

Warring Corinth

Paul's Patrons Series: Book 3 — Book Club Discussion Questions

1. The apostle names his source without softening it: “It has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you” (1 Cor. 1:11). Much of *Warring Corinth* turns on whether telling the truth about a church is faithfulness or betrayal. When is it right to carry a hard report to someone with authority to act, and when does it become gossip? (See also Prov. 27:6, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.”)
2. The Isthmian games crowned their victors with a circle of wild celery that browned within days. Paul, who lived in Corinth long enough to have watched it happen, writes that athletes “do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable” (1 Cor. 9:25). What perishable crowns is Chloe pursuing when the novel opens? What are yours?
3. Chloe keeps a household shrine and pays her vows for years before she hears the gospel. The Lord declares, “My glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols” (Isa. 42:8), and Paul insists that “an idol has no real existence” (1 Cor. 8:4). Why is it so costly to remove something that has stood in a wall for two decades? What idols in your own life are hardest to pull down because so much is resting on them?
4. As a patron, Chloe weighs every gift by what the city will understand it to mean. Paul asks, “What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Cor. 4:7), and holds up the Macedonians, who gave “beyond their means” out of “extreme poverty” (2 Cor. 8:2–3). Where does the novel expose the difference between generosity that costs the giver and generosity that buys the giver something?
5. “Each one of you says, ‘I follow Paul,’ or ‘I follow Apollos,’ or ‘I follow Cephas,’ or ‘I follow Christ’” (1 Cor. 1:12). Almost no one in Chloe’s assembly says anything untrue, and the church comes apart anyway. How do good teachers become rallying points for division? Read 1 Corinthians 3:5–7. What changes when we admit that “neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything”?
6. When believers take one another before the Roman courts, Paul asks, “Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?” (1 Cor. 6:7). Is that a rule to obey or a posture to grow into? What does the novel suggest happens to a congregation that has no one “wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers” (1 Cor. 6:5)?

7. In Corinth the wealthy could arrive at the supper whenever they pleased and the working poor could not, so that “one goes hungry, another gets drunk” (1 Cor. 11:21). How do the hours, the seating, and the food in Chloe’s dining room preach a theology she never intended to preach? Where do our own gatherings quietly sort people before anyone says a word?
8. Priscilla and Aquila first appear as strangers with an awning, a bench, and a cup of water (Acts 18:2–3). Later they take the most gifted speaker in Greece aside and explain to him “the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26). What does the novel suggest about the kind of influence that leaves no name on the work? Whose quiet shaping are you living on today?
9. “Love does not insist on its own way” (1 Cor. 13:5). Chloe insists on her own way constantly, and nearly always for excellent reasons and for other people’s good. Why is that far harder to recognize in ourselves than plain selfishness? What finally makes it visible to her, and what would it take to make it visible to you?
10. Paul tells the Corinthians to “turn to forgive and comfort him” and to “reaffirm your love for him” (2 Cor. 2:7–8), and reports the answer he received when he begged for relief: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). How does *Warring Corinth* hold together the necessity of confronting sin and the necessity of restoring the sinner? Which of the two do you find harder, and why?

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