

1 Corinthians – An INTRODUCTION

Background on Corinth:

- a major commercial center of Greece; regional Roman Capital of Greece
- its location determined that it would be prosperous (on Isthmus of Corinth) four mile stretch of land, alternative to treacherous journey around Southern tip of Greece. Small boats dragged on sledges. Was a wealthy boom town
- second only to Rome in terms of known info / reconstruction
- population heterogeneous (Romans, Greeks, Jews). Paul's audience predominantly Gentile Christians.

Paul was in Corinth after Jews had been expelled from Rome (49AD), probably 50-52AD, with the writing of this letter thereafter (53-54AD).

Corinthian Correspondence

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. 1 Cor. 5:9 | The Stern Letter |
| 2. Our 1st Cor. | First Corinthians |
| 3 Alluded to in 2 Cor. 1-2 | The Letter of Much Tears |
| 4. Our 2nd Cor. | Second Corinthians |

The Churches at Corinth

- Met in villas (homes) – maximum of 40-50 people.
- If assumed were 4-5 house churches, would be talking about 200-250 believers in a city of 50,000.
- Indications of Jews in Corinthian churches - 7:18, 9:8, 10 appears Paul assumed enough Jews in the church to interpret to Gentiles when he spoke of Jewish matters.

Influence of Pagan Religions

Asclepion god of physical and emotional healing

- well or sacred spring of healing
- "health resort" place of rest and restoration
- library, garden, gym, baths, public dining
- if felt healed, made plaster cast of body parts for display -- lots of
- breasts and genitals.

Aphrodites goddess of love, beauty, fertility & sea farers.

- located on top of the Acro Corinth (1800 ft above city)
- patron goddess of prostitutes
- temple prostitution
- problem for Paul -- pagan religions made sex outside of marriage
- respectable as part of religious worship.

Hera Argapa goddess of marriage

- temple near marketplace -- agora
- generally where married woman went.
- Probably prayed for husbands to remain reasonably faithful.

Apollo / Oracle of Delphi 50km from Corinth

- a person would bring a question about life to the oracle. An interpreter would take the question to the oracle (always a woman). Ecstatic outbursts, etc. Interpreter then brought back message -- believed to be prophecy. The view of the Corinthians that: Prophecy = Ecstatic Speech + Interpretation may have influenced their view of tongues and prophecy in the church.

LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE – Differences between 1 & 2 Corinthians

The two letters to the Corinthian church that are found in the Bible are very different, with different tones and focuses.

1 Corinthians

Practical

Focuses on the character of the church

Deals w/ ?'s on marriage, freedom, spiritual gifts, and order in the church

Paul instructs in matters of the church's well-being.

Contains advice to help the church combat The pagan influences of the wicked city of Corinth.

2 Corinthians

Personal

Focuses on Paul as he bares his soul and tells of his love for them.

Deals w/ problems of false teachers, whereby Paul defends his authority & the truth of his message.

Paul give his testimony because he knows that acceptance of his advice is vital to the church's well-being.

Contains testimony to help the church combat the havoc caused by false teachers.

DISCUSSION

What do we learn about Paul from the opening scripture? (v.1) _____

What do we learn about the audience? (V.2) _____

Application for us? _____

What is Grace and Peace? (v.3) _____

What did Paul want the church to do? What was the problem? (vv.10-12) _____

Why was Paul glad he didn't baptize anyone else? (vv.14-15) _____

What was Paul's goal? (v.17) _____

Can you think of any parallel problems/challenges/divisions in the church today? _____

How does Paul describe the message of the cross? What does he mean? (v.18) _____

Note the differences between Jew and Gentile in regards to the cross. (vv.21-25) _____

What kind of things does Paul say God chooses? Uses? How does he use them? (vv.26-31) _____

Where is the true place of boasting? (v.31) _____

DISCUSSION

Describe Paul's message and preaching? Who was the focus? (2:1-5) _____

What is our message of wisdom? (2:6-10) _____

What is our helper in this? How does it help? (2:11-15) _____

What does this mean? What should it look like? (2:16) (see also Philippians 2:5-11) _____

DISCUSSION

What was the problem here? Why were the people still worldly infants? (3:1-4) _____

How does Paul describe the "Servants" who help people come to believe? (3:5-9) _____

How does Paul describe the growth process of a believer? (3:10-15) _____

What do you suppose the elements refer to? _____

What do we do with these verses? What is Paul teaching? (3:16-17) _____

Message of these verses? Do you think Paul was done with this subject? (3:18-23) _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

DO v1-2

DARKNESS

DISCLOSED

v 3-5

DECEPTION

v 6-7

DREGS v8-14

or
DISCIPLES?

DETERMINE

DESIRES

v15-21

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

v1 The Problem

v2 Church Response

v3-5 Proper Response

Destruction of the Flesh Implications – Consider:

Gal 2:20

Gal 5:16-25

Rom 8:1-13

By v5, 13

Desired

Outcome

v 2,5,13

Confirmed

2 Cor 2:5-11

v 6-8 Illustrations of Need:

Leaven/Yeast

Passover

Unleavened

v9-11 Associations Clarified

w/ World for

w/o World for

v12 In the Church...

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

Do You Not Know...

Therefore, (the Implications)

v1-2 Saints will Judge the World.

v3-8 Judge Angels

v9-10 Unrighteous Will Not Inherit
Kingdom of God

v15 (+) Your Bodies are Members of Christ

v16-17 (-) Join & Be One with a Prostitute?

v19-20 Body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit

Some Guidance on Dealing with Immorality:

v11

v12-13

v18

v14

DISCUSSION – “GUIDANCE” (what can we learn / observe together)

v1-7 For the **Married**

v10-16

v8-9 For the **Unmarried**

v17-28 General(**for All**)

v29-31 Background for
Concerns

See Also:

1 Cor 15:51, 58

1 Thes 4:15, 17

v32-35 Desired Outcome

v36-38 For Fathers with

Virgin Daughters

v39-40 For **Widows**

DISCUSSION – “GUIDANCE” (what can we learn / observe together)

Love v1-3

vs.

Knowledge

Idol

Food

v4-9

Weak vs. Strong Christians

v10-13

DISCUSSION – “GUIDANCE” (what can we learn / observe together)

Paul’s Rights v1-4 _____

Pastoral Care v5-18 _____

Freedom & Discipline v19-23 _____

Perseverance & Preparation v24-27 _____

DISCUSSION

What were the warnings given here? (vv.1-13) _____

What do we learn about temptation? (vv.12-13) _____

What was Paul's warning teaching here? (vv.14-22) _____

What do we do with questions of conscience? (vv.23-30) _____

What were the ultimate goals of these instructions to be? (vv.31-33) _____

DISCUSSION

How could Paul say this? What was his hope? (v.1) _____

What was the teaching for that day and context (vv. 3-16) _____

What do we do with this today? _____

What lessons can we apply to our church? _____

What were the problems with their practice of the Lord's supper? (vv.17-22) _____

What do these verses teach us about Corinthians? (vv.27-32)

Giving thanks _____

Remembrance of _____

Proclaim _____

Unworthy manner _____

Examine ourselves _____

DISCUSSION

What is a spiritual gift? (v.1) _____

What unifies all this? (vv.4-6) _____

What was the manifestation of the spirit given? (v.7) _____

What was the problem with the words the foot says? (v.15) _____

What is the problem with the words of the eye to the hand? (v.21) _____

What might these responses look like today? _____

How has God "arranged" the parts? (v.18, vv.22-24) _____

What was the purpose for this and God's purpose for the body? (vv.25-26) _____

Do you have a part? (v.27) _____

What is your part? _____

Was everyone to have the same gifts? (vv.28-30) _____

DISCUSSION

What is the most excellent way? _____

What was Paul communicating to the church in Corinth here? (vv.1-3) _____

(vv.4-7)

Do you think it is important he began with patience? Why? _____

Describe the selfless aspects of love. (Hint: 6 of the them) _____

Describe how love doesn't keep score. (Hint: 3 of them) _____

Describe the wall of defense love builds. (Hint:5 of them) _____

Based on these words, how would you define biblical love? _____

How is love different then other gifts of the spirit? (vv.8-13) _____

What should that teach us about how we operate in the spirit? _____

DISCUSSION - (what can we learn / observe together)

Context for Considering Issues:

- Scriptures – Old Testament Only (NO New Testament collection of Letters yet)
- Letters Written by Apostles to Churches – Addressed Questions, Concerns & Problems
- Cultural Issues (i.e., Over-emphasis of certain spiritual gifts, freedom / equality issues for women [hair / appearance / authority in the church], slaves [freedom / responsibility to earthly masters] and the less fortunate brothers and sisters [exclusion from Lord's Supper meal]). Lots of Dynamics and Cultural Norms to Deal with.

As you consider the following think about implied guidance to be applied today in the Church.

v1 **Overall Guiding Principle #1** - _____

v12 **Overall Guiding Principle #2** - _____

v20 **Overall Guiding Principle #3** - _____

v33 **Overall Guiding Principle #4** - _____

v40 **Overall Guiding Principle #5** - _____

Prophecy (emphasis Forth Telling - a Message from God for the Moment)

Speaking in Tongues (emphasis Speaking to God "mysteries" v2)

v2-11 Compare and Contrast

v13-19 Further Consideration

v21-26 Further Clarification / Concern

v27-33 Church Service Order

v34-36 Conduct of Women in the Church (see Law – Gen 3:16 & consider context – Temporary or Permanent?)

v37-39 In Summary

DISCUSSION - (what can we learn / observe together)

v1-4 The Gospel Summary:

v5-8 Witnesses

v12-19 What IF – Jesus Did Not Rise from the Dead?

v20-34 But Since Jesus DID Rise from the Dead – Implications:

v35-49 Body Now vs. Resurrection Body - Important Distinctions:

v50-57 Rejoice & Reflect on Our Resurrection Hope – Someday ...

