

5-LESSON STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS



1 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION



Author: Paul, the apostle (1:1; 16:21), joined by Sosthenes, who some think may be the same as mentioned in Acts 18:17. Sosthenes might have written the letter while Paul dictated it.

Where Written: The city of Ephesus (16:8-9, 19).

To Whom Written: The church in Corinth (1:2)

Why Written: To identify problems in the Corinthian church, to offer solutions, and to teach the believers how to live in a corrupt society.

The Culture of Corinth

Corinth was a massive, wealthy, and morally chaotic Roman port city often compared to the “Las Vegas of the ancient world”, which directly fueled the deep divisions and behavioral problems inside this early Christian church.

i. Wealth and Social Stratification

- **Extreme Prosperity:** Located on a narrow isthmus with twin harbors, Corinth was a bustling hub of international commerce and trade.
- **Class Divisions:** Society was sharply divided between the ultra-rich, