Final Source of Authority

The apostle Paul, writing God's inspired words, wrote something vital to the struggling, arguing church in Corinth, Greece. The city had a long, deep history of pursuing the finest things knowledge and technology had to offer. From the days of the ancient Grecian Empire, Corinthia, as it was called then, had been one of the world's great cities. Boasting world class architecture, much of it newly built in 44 BC after the Romans destroyed much of the original Grecian city.

Because of its geographical location, Corinth had long been a major city of commerce and world trade. Of course, the international trade brought almost every form of villainy and vice to streets and the pagan temples of Corinth. As Athens had become the seat of learning, then Corinth had become the tenderloin district. Sailors and others both brought and found every form of deviance and debauchery in this bustling capitol of its Roman province.

But Paul planted a church there. Into this dark collection of humanity, Paul brought the good news of Jesus, the light of the world (John 8:12). In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 we find that the Corinthian church itself is comprised of formerly dubious characters,

> *Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

The new Christians in Corinth had a plethora of backgrounds in their belief systems and in their former sins. Now, as new babes in Christ they struggled to form a cohesive family with God-given doctrines and directions and unity. The God-given answer to their struggles is found in chapter 1 verse 10:

> *Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

One thing that is obvious here is that unity and cohesion in a church family must be based on everyone believing and teaching the same thing! That introduces a vital reality: all of God's children must have the same source of final authority - God's word. All of His word is inspired (t*heopneustos* – literally the Greek word for "God-breathed"). The text of the Bible comes directly from God, not man (2 Peter 1:20, 21).

In such a *formerly* diverse group of people, there would naturally be wide-ranging *final sources of authority.* But God, Himself, though Paul's pen, is calling for all His children to be in agreement (literally "speak the same thing) in 1:10. The only way that can happen in any local church and God's churches at large, is for all of us to take God and His blood-purchased written

word as our ***final authority***… not some cadre of men in a distant city, not some guru or group, but God's word, and His word alone, *solo-scriptura*.

Not going beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6) is our only hope of true fellowship, healing of our hearts, and overcoming our biases. **Who is *your* final source of authority?**

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