v58 Until THEN... _____

DISCUSSION - (what can we learn / observe together)

v1-2 Instructions on Giving – A Love Offering

- Planned _____
- Personal _____
- Purposeful _____
- Proportional _____

(For a more in-depth discussion – see 2 Corinthians chapters 8-9)

Evidence for Paul's Love & Concern for this Church

v5-9 Paul's Travel Plans _____

v10-11 Timothy _____

v12 Apollos _____

v22-24 Closing Words _____

Summary Exhortations:

v13 Be on the Alert _____

Stand firm in faith _____

Act like Men _____

Be Strong _____

v14 Do all in Love _____

1 Corinthians – A Review

REFLECT (on the Book / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

REMEMBER (note thoughts, observations, insight gained, etc., in each chapter)

<u>Ch.</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Summary Statement</u>	
1	Unity	v10	_____
	Other		_____
2	Spirit	v2	_____
	Other		_____
3	Foundations	v11	_____
	Other		_____
4	Attitude	v16	_____
	Other		_____
5	Ch Discipline	v6	_____
	Other		_____
6	Temples	v19-20	_____
	Other		_____
7	Stay/Remain	v35	_____
	Other		_____
8	Liberty	v9	_____
	Other		_____
9	Liberty	v22	_____
	Other		_____
10	Conduct (You)	v12-14,31	_____
	Other		_____
11	Order (Us)	v1	_____
	Other		_____
12	Spiritual Gifts	v7	_____
	Other		_____
13	Love	v4-8	_____
	Other		_____
14	Conduct (Us)	v40	_____
	Other		_____
15	Resurrection	v58	_____
	Other		_____

16 Final Expressions
of Love v13
Other

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

NEWER APPRECIATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

1 Cor 4:16 "Therefore I exhort you, be *imitators* of me."

		Bible Reference
I	"I" will strive to Love like Jesus	ch 13; 16:14
M	"Mere" Living is no longer an option	3:1-4; book theme
I	"I" will proclaim Jesus in my life by action and word.	9:19-23
T	"Temple" of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I will glorify God with my body	6:19-20
A	"Always Abounding" in the Work of the Lord, knowing that my labor is not in vain	15:58
T	"Temptation" - I will flee from it	10:12-14
O	"Order" in the church body to build up and encourage	14:40
R	"Resurrection" of Jesus - remember & maintain an eternal prespective	ch 15
S	"Spirit / Spiritual Gifts" - the gift(s) we're given are for the common good	12:4-11

1 Corinthians Summary

Transforming "MERE" believers into MIRRORS of Christ / IMMITATORS of Paul

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly —*mere* infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³ You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? ⁴ For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not *mere* human beings? 1 Cor 3:1-4 NIV

Therefore I urge you to *imitate* me. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Cor 4:16, 11:1 NIV

Chapter	Verses	Characteristics of MERE believers
1	10	Divisions
2	5	Faith rests on the wisdom of men
3	3	Worldly, jealous, quarreling
4	6-7	Arrogant Pride
5	1-2	Tolerance of the unacceptable / Pride
6	5-6	Poor examples to unbelievers
7	5	Giving Satan opportunity / Lacking self-control
8	1,7	Self-focused, not concerned for brothers & sisters in Christ
9	3	Questioning authority of the leader(s) Ignoring examples of bad behavior / choices in the past.
10	5-6, 23	Seeking their own good & not that of others.
11	16-19	Contentious, divisions, humiliating the less fortunate
12	1-2, 31	Gifts for pride & personal benefit, not the proper attitude
13	11	Still acting like immature children, not adults
14	20	Thinking like children
15	1-2, 12	Vain (useless faith) - Jesus' resurrection did not affect their walk
16	1-2	All talk, but no action

Verses	Characteristics of MIRROR believers
17,31	Proclaim the Gospel - a Crucified, Resurrected Messiah Boast about the Lord
2	Christ & Him Crucified Proclaimed
5-7,10-11	Servants of the Lord, who gets all the credit Wise builders on the foundation of Christ
6-7	Trustworthy faithful servants of Christ
9-11	Careful in associations, making a difference in the world Making choices that further the message of the Gospel
12, 18-20	Flee Immorality to be Temples of the Holy Spirit
10-11	Remain faithful in relationships
9	Sacrifice choices in favor of encouraging others Do all for the sake of the Gospel, reaching out
19-22, 24	Run (live life) to get the prize.
11-14	Learn from example, heed warning, endure temptation Do all for God's glory
25-31	Remember what Jesus has done for you, practice discernment & judge your life by the standard of Christ.
7, 11, 27	Recognizes spiritual gifts received are for the good of the Body of Christ and exercises them for God's glory
4-8	Seek to exhibit the perfect love of Jesus in life
1	Follow way of Jesus' love and proclaim what Jesus has done in their life.
58	Keep the resurrection hope after this life in mind in order to stand firm and abound in the work of the Lord in this life.
13-14	Remain on their guard, standing firm in the faith, courageous and strong, doing everything in love