

SUPPLEMENTARY WEB RESOURCE 8



USING *CREATING A SCENE IN CORINTH: A SIMULATION* IN COLLEGE OR SEMINARY

Some college or seminary classes are held for a more intense but shorter block of time, such as a week or a month. This would be an ideal time for a course simulating a Corinthian house church. But it can also work well for a course meeting weekly or bi-weekly.

If larger groups are involved, they can be divided into two (or more) house churches if the space is sufficient. For example, a college class of 35 can be divided into two house churches. One house church could designate Stephanos (1 Corinthians 1:16 16:17) or Gaius or Crispus (1:14) as leader instead of Chloe, but using the same character roles from Chapter 5. The reader/performer should probably be the professor, who can play the role of Phoebe or Stephanas and read to the entire class before they begin discussing with each other. Depending on the size of each faction, you may want to designate a leader for each one to better facilitate the discussion, especially if participants are unused to role-playing.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

I. Character Sketch

After characters are chosen or assigned, each student should create a detailed character sketch for her/himself, using the template below. The more specific and imaginative the character sketch, the better will be the interaction during role-playing. Set a date when the character sketch is due. To increase familiarity within factions, have students share a copy of their character sketch with others in their faction. Reading each other's character sketch can be part of the course requirement.

Character Sketch Outline

1. Name:
2. House church:
3. Faction (Paul's, Apollos's, Cephas's, Christ's):
4. Gender:
5. Role in cell group – leadership role, gifts, responsibilities:
6. Ethnic background:
7. Station in life (slave, freed person, freeborn):
8. Economic status (rich, well-off, middling, struggling, desperate):
9. Description of living quarters:
10. Marital state and name of partner, if any:
11. Children, if any:
12. Occupation and specific role in your occupation:
13. Level of education and level of intelligence (may be different):
14. Previous religion:
15. How you came to convert:

16. Traumatic experiences in your life:

17. Special blessings in your life:

18. Personal characteristics, temperament, pet peeves, strengths and weaknesses:

See sample character sketches at the end of this appendix.

II. Journal

After each session, a written journal is required, to be handed in at the beginning of the following session. The first part of the journal is written from the perspective of the student's Corinthian character and should include both left brain (intellectual/theological) and right brain (emotional) reflections from the role-play, the biblical text, and the questions in the relevant chapter. Encourage creativity and freedom of expression.

The second part of the journal should analyze the simulation from the perspective of the participant as her/himself, as well as making connections to contemporary life. Use application questions at the end of each chapter. See below for sample journal entries from seminary students.

Textbooks

Besides the Bible, *Creating a Scene in Corinth* is sufficient for lower level college classes, especially if 1 Corinthians is only one component of the course.

When teaching an upper-level college class for religion/Bible majors, or a seminary class, we recommend adding another compatible commentary on 1 Corinthians, such as Richard Hays' in the Interpretation series, or Pheme Perkins in the Paideia series. For a required research paper, students are encouraged to read widely. Compare other interpretive methods with this one. How do other scholars identify and describe the four factions of 1 Corinthians 1:12? How common is our proposal that differing social status is the main cause of the divisions in Corinth? See our bibliography.

FINAL SESSION—AGAPE MEAL WITH LORD'S SUPPER

First-year college students. Based on many years of simulating Roman house churches using my previous book, *Roman House Churches for Today*, here's what I would suggest if a study of 1 Corinthians can be part of a general education introduction to biblical studies. If possible, arrange for a catered meal in a private room. Count the occasion as the last of the required classes. Work out a menu using the suggestions and recipes in the book. Raise the tensions higher by having ham or some other "unclean" meat in one main dish, with the other main dish vegetarian.

Consider other attempts at historical realism: candles for lighting, no tablecloths, no forks (not yet invented), only one knife on each table for cutting bread. Offer a small amount of extra credit to those who come in Greco-Roman costume. Phoebe (or Stephanas) can officiate at the opening bread-breaking ritual, with help from Chloe. Encourage students to maintain their roles and sit with persons from other factions and social classes. What might happen if diverse characters at the table tell their life stories? End the meal with the wine ritual, (always "after supper" in the Greco-Roman culture) and your choice of prayers and other suggestions from Chapter 18.

