

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 10, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 1 (1:10-4:12) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 10, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 1 (1:10-4:12), Biblicalelearning.org

Dr. Gary Meadors' lecture focuses on Paul's response in 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21 to information received from Chloe's household. Meadors emphasizes the importance of understanding this section as a unified whole rather than individual verses. He discusses analyses by Talbert and Wynter, highlighting the secular Greco-Roman cultural context of Corinth that influenced the Corinthians' behavior and thinking. Meadors explains how their tendency to apply worldly perspectives to Christian teachings led to divisions and a misunderstanding of leadership. He notes Paul's efforts to shift their understanding towards a family-based imagery and emphasize service over status. Ultimately, the lecture underscores the necessity of a transformed mindset, moving from secular ways of thinking to a biblical worldview.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 10 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 1 Corinthians).



**Meadors_1Cor_Sess
ion 10.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 10, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 1 (1:10-4:12)

Briefing Document: 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21 - Paul's Response to Chloe's Household

Overview:

This lecture by Dr. Gary Meadors focuses on the crucial unit of 1 Corinthians 1:10 through 4:21, where Paul responds to an oral report from Chloe's household regarding issues within the Corinthian church. Meadors emphasizes the importance of understanding this section as a cohesive unit, rather than a collection of individual verses. He critiques the practice of "expository preaching" that focuses solely on individual verses without considering the broader context and argues that the Bible communicates through larger units of thought, often represented by paragraphs.

The lecture draws heavily on the structural analysis of Talbert and the socio-cultural insights of Bruce Winter to illuminate the underlying issues Paul addresses. The central argument is that the divisions and problems in the Corinthian church stemmed from their application of a secular, Roman worldview – particularly the competitive teacher-disciple dynamic prevalent in their culture – to their Christian faith.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Understanding 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21 as a Unified Response:

- Meadors stresses that this section is Paul's direct response to the information he received from Chloe's household.
- He encourages a holistic reading, emphasizing that each part of this unit contributes to a larger, interconnected message.
- *"thinking through this particular unit is going to exercise us greatly on how to think of a whole unit like this 1, 10 through the end of chapter 4, rather than just one paragraph or a verse."* (Page 1)
- He criticizes verse-by-verse preaching that loses the overarching ideas presented in larger biblical units.
- *"Romans is preaching this unit, this unit, this unit, and sometimes those units may take several verses, maybe sometimes as much as 10 or 20 verses."* (Page 1)

1. Talbert's Structural Analysis: The Chiasm of Rhetorical Questions:

- Meadors discusses Talbert's view that the structure of chapters 1-4 is based on three rhetorical questions in 1:13: "Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"
- Talbert proposes that the answers to these questions appear in reverse order throughout chapters 1-4, forming a chiasm (A-B-C, C-B-A).
- Answer to the third question (baptism in Paul's name): 1:14-16.
- Answer to the second question (Paul's crucifixion): 1:17-3:4.
- Answer to the first question (Christ divided): 3:5-4:7.
- Meadors acknowledges the helpfulness of this structure but notes it's not perfectly clean due to the inclusion of 4:8-21 as a conclusion.

1. Winter's Socio-Cultural Analysis: The Influence of Secular Discipleship:

- Meadors highlights Bruce Winter's crucial insight that the root of the Corinthian problems lies in their "secular fashion" of thinking and behaving, as indicated in 1 Corinthians 3:3: *"for you are still of the flesh. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving according to human inclinations?"* (Page 3, RSV)
- Winter argues that the Corinthians were applying the norms and values of their Roman, Corinthian culture to their Christian faith, rather than allowing the gospel to transform their worldview.
- *"They're applying a secular way of unpacking what's going on within Christianity. They're pouring Christianity into their mode rather than being poured into the Christian mode."* (Page 4)

1. The Prevalence of the Teacher-Disciple Model in Greco-Roman Culture:

- Meadors explains that in the Mediterranean world, particularly in a city like Corinth, public speaking and oratory were highly valued.
- Teachers (orators) had authority over their students (disciples), and there was often intense competition among teachers and their followers.
- The concept of a "disciple" in this context meant an apprentice who learned their mentor's "trade," which could include oratory, and involved imitation of the teacher's mannerisms and views.

