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1 Corinthians:

Sources of Unity in a Conflicted Church

Why are we here?

- **Importance of Unity**
- For Christian witness
 - John 17:20-23
 - 1 Peter 3:15
 - Matthew 5:14-16
 - John 13:34-35

I DO NOT PRAY FOR
THESE ALONE,
BUT ALSO FOR THOSE WHO
WILL BELIEVE IN ME
THROUGH THEIR WORD;
THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE,
AS YOU, FATHER, ARE IN ME,
AND I IN YOU;
THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE
ONE IN US, THAT THE WORLD
MAY BELIEVE THAT
YOU SENT ME.

JOHN 17:20-21

1 Corinthians: Sources of Unity in a Conflicted Church



Why are we here?

- Importance of Unity
- Experience of Conflict
- *Stories to share?*



Sorting Thru the Mess: *"Theological Triage"*

1. **Essential to Gospel**
(what it means to be Christian)
2. **Urgent for Church Practice**
(functional, group distinctives)
3. **Important for Theology, not Unity**
(agree to disagree; cooperate)
4. **Not important; Bible silent**
(interest, preference, culture)

Gavin Ortland

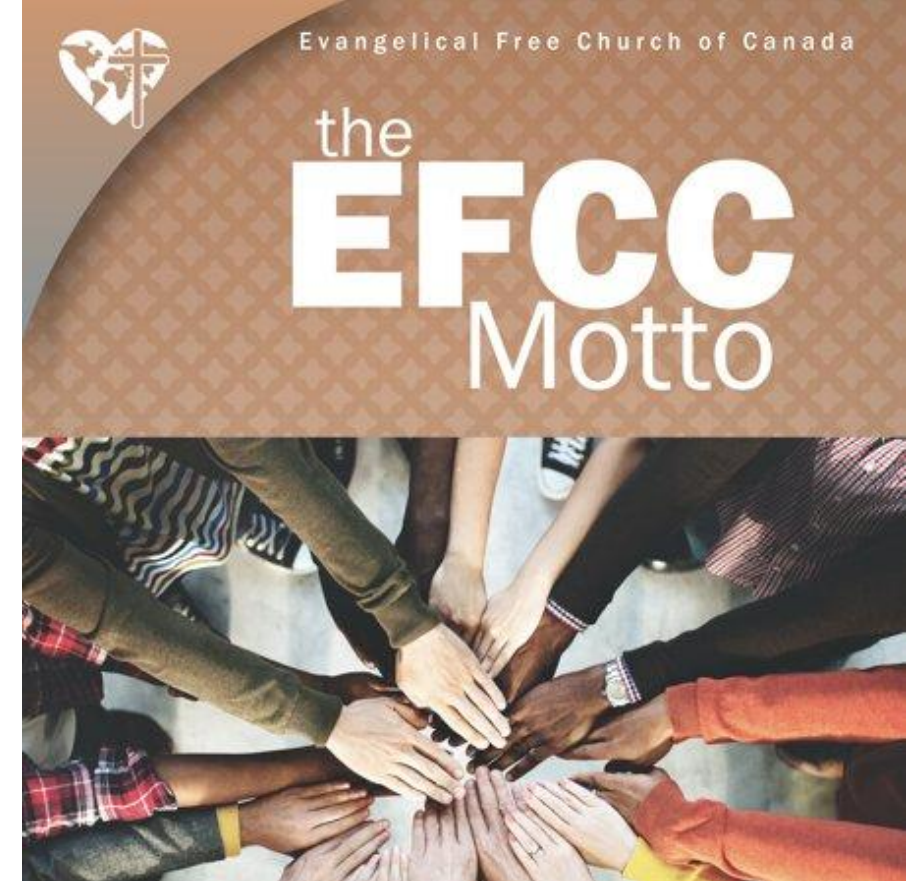
FINDING THE RIGHT HILLS TO DIE ON

The Case for Theological Triage

Finding Unity: *Can't we Just Stick to the Essentials?*

*"Make every effort
to keep the unity
of the Spirit
through the
bond of peace."*

EPHESIANS 4:3



- ***"In essentials, unity;
in non-essentials, charity;
in all things, Jesus Christ"***

1 Corinthians: *In an Hour?*

- **Hermeneutical approaches**
 - Form-critical – for Bible translation
 - Historical-grammatical – for study, preaching
 - Literary-rhetorical – for identifying themes
- **Today's Purpose – An Interpretive Lens**
 - *1 Corinthians* is a letter written in response to conflict, pointing to sources of unity
 - **1:4-10 – Tension:** spiritual blessings & earthly reality
 - **Five sections:** Addressing conflict & building unity