Upper-level college students. If most students eat in the dining hall at college, use the same procedure as above. If not, arrange for a potluck meal, with students each bringing a dish from among the suggestions and recipes in Chapter 18. Everything else is the same—although the conversation at table should be more mature!

Seminary students. When I (Reta) taught Corinthian Letters in seminary, in lieu of a final exam, we put on a chapel service for all the students, followed by a potluck agape meal.

Our entire class came to chapel in costume, and each faction from Chloe's house church came up in turn to introduce themselves and describe the nature of their faction. I did a brief exegetical homily on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Chapel was very well attended that day!

For the meal that followed, each class member had brought a recipe from Chapter 18. (Other students were also encouraged to do so.) Two members of the class led in a Lord's Supper ritual at the beginning, followed by the meal. It turned out to be a memorable occasion. See the last set of photos from the supplemental slide presentation, "A Visit to Ancient Corinth" (www.HeraldPress.com/CreatingAScene).

SAMPLE CHARACTER SKETCHES

Name: Byron Pellecer

Corinthian Name: Valerius

House Church: Chloe's

Faction: Apollo's

Gender: Male

Role in Cell Group: Attendee, Member

Ethnic Background: I am a Roman descendant. My great-grandfather was born a slave in Rome but was freed before being brought to Corinth as a colonist. My dad is a client of a city council member.

Station in life: I love the teachings of Apollos and the Epicurean philosophy. I love to read about the matters of life.

Economic Status: I'm a free citizen with a responsible job. As a patron, I do favors for my clients so they are obliged to honor me publicly.

Description of living quarters: My house is big enough for me and my family and to hold banquets for 9 people.

Marital State and name of partner: Lucretia

Children: Maximus and Marcela

Occupation and specific role in your occupation: I work for the city treasury.

Level of education and level of intelligence: My only formal training is in the accounting field. In spite of enjoying solitude, I love to talk with all kinds of people, especially those of my social status.

Previous religion: Epicurean. I used to be devoted to sensual pleasures, especially to food and drink. My social and economic status allowed me to fond and to adapt to luxury, to be indulged in sensual pleasures. I was very hedonistic, a person whose life is devoted to the pursuit of pleasure and self-gratification. I used to think that if there was no pleasure in it, what was the point of it?

How you came to convert: Erastus, my best friend, took me to hear Apollos' masterful rhetoric about Jesus Christ, and invited me to join Chloe's people.

Special blessings in your life: First, hearing Apollos speak. I was impressed with his eloquent speeches and attractive appearance. He was very intelligent, full of wisdom, and always well groomed. Apollos seems to be at peace with his own self and with the world. He is very friendly, easy to talk to; he appreciates someone else's opinions yet, he has this gift to make people turn to hear his preaching about Jesus. Second, my current job in the city treasury can lead me to bigger things.

Personal characteristics, temperament, pet peeves, strengths and weaknesses: I enjoy my social status and I love my job. I love helping people whenever possible, such as assisting them to get jobs and connecting people with each other. When we hold our Agape meals, I love to participate and to contribute with the food and drinks. All this, of course, brings me public honor as a patron of many clients.

Remarks:

When Paul was here in Corinth, my friends and I wanted to make him feel welcome and attend to his needs, but he resisted.

Through Apollos' teachings, we have learned that is ok to be a member of the body of believers and to hold down responsible positions here in our city of Corinth.

We contend that the modest influence that we have and the help of important people that we personally know may be needed to protect the fledgling house churches from discrimination and persecution.

We believe that the final resurrection is underway and good things have begun to flow to God's faithful ones. I believe that Jesus is a philosopher, the very best!

I still like the Epicurean philosophy (I find in the Agape meals a great pleasure!).