- *"The role of disciples was to learn his mentor's trade. That trade might be just about anything. In a trade like oratory, a disciple would learn to imitate."* (Page 7)

1. The "Renaissance of the Sophists" and its Impact:

- Meadors mentions the "Second Sophist Street" in the first century, where orators were prominent and the term "disciple" was frequently used.
- This cultural backdrop contributed to the Corinthians' tendency to form factions around different Christian leaders (Paul, Apollos, Peter, Christ) and engage in competitive behavior, reflecting the rivalries among secular orators.
- *"There was an intense professional competitiveness among teachers, which was passed on to their student disciples. We can see that so much. I'm a disciple of Paul. I'm a disciple of Peter. I'm a disciple of Apollos. I'm a disciple of Christ."* (Page 8)

1. The Secular Values of Corinth: Honor (Dignitas) and Litigation:

- Meadors points out that gaining honor ("dignitas") in the city was a significant motivator in Roman culture, often achieved through success in public speaking and in the notoriously litigious society of Corinth.
- The Corinthians' tendency to take each other to court (mentioned later in 1 Corinthians) is linked to this cultural emphasis on status and winning disputes.
- *"Corinth was a notoriously litigious society. Everything to gain power, to gain prestige, to gain honor of whatever sort it was in the city often took place in the courts."* (Page 9)

1. Paul's Counter-Arguments and the Shift in Imagery:

- Meadors outlines five ways Paul counters the secular mindset of the Corinthians, based on Winter's analysis:
- **Unified Loyalty to Christ:** Believers should be united in their allegiance to Christ, not individual human leaders. *"So, let no one boast about human leaders... you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God."* (Page 11, 3:21-23 NRSV)
- **Functional Tasks Over Status:** The roles of believers, including leaders, are for service, not to gain status. *"What, then, is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe."* (Page 12, 3:5)

- **Leaders as Servants and Stewards:** Believers should view their leaders as servants and stewards of God's mysteries (4:1-4), undermining the power dynamics of the teacher-disciple model.
- **Undermining Power Plays:** Paul's approach was not based on worldly power or rhetoric but on the message of the cross (2:1-5).
- **Shift from Disciple to Family Imagery:** Paul deliberately avoids the term "disciple" in his epistles, which carried the connotations of secular apprenticeship and loyalty to a teacher. Instead, he uses familial terms like "brothers" and the image of himself as their "father," emphasizing unity and mutual support. *"The noun disciple is never used in Pauline literature. The term brothers... is used 29 times."* (Page 13)

1. The Need for Transformation of the Mind:

- Meadors emphasizes that the solution to the Corinthians' problems lies in the transformation of their thinking, moving away from a secular worldview to a gospel-centered one.
- He uses the analogy of the bumper sticker "She who dies with the most toys wins" to illustrate a secular mindset focused on acquisition and self-interest, contrasting it with the Christian ethic of loving people and using things.
- *"You change thinking to change behavior. The Bible is consistent from Genesis to Revelation about that motif."* (Page 15)
- He highlights that the biblical understanding of "heart" often refers to the rational domain, emphasizing the importance of intellectual and spiritual understanding in faith.

Key Quote:

"They're applying a secular way of unpacking what's going on within Christianity. They're pouring Christianity into their mode rather than being poured into the Christian mode. And so consequently, they've messed up the message." (Page 4)

Implications for Understanding 1 Corinthians:

- To truly understand Paul's arguments in 1 Corinthians 1-4, it is essential to consider the socio-cultural context of Corinth and the prevalence of the competitive teacher-disciple model.

- The divisions and factions within the church were not simply personality clashes but reflected a deeper issue of applying secular values and structures to the Christian community.
- Paul's response aims to redirect their loyalty to Christ, redefine leadership as service, and establish a new community identity based on familial love and unity rather than worldly competition and status.
- The transformation of their minds and worldviews was crucial for the Corinthians to live in a manner consistent with the gospel.

Further Action/Consideration:

- Read the assigned materials, particularly Talbert's "Reading Corinthians" and Winter's "After Paul Left Corinth," to gain a deeper understanding of their analyses.
- Reflect on how secular values and cultural norms can influence contemporary Christian communities.
- Consider the implications of understanding biblical texts within their original historical and cultural contexts.
- Anticipate the discussion of 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 in the next lecture, where Paul's "secret" to overcoming the secular mindset will be explored.