1 Corinthians: *A Brief Outline*

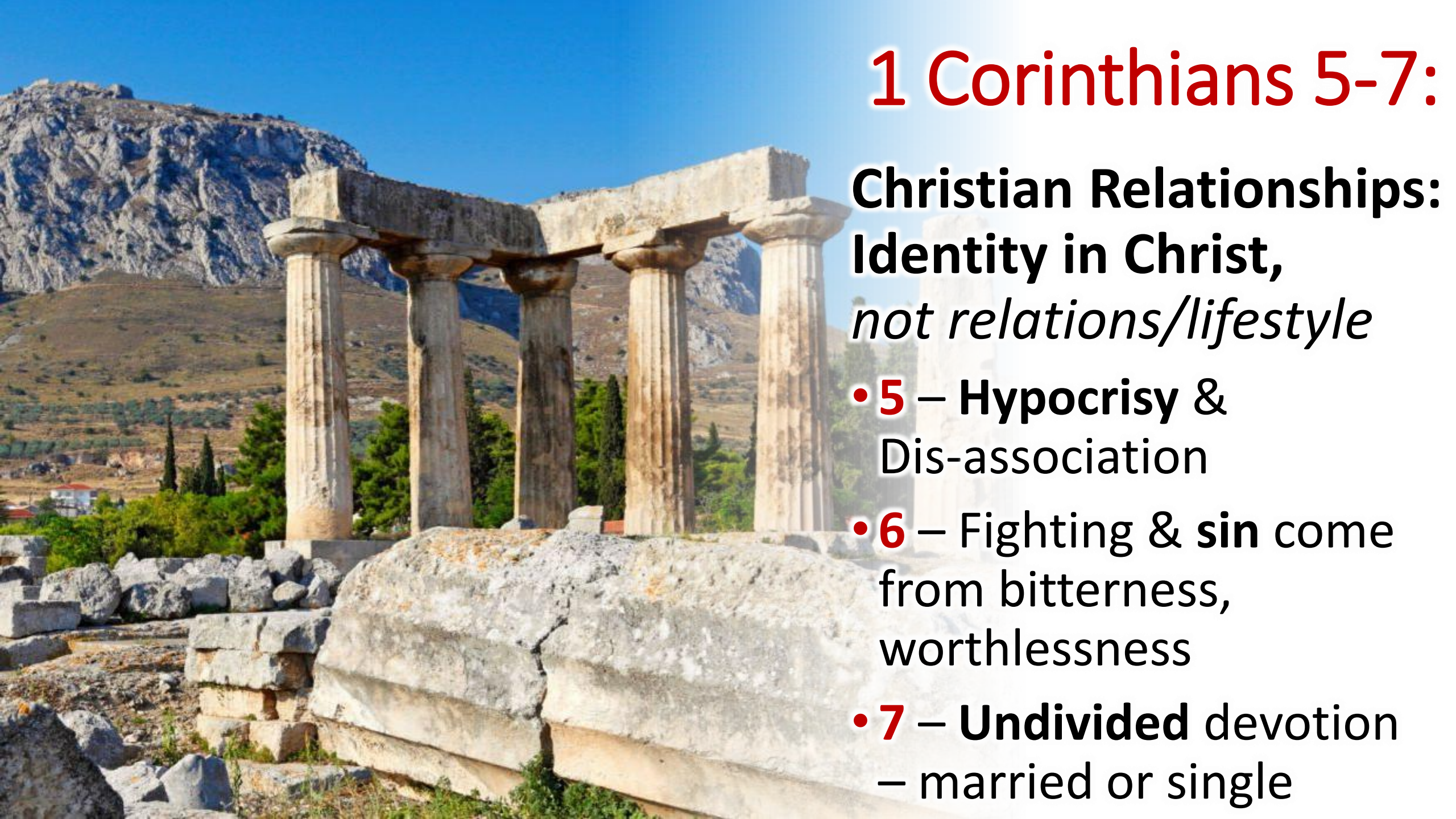
- **1-4** – Unity in our Savior,
not our heroes
- **5-7** – Identity in Christ,
not relations/lifestyle
- **8-10** – Missional Charity,
not cultural conformity
- **11-14** – Loving Fellowship,
not personal independence
- **15-16** – Gospel Hope,
not aimless pleasure



1 Corinthians 1-4:

Christians & Leaders:
Unity in our Savior,
not our heroes

- **1:10-16** – Problem of **factions**, follow leaders
- **1:17-2:16** – Not power & wisdom, but unite in **gospel** of Christ
- **3-4** – Leaders are just planters, builders, merely **servants!**



1 Corinthians 5-7:

**Christian Relationships:
Identity in Christ,
*not relations/lifestyle***

- **5** – Hypocrisy & Dis-association
- **6** – Fighting & **sin** come from bitterness, worthlessness
- **7** – **Undivided** devotion – married or single



1 Corinthians 8-10:

Christianity & Culture:
Missional Charity,
not cultural conformity

- **8** – Forego freedom for sensitivity to **others**
- **9** – Accommodate cultural forms for **gospel**
- **10** – Consider **others'** conscience above own

1 Corinthians 11-14:



Christian Gatherings:
Loving Fellowship,
not independence

- **11** – Table manners:
Consider the **Body**
- **12** – Use **gifts** of Spirit to
work for common good
- **13** – Display **fruit** of Spirit
in how we work, serve
- **14** – Desire gifts that
build up body



1 Corinthians 15-16:

Christian Message:
Gospel Hope,
not aimless pleasure

- **15** – Good news:
death & reconciliation;
resurrection & **renewal**
- **15** – **Implication:**
our work is not in vain
- **16** – **Partnership** in
Kingdom work

I'm Glad we Fought...

- **2 Corinthians 7:8-13** - ⁸ Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— ⁹ **yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance.** For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.
- ¹¹ **See what this godly sorrow has produced in you:** what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹² So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. ¹³ By all this we are encouraged.