CHARACTER SKETCH OUTLINE

Name: Irvin Heishman

Corinthian Name: Enoch

House Church: Chloe

Faction: Cephas

Gender: Male

Station in Life: Slave

Role in Cell Group: Tutor of Children

Ethnic Background: Jewish

My Family Tree: Great, great grandmother Ruth (b. 83 BC) was captured in the siege of Jerusalem in 64 when 19 years old and carried to Rome by Pompey as a trophy of war for his triumphal procession in 61 and sold into slavery. She had to satisfy the sexual needs of her master who was a widower. Because her children to him would be slaves, she and they were no threat to his estate.

Great Grandfather Jacob (b. 59 BC) was taken with his master's family from Rome to Corinth in 44 BC (when 15 years old) and worked in construction of the new city. He died at age 25 when a building stone slipped and crushed him.

Grandmother Rachael (b. 36 BC) was sold into an aristocratic family and worked as a domestic servant. Although her father Jacob died when she was two, her mother trained her in Jewish tradition and took her to the synagogue.

Father Aaron (b. 14 AD) was trained as a tutor in the same family as his mother and eventually raised enough money to buy his freedom in 45 AD.

Enoch (b. 18 AD) was educated as my father had been to tutor the children of our master's extended family. When the financial impact of the famine hit, my master needed additional income and so he contracted me out to Chloe's family as tutor. I am 36 years old.

Economic Status: Stable, dependent—no significant personal capital

Description of living quarters: very small, rented one room space with very basic furnishings

Marital State and name of partner: married to Elizabeth, our three children were all recently sold to another family to raise funds for my master who is "suffering" reduced profit because of the famine.

Occupation and specific role in your occupation: Tutor of Children of Master's extended family and as noted above, due to the famine, now sub-contracted out as tutor to Chloe's family.

Level of Education and Level of Intelligence: I'm highly educated in Greek and Roman logic, philosophy, and rhetoric. I have additional synagogue education in Jewish history and law. As a previous participant in the cult of Mithraism, I am familiar with the seven levels of initiation and related teachings. I have also been trained to lead the religious activities related to the Compitalia festival and daily honors to the Lares of my master's family. This is supposed to be sort of a special role for slaves and I do like the liberties given during the Compitalia. But I secretly find servicing idols detestable. My mother taught me to realize that they are just pieces of stone and metal and yet I serve them as if I were a devoted priest. I am told I am unusually bright for a Jew slave.

Previous Religion: I've seen and encountered all kinds of religion. I'm responsible to serve the Lares of my master but this is just a task. It has no meaning for me, although at times I get spooked by the Lares when they seem to be looking at me and judging me for my attitude toward them. I was nurtured in Jewish practice and thought by mother and friends at the synagogue. Recently, I got involved in Mithraism because of the communal meals. They let me incline to eat like the wealthy! It was exciting to feel respected and valued after the terrible degradation, powerlessness, and outrage I felt at having my children taken from me. It gave me a way to live up to the Greek philosophical ideal of living in freedom, at least while in the underground chamber. I admit it was an escape from daily indignities of social humiliation as a slave.

How you came to convert: It was a process which first drew me back to my Jewish roots. Mithraism appealed to me because it helped me deal with my resentment over my lot in life as a slave. I could eat at the cultic meals reclining with elite people and have stimulating conversation with them as intellectual equals. Still, it always felt foreign to me and I never fully bought into the bizarre beliefs and imagery of gaining life energy from communion with various levels of animal figures. The worst part however was the cost. Often, I had to stay home because I couldn't afford to pay my share at the meals and that left me feeling as if this religion was just a game. If the egalitarian Mithras community had been real, the other devotees would have helped me pay the costs of attending the meals.