4. Study Guide: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 10, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 1 (1:10-4:12)

Study Guide: 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21

Key Concepts and Themes

- **Divisions in the Corinthian Church:** The passage addresses factions and rivalries within the church based on allegiance to different leaders (Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ).
- **Oral Communique from Chloe's Household:** This report served as the catalyst for Paul's response, highlighting the disunity in the Corinthian church.
- **Secular Worldview Influencing Christian Practice:** The core issue identified is the Corinthians' tendency to apply their Greco-Roman cultural values and norms to Christian faith and practice.
- **The Significance of 1 Corinthians 3:3:** This verse, highlighting jealousy, quarreling, and acting according to human inclination, is presented as the key to understanding the problems in chapters 1-4.
- **Greco-Roman Concept of the Disciple:** The lecture emphasizes the cultural context of discipleship as apprenticeship to teachers, particularly orators, involving imitation, loyalty, and competition for honor.
- **Paul's Alternative Imagery: Family:** Paul deliberately shifts away from the teacher-disciple model, emphasizing the imagery of believers as brothers and sisters in a family, with leaders as servants.
- **The Importance of a Transformed Mind (Romans 12:2):** True Christian living stems from a fundamental shift in thinking, moving away from secular values towards a gospel-centered worldview.
- **The Nature of "Wisdom":** The Corinthians were valuing worldly wisdom and oratory skills over the message of the cross.
- **The Role of Church Leaders:** Paul presents leaders as servants and stewards, not figures to be idolized for their status or rhetorical abilities.
- **The Dangers of Litigiousness and Seeking Honor:** The Corinthian culture was marked by legal disputes and a strong emphasis on public honor (dignitas), which was inappropriately influencing the church.

- **Chiasm in Chapters 1-4 (Talbert's Analysis):** Talbert proposes a chiastic structure centered around the rhetorical questions in 1:13, with the answers appearing in reverse order.

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. According to Dr. Meadors, what prompted Paul's response in 1 Corinthians 1:10 through 4:21?
2. Why does Dr. Meadors emphasize treating 1 Corinthians 1:10 through chapter 4 as a single unit of thought?
3. What is the central issue identified in 1 Corinthians 3:3, and how does Dr. Meadors explain its significance for understanding chapters 1-4?
4. Describe the Greco-Roman concept of a "disciple" in the first century, particularly in relation to orators, and how it influenced the Corinthians.
5. Why does Paul largely avoid the term "disciple" in his epistles, and what alternative imagery does he frequently use to describe believers?
6. How were the Corinthians applying a "secular fashion" to their Christian faith, according to Dr. Meadors? Provide an example from their cultural context.
7. What does Dr. Meadors mean when he says the Corinthians were trying to "pour Christianity into their mode rather than being poured into the Christian mode"?
8. Explain the contrast between a secular worldview of "love things and use people" and a Christian worldview according to the lecture.
9. What are some of the ways Paul attempts to correct the Corinthians' secular thinking about leadership and loyalty, as outlined in the lecture?
10. Briefly describe Talbert's perspective on the structure of 1 Corinthians chapters 1 through 4.

Quiz: Answer Key

1. Paul's response in 1 Corinthians 1:10 through 4:21 was prompted by an oral communicate from Chloe's household, which informed him of the divisions and quarreling within the Corinthian church.
2. Dr. Meadors emphasizes treating this section as a single unit because it represents Paul's comprehensive response to the information from Chloe's

household, and each part contributes to the overall message addressing the disunity and underlying issues.

3. The central issue in 1 Corinthians 3:3 is the presence of jealousy and quarreling among the Corinthians, which signifies that they are still acting according to the flesh or in a worldly (secular) fashion, applying human standards rather than gospel principles.
4. In the Greco-Roman world, a disciple was essentially an apprentice or student, often of a public speaker or orator. This involved intense loyalty, imitation of the teacher's style, and participation in the competitive pursuit of honor and status. The Corinthians were applying this model to their Christian leaders.
5. Paul avoids the term "disciple" in his epistles because it was heavily associated with the Greco-Roman teacher-student dynamic that fostered division. Instead, he frequently uses family imagery, referring to believers as "brothers" and "sisters," and presenting himself as a spiritual father, emphasizing unity and mutual support.
6. The Corinthians were applying a "secular fashion" by bringing their cultural values of competition, hero worship of orators, and the pursuit of public honor into the church. For example, they were aligning themselves with different preachers based on their rhetorical skills and engaging in rivalries similar to those among philosophical schools or orators.
7. When Dr. Meadors says the Corinthians tried to "pour Christianity into their mode rather than being poured into the Christian mode," he means they were attempting to understand and practice Christianity through the lens of their existing Greco-Roman worldview and values, rather than allowing the gospel to transform their thinking and behavior.
8. A secular worldview, exemplified by the bumper sticker "she who dies with the most toys wins," prioritizes the acquisition of material possessions and may lead to using people as means to that end. In contrast, a Christian worldview emphasizes loving people and using material things responsibly, reflecting a transformed set of priorities.
9. Paul attempts to correct the Corinthians' secular thinking by emphasizing that all believers are united in loyalty to Christ, that leaders are merely servants with functional roles, and that the true way to influence is through the message of the

