

Study Guide for the Week of August 17, 2008

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Message manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.

Monday—Read 1 Corinthians chapter 12. The Corinthians had asked Paul about the nature, purpose and experience of spiritual gifts. How does Paul describe the spiritual gifts in verse 7? What are those gifts and are they still available to followers of Jesus today? In verses 14-26 Paul uses the analogy of the human body and the body of Christ. What is Paul's point here? What does it mean to your life and gifts?

Tuesday—Read 1 Corinthians chapter 13. This is one of the most loved texts in the entire Bible. It is not meant to be a poem on love, but a challenge of self-examination on our motives in serving others and living out our spiritual gifts. Why is Paul using the imagery of childhood and adulthood? How does that relate to how we express love? Spend time focusing on verses 4-8. What do these words mean to you? How do you see Jesus in these words? How do you see yourself in these words?

Wednesday—Today's chapter deals with a subject that has been controversial since the beginning of the Christian faith. It addresses speaking in tongues—speaking in a language you have not learned. But don't worry, just read slowly and carefully and ask God for insight and understanding. **Read 1 Corinthians chapter 14.** To whom is the gift of speaking in tongues given? What is the personal benefit of praying in tongues? What is the limitation of praying in tongues? The second part of this chapter depicts how the presence of the Holy Spirit makes times of worship exhilarating and dynamic times to experience Christ's presence. Notice in verses 26-32 the beauty and balance of early Christian worship. What might it have been like to be there?

Thursday—Read 1 Corinthians chapter 15. In this chapter Paul writes at length about the resurrection of Jesus and the implications of that event to Christian faith. For Paul and all the New Testament authors, the physical resurrection of Jesus is the absolute essential upon which the gospel stands or falls. What are the implications of our faith if Jesus has not been raised (verses 12-18)? The resurrection of Jesus is called "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." What does this mean? Paul uses a number of metaphors for what heaven will be like. What do these mean to you?

Friday—Read 1 Corinthians chapter 16. Paul ends his letter in a very practical way reminding the Corinthians of the collection he is receiving for the poor. What does this special collection say about the connection between early churches? What are your thoughts on Paul's travel plans? How does Paul conclude this letter? What does that say to you?