So I felt drawn back home to the religion of my ancestors. In the synagogue I was with my true family. I was born part of the chosen people. The fact that I am now a slave doesn't take that away from me. I thrive on the rabbinic debates and study too. It's one place where my intellect is respected. Even though I can't be involved much in my children's lives, they can come to the synagogue and my wife and I can see them there. Jewish slaves are treated a little better at the synagogue than on the street (better than Gentile slaves anyway), but nonetheless I was still a slave in their eyes and I couldn't shake feeling somewhat excluded and isolated. I was never fully included.

However, I was blown away when I met the people in the new Jesus movement. These followers of Jesus spoke of themselves as slaves of God. Greek philosophers speak of true slavery "as a slavery of the mind." Stoics say we can be free mentally even while in slavery. That's all well and good but slavery in their eyes is a bad thing. But this Jesus movement, they see slavery as a good thing, that is, we are all called to serve one another. It's revolutionary. It's like Mithraism, in that the people of this movement treat each other more like equals but unlike the Mithras community, the followers of Jesus actually visited with my family, consoled my wife, and included us in the meals without cost.

Imagine this, this Jesus, our Messiah, has come and he washed his disciples' feet! That was the story that brought tears to my eyes and I knew I wanted to be a follower of our Messiah. Imagine such a great and glorious leader, so humble in his love for his followers. Even the disciples wouldn't have had to stoop to the level of washing feet. That's the work of slaves and women. But Jesus teaches us that we are all slaves of God and he proved it by getting down on his knees and doing slave's work. We are free to be in service to one another, and those who serve, he said, are greatest in the Kingdom of God. As his follower, I feel finally like a real person. I just feel so hopeful and I can barely wait for the coming of Christ to usher in this new Kingdom where we will all be one family, not dominated by others but serving and loving one another. Jesus redeemed me so I belong to him now. I say with pride that I am now God's slave.

Traumatic experiences: The selling of my children at ages 7, 9 and 11 to another family put my wife into a state of grief and depression from which she has not fully recovered. As a slave, my situation could have been a lot worse, but this horrible loss of my children has filled me with deep resentment. I understand about the famine and all but I felt so powerless, I had no say. Our kids were just taken away from us. There was no warning. Just like that they were taken, stripped, and put on the auction block. I couldn't eat or sleep for days. It was after this time that I began participating in the cult of Mithra as I struggled to cope and find some sense of hope.

Special blessings: I'm thankful to have received an education. I can lose myself for hours in the midst of study and academic debate. Still, education isn't everything. Knowing the Greek ideal of freedom just deepens my dissatisfaction in life. My father did manage to purchase his freedom but so far I haven't been able to accumulate enough money to do the same. Nevertheless, I've been spared the kind of hard labor that other slaves have to endure. Of course, now I know that Jesus has set me free. This is different from the Stoic idea which states that physical slavery is immaterial because the only true slavery is a state of mind. I accepted that until they took my kids... No, what Jesus offers is not just a mental state that I have to force myself into, it's real. I feel free already because it won't be long until Jesus comes to bring in his kingdom. Then I will be free indeed, physically and mentally free! I know I have to wait a little while. I have to endure this physical slavery just a little longer. It's not so bad knowing what's coming.

Personal characteristics: I know how to keep to my place in life. I don't look people in the eye in the street. I've been taught to look away to the ground and step aside for citizens and freedmen. I do feel kind of awkward with the rich people at the house church. On the streets, I don't dare talk back when insulted, yelled at, or punched. However, I am internally conflicted over my status. Stoic thought reminds me to know my place and accept it. But my Jewish heritage reminds me of my chosen status before God and if I were in Judea I'd have half a chance of being set free after seven years under Jewish law. In fact, I might be free now. I'm 36 and I've been a slave all that time.

Jesus is my hope now and I get frustrated and disappointed with those in the house church who get arrogant and act as if they were still living in this world. The Gentiles are especially irritating. They don't get the idea that we're all family, the chosen ones. They are used to beating us slaves around and that attitude shows up at church. At least the Jews recognize that all Jews slave or free in this world are part of the chosen people. The actions of the Gentiles especially don't live up to the teaching.

