> 1:5 **that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge.** The riches of the Corinthian saints made their church a place of effective instruction. In other words, “all speech” and “all knowledge” likely refer to the wealth of spiritual gifts God poured out on that congregation that equipped them for ministry.

<sup>c</sup> 1:6 **even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you.** This confirmation of the message of Christ came to the Corinthians through the Spirit’s manifestations of special gifts. This has been true in many front-line locations where the gospel has never been taken. The writer of Hebrews warns those who have seen and heard such things of their great accountability:

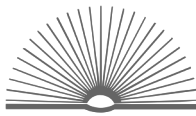
For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. Hebrews 2:2-4

<sup>d</sup> 1:7 **so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.** When you study the topic of spiritual gifts, 1 Corinthians is a great resource because it has the most complete record of the special abilities the Spirit gave to the Church. Those named gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14) must have meant something to the people. In other words, all of those spiritual gifts were operational in the days when Paul wrote this letter.

The forward look of the Corinthians was to the return of Jesus Christ. The word translated “awaiting eagerly” in this verse almost always refers to the ultimate hope of believers (Romans 8:19, 23, 25; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 9:28). Service for God’s glory should have long-term glory in mind.

<sup>e</sup> 1:8 **who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.** Here again is our word *confirm* (v. 6). The message of Christ was backed up with supernatural gifts, but the work of God in a changed life is the ultimate confirmation.

<sup>f</sup> 1:9 **God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.** This attribute of God called *faithfulness* is directly related to both your current position in Christ as well as your enduring in the faith until the end.



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<sup>a</sup> 1:4-9 It is very easy to hold others at arms' length, particularly those in your church family. Rejoicing in God's people is actually rejoicing in Him. That is why people of such diverse interests and backgrounds can gather in love in the church. We don't share hobbies and music tastes and abilities. We share the Redeemer and the corruption that makes His redemption sweet.

Take note that God has given grace to even the most difficult believers. Here are some factors that should make you pursue your best relationships inside the family of God:

1. Remember that the grace that reached you reached them. Even the kindest, most engaging personalities in the unbelieving world do not have that gift in common with you.
2. Remember that your spiritual gifts are God's gifts to them. You cannot serve God in isolation. Your life in Christ was designed by God Himself to be spent on others.
3. Remember that God is not finished with you or your believing friends. You share an upward path in sanctification. Give God some time to work on them.
4. Remember that you will live with these people forever. You will spend eternity in unified worship of your Redeemer. Practice now.