cross, not worldly power or status. He also shifts the imagery from disciple to family to promote unity.

10. Talbert analyzes 1 Corinthians chapters 1 through 4 through the lens of three rhetorical questions posed in 1:13. He suggests a chiasmic structure where the answers to these questions appear in reverse order throughout the subsequent chapters, though he acknowledges this structure isn't perfectly neat.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the cultural context of first-century Corinth, particularly the emphasis on rhetoric and the teacher-disciple relationship, and explain how this context contributed to the divisions within the early church as described in 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21.
2. Discuss the significance of 1 Corinthians 3:3 ("You are still worldly") as the key to understanding Paul's concerns in chapters 1-4. How does the concept of "secular fashion" illuminate the specific issues Paul addresses?
3. Compare and contrast the Greco-Roman understanding of "discipleship" with the imagery Paul employs in his epistles to describe the relationships among believers and between believers and their leaders. Why is this shift in imagery significant for addressing the problems in Corinth?
4. Evaluate the claim that the core issue in 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21 is the failure of the Corinthians to undergo a transformation of their minds (Romans 12:2). How does their secular worldview hinder their understanding and practice of the gospel?
5. Explore the practical implications of understanding the first-century cultural context of 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21 for contemporary Christian communities facing issues of division, leadership, and the influence of secular values.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Oral Communique:** A message or report delivered verbally rather than in writing. In this context, it refers to the information Chloe's household brought to Paul about the issues in the Corinthian church.
- **Expository Preaching:** A method of preaching that focuses on explaining the meaning of a passage of scripture in its historical and literary context. Dr. Meadors critiques a verse-by-verse approach as not truly expository when it misses the larger units of thought.
- **Unit (of Text):** A coherent section of writing that develops a single idea or theme. Dr. Meadors emphasizes understanding larger units in scripture, like 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21, rather than just individual verses.
- **Rhetorical Questions:** Questions asked not to elicit information but to make a point or create an effect. Paul uses them in 1 Corinthians 1:13 to highlight the absurdity of the Corinthian divisions.
- **Chiasm:** A literary structure where parallel elements are presented in an A, B, C, B, A pattern. Talbert identifies a chiastic structure in 1 Corinthians 1-4 based on the rhetorical questions in 1:13.
- **Greco-Roman World:** The cultural and historical context of the Roman Empire and the influence of Greek thought and customs in the first century AD. Corinth was a major city within this world.
- **Secular:** Relating to worldly matters rather than spiritual or religious ones. Dr. Meadors argues that the Corinthians were operating in a secular fashion by applying worldly values to their Christian life.
- **Disciple (Greco-Roman Context):** A student or apprentice who follows and learns from a teacher, often imitating their behavior and demonstrating loyalty. In the context of orators, disciples would emulate their speaking style and advocate for their views.
- **Orator:** A skilled public speaker, highly valued in the Greco-Roman world for their ability to persuade and influence audiences.
- **Dignitas (Latin):** A Roman concept referring to honor, status, and social standing within the community. The pursuit and maintenance of dignitas were important aspects of Roman culture.