For example, some don't want to let slaves eat with them at the love feast. Who do they think they are? We Jews are the ones who have the right to be at the table, not them! They should be grateful to be invited. I think Paul's too eager to let the Gentiles in before they learn the tradition. Further, I'm better educated than many of the church teachers but they only let me teach children. I love children, don't get me wrong. But I know more Scripture than Chloe. She's great, but sometimes she makes mistakes in quoting the law of Moses. I realize it's not my place to expect equal treatment but our Messiah Jesus washed feet!

SAMPLES OF JOURNALS

Rebecca Van Stavern—Euphemia, older slave of Erastus, an up-and-coming Corinthian in the Apollos Faction

Corinthians Class Journal #5 for 1 Corinthians 8-10—“At Whose Banquet Table?”

March 3, 2011

Dear Diary,

I did not realize there would be so many issues to deal with when I joined Chloe's house church. Attending the house church does bring a sense of peace and freedom that I do not receive out in the real world. But I didn't know it would be so difficult. I really try to be faithful. I pray that by being faithful, I will receive my complete freedom that Jesus proclaimed about while on earth.

I know it is wrong to turn back to idol worship, yet is there true equality when Erastus, my master, goes to these Isthmian Games and pays tribute to the Imperial Cult? Erastus even left a thank-offering of a terra cotta votive in the shape of a healed body part. I saw him laughing while looking at the piece of terra cotta votive and said, “Maybe this will show them that I identify with Asclepius, when I leave this offering.” He laughed until his belly shook and called them ‘poor fools.’

“I know there is nothing to this shrine of Asclepius,” I later overheard him say, “but maybe in leaving this token of my gratitude, I will be advanced on my social ladder and be able to at-

tend more imperial parties.” As Erastus once more examined the terra cotta head, he grinned from ear to ear and said, “In fact it may move me up the social ladder. I can still worship Christ; there is no harm because I do not truly worship Asclepius. Jesus even said to ‘render to Caesar what is Caesar’s.’ Jesus has no use for this terra cotta head, so Jesus should not care that I offer it to the shrine of Asclepius.”

If Erastus advances by leaving an offering at this shrine, perhaps I should do so as well. Maybe I should consider some way to leave an offering. I’d like to purchase a terra cotta votive, but as a slave I have no money. It made me feel a little better when Erastus confided in me his concern of what would happen to him if he did not pretend to observe the Imperial Cult and their pagan ways. Erastus does confide in me from time to time, even though I am just a slave; he did this when he gave me another lesson in Latin.

Erastus always has been a bit cowardly. Yes, he can be demanding and forceful with his slaves but he is a mouse among men. I remind myself often that even though I am just a slave, I have been a slave of Erastus longer than the others have. Erastus confides in me as he would an old friend.

It is sad that those of Apollos compromise their Christian beliefs by partaking in the paganism in our culture today. It confuses the rest of us and makes it hard to trust anything they say. Valerius, for example, is so quick to answer. I have heard of silver-tongued devils; now I can say I have met one. Valerius proudly argued with Fortunatus and Enoch today. His words were like arrows shooting across the table at others not in his faction.

How easily we accept the very things that Jesus opposes. Not only does the Apollos faction readily accept what Jesus and Paul oppose, but they also forsake their brothers and sisters in Christ on the basis of petty differences. It is a struggle with my new belief system of Jesus and to live in our pagan community. Paul has addressed all of these issues in Phoebe’s reading of his letter today (1 Corinthians 8–10). I think Paul is speaking to those who have such privileges, and not to the poor within the group. In fact, he says that.

Paul says that Christian liberty must be voluntarily limited, and in this case, the “free” Christians should stay out of pagan temples so they would not hurt the faith of weak Christians. He even said he would not eat meat at all if eating would cause someone to sin (8:13).

It seems that Paul is saying love requires self-sacrifice, and he gives an example from his own ministry. The house church is weak and Paul chooses to be a slave manual laborer for the sake of the gospel and gives up his rights in order to avoid offending others. Does Paul not realize that there is more to being a slave than just giving up meat?

The meat issue really upset those of Cephas. Enoch reminded Chloe that Olympus received an invitation to the banquets and would be eating the meat. The Jewish Council decreed that Jews were not to receive food offered to idols. Dionysia weighed in, added her two cents, in telling Enoch that no one questioned where the meat came from and therefore it did not mean anything. She said, “We just eat it.”

Achaicus was evidently upset because he does not usually say much but he said, “We must worship God as our real God.” He accused Valerius of participating with the pagan gods yet not even witnessing for our God. Valerius retaliated by saying that even the Jews were idol worshippers. Deborah informed Valerius that those who worshipped idols were struck down by God.

I could not believe Tertius had the gall to start laughing about the situation. He said, “People, it is just food, a good time, good wine, and partying.” Valerius agreed. Matthias told Valerius that when he pledged allegiance to Rome at these parties, he was sinking deeper and deeper in quick sand.

What a day in the house church of Chloe. I can go rest my weary head in knowing that for once Paul was speaking to the affluent ones and not the slaves. I will sign off for now.

—Euphemia

Debriefing and Applying

All of the problems that Paul was addressing in his letter today still speak to all future generations. At the largest church I serve, the biggest competition I have is with local sports events. When we have Administrative Board Meetings, if someone does not have a sports calendar, then we do not schedule anything, all church functions are scheduled around the sports calendar. If there is a big game on, then I might as well forget having anything at the church.

Richard Hays says, “Our identity as God’s people is given its indelible character by its conformity to Christ’s example. ‘For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh’ (2 Corinthians 4:11—NRSV). The brilliance of Paul’s theological insight is to apply this paradigm to a seemingly unrelated mundane quarrel about what kind of meat can be consumed.”¹ Hays then goes on to say, “Our task as interpreters is to discover how that same paradigm might reshape our thinking about the issues faced by our congregations today.”

Paul stressed the love we should have for one another as Christians. The love we have should be enough for us to give up certain freedoms in order not to become an obstacle to others. We should focus on the love we have for each other. If our love were true love then we would not want our weaker brother or sister in Christ to be tempted. In doing this Jesus will then be made flesh in our mortal flesh.



Journal #6 Dionysia, Tammy James

March 21, 2011—I Corinthians 11

Dear Diary,

Today Chloe read a portion of Paul’s letter and I have to say as a woman, I should be jumping up and down in delight over Paul’s instructions regarding what to wear when we gather for worship. You know how we often get stressed over dressing appropriately. We ask each other (as if we had lots of choices), “What are you wearing to worship this week?” We always want to fit in and to be appropriate in our presentation.

So, why do Paul’s words seem to carry loaded meaning? After all, he is just giving us some guidelines for how we wear our hair and cover our heads so we may participate in honorable, orderly worship (11: 4 -5). We already know better than to wear our hair hanging down loose like the prostitutes do, but this ‘covering’ language sounds like he is hinting at something else. Paul seems to be coming from a place of hierarchy, perhaps insinuating that women be in subordination to men. As I’ve said all along, it is a man’s world here in Corinth! Paul tells us we are free in Christ, but then speaks out of the other side of his mouth and tells us we will honor or dishonor our men by the way we submit (11:3). What to do, oh, what to do?!

I am confused! I think Paul is confused, also (or as Hays puts it, Paul’s “line of argument—by any standard—is labored and convoluted”²). Like a good parent who disciplines a child, Paul begins by telling us something positive about ourselves. He commends us for remembering him and keeping the traditions as he handed them to us (11:2), but then he says, “But” (11:3).

1. Richard Hays, *1 Corinthians*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, (John Knox Press, 1997), 181.

2. Hays, *ibid.*, 183.

We knew we had it coming. He wasn't happy about something we were doing. Paul makes certain we understand that "Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ" (11:3). I have to ask, was this an inadvertent misstep of Paul? He seems to forget that "in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27) and we are both equal in God's sight? Did Paul momentarily forget, that "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for [we] are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28)?