- **Litigious:** Prone to engaging in lawsuits or legal disputes. Corinth was known for its litigious society.
- **Zealot:** In this context, referring to someone fiercely loyal and devoted to their teacher and their teachings, as seen in the Corinthian factions.
- **Worldly (Thinking/Fashion):** Behaving and thinking according to the values and norms of the secular world rather than the principles of the gospel.
- **Filial Imagery:** Language and metaphors related to family relationships, such as brothers, sisters, and fathers. Paul uses this imagery to promote unity and a different understanding of leadership in the church.
- **Paradigm Shift:** A fundamental change in approach or underlying assumptions. Dr. Meadors suggests that accepting the gospel requires a major paradigm shift from a secular to a Christian worldview.
- **Transformation (of the Mind):** A radical change in one's thinking and understanding, as described in Romans 12:2, which is essential for living according to God's will.
- **Heart (Biblical Usage):** In biblical terms, "heart" often refers to the center of one's being, encompassing the mind, will, and understanding, rather than primarily emotions (as in Western culture).
- **Splankna (Greek):** The Greek word for "bowels" or "inner parts," often used metaphorically in the New Testament to refer to deep emotions like compassion or affection.

5. FAQs on Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 10, Response to Chloe's Household, Part 1 (1:10-4:12), Biblicalelearning.org

Frequently Asked Questions on 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21

1. What is the primary issue Paul is addressing in 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21? Paul is primarily addressing the divisions and rivalries within the Corinthian church. These divisions are manifested in the believers aligning themselves with different leaders like Paul, Apollos, and Peter, reflecting a secular, competitive mindset rather than a unified devotion to Christ. This unit of scripture highlights the problem of applying worldly values and structures to the Christian faith.

2. What information prompted Paul to address these issues in his letter? Paul received an oral report from Chloe's household regarding the state of affairs in the Corinthian church, specifically mentioning the disagreements and factions forming around different teachers. This communique served as the catalyst for Paul's response in 1 Corinthians 1:10 through chapter 4.

3. How does Dr. Meadors emphasize the importance of understanding the literary structure of this section of 1 Corinthians? Dr. Meadors stresses the significance of viewing 1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21 as a unified whole rather than a collection of isolated verses or paragraphs. He critiques the practice of "expository preaching" that focuses on individual verses without considering the broader context and the overarching ideas communicated within larger units, such as chapters or significant portions thereof. Understanding this unit as a cohesive response is crucial for grasping Paul's intended message.

4. According to Talbert's structural analysis, what rhetorical device does Paul employ in chapters 1-4? According to Talbert, Paul utilizes a chiasm in chapters 1-4, structuring his response around three rhetorical questions found in 1:13: "Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Talbert suggests that the answers to these questions appear in reverse order throughout these chapters, forming an A-B-C, C-B-A pattern.

5. What is Bruce Winter's key insight into the root cause of the Corinthians' divisions?

Bruce Winter argues that the underlying cause of the divisions and other issues in the Corinthian church was their "secular fashion" of thinking and behaving. They were applying the values and norms of their Roman Corinthian culture, particularly the competitive and status-driven aspects related to teachers and orators, to their Christian faith. Winter identifies 1 Corinthians 3:3 ("For you are still of the flesh. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving according to human inclinations?") as a key verse highlighting this worldliness.

6. How did the Greco-Roman cultural understanding of a "disciple" contribute to the problems in Corinth? In the Greco-Roman world, a disciple was essentially an apprentice or student who showed exclusive loyalty to their teacher, often imitating their mannerisms and rhetoric, especially in the prominent field of oratory. The Corinthians adopted this cultural paradigm, forming factions around their preferred Christian leaders (Paul, Apollos, Peter) and exhibiting competitive loyalty, much like disciples of secular orators. This "hero worship" and focus on individual teachers undermined the unity of the church centered on Christ.

7. How does Paul attempt to correct the Corinthians' secular mindset and their view of Christian leadership? Paul counters the secular mindset in several ways. He emphasizes that all believers share a primary loyalty to Christ, not to human leaders (3:21-23). He redefines the role of Christian leaders as servants or stewards with functional tasks rather than figures of high status to be competitively followed (3:5-7, 4:1-4). He also shifts the imagery from that of a "disciple" with exclusive loyalty to a teacher to that of a familial relationship, emphasizing unity and mutual support among "brothers and sisters" in Christ.

8. What fundamental shift in thinking does Paul advocate for the Corinthians (and by extension, all believers)? Paul calls for a radical transformation of their minds, moving away from a secular worldview focused on competition, status, and worldly wisdom to a gospel-centered perspective. This new way of thinking prioritizes unity in Christ, viewing leaders as servants, and embracing a family-like community where the focus is on lifting each other up rather than striving for individual prominence. This paradigm shift, from "loving things and using people" to "loving people and using things," is essential for living out the Christian faith authentically.