Chloe tried hard to explain to both the men and the women what all of this talk about heads meant. She read Paul's words about women honoring and dishonoring their husbands, about God being honored or dishonored by our head coverings but I am not sure we all came to any sort of understanding. There was a lot of talk trying to unpack Paul's words, but I don't feel like we made much headway (no pun intended).

I became even more confused when Paul said, "That's why a woman must have authority over her head, because of the angels" (11:10). Paul needs to tell us more about angels—what they are, where they are, and their purpose in this day and time. I only know that the angels are part of God's creation and they have their rightful place within this creation. Isaiah 6:2 tells us that the angels covered their faces when in the presence of the Lord. They knew how to act appropriately in worship. Perhaps this is the concept at which Paul is hinting.

Previously, I thought I wanted to be married some day, but golly, I don't think I care about all this subordination stuff. I don't want to be all caught up in following rules so that I honor my man by the way I wear my hair. Now really, is this so important? What about the widows who have no man? How are they to interpret Paul's instructions? They don't have to be concerned about pleasing anyone but God. That sounds rather liberating to me! I think I will claim Paul's admonition to remain unmarried (7:8).

We could deduce from this that Paul's view of the Trinity—God, Son, Spirit—is a subordination view. Paul is quite hierarchal in his thinking. I suppose we all are given the culture we live in. What else is there? The Roman authorities make certain we know our rightful place in society's hierarchy and, by golly, they make sure we stay in our place! I have to give Paul credit. He does not really imply inequality between men and women; he just implies we both have our rightful place in God's economy. I suppose I can live with that as long as Paul doesn't tell me to be silent in my worship of God. I think that would be impossible. God seems to give me words of prophecy from time to time and to hold those words in and not speak them would quench the Spirit that wells up within me.

Now about Paul's words regarding the taking of the love feast. When Paul pointed out our bad behavior I felt so bad. I own it—I am guilty of being selfish. Apollos' faction has totally disregarded the other factions by flaunting our social class without meaning to do so. Fortunatus cut into my conscience and heart with his passionate admonition to us to stop being selfish. He was so right! We come to the meal early, bringing the best of the food and wine, and get an early start on consumption. We totally forgot that the others are still working hard and cannot come until sunset.

By that time, in our self-centered gluttony, we had already consumed most of the food and wine, leaving very little for others. In our drunken stupor we failed to see the hurt, hunger, and disappointment in the other's eyes when they arrived to find very little left for them. I am ashamed. I had to confess this sin before partaking of the Lord's Supper. I am grateful that Paul's words helped me get right with God again.

Paul is challenging me to think more about 'the body of Christ' and my rightful place within this body. I understand the concept of us being mindful of one another and working together as this is what I teach my athletes. Most of the time we compete in our games as individuals, but occasionally we join forces as a team to compete. When we do, we must work together in every aspect. We must know one another well enough to anticipate the next move. We must

respect each other's gifts of athleticism that are brought to the team, and we must honor each other with words of encouragement. But most of all we must love one another so we can be a united team. When we compete we are all working for the same purpose—to win. I think this is the essence of Paul's message to us. If we will unite as a body of Christ and love one another, we will be winners in God's Kingdom.

Debriefing and Applying

I was delighted to study this portion of Scripture so I could learn more about Paul's message. I grew up in a Southern Baptist Church which used this Scripture inappropriately to "keep women in their rightful place." First Corinthians 11: 2-16 was used as "ammunition" (along with other misinterpreted Scripture) to prohibit women from speaking, praying, and exerting leadership in the worship setting.

It was okay for women to participate in the leadership of children, to lead in music for worship, and to help maintain the worship space, but men who taught us to be in submission prohibited anything else. It has taken me years to stop hearing these oppressive voices and to listen fully to God's call on my life. It is refreshing to gain new perspective on the Scriptures that are used inappropriately to promote Paul's subordinate views. (I could say so much more, but because this journal entry is already lengthy, I will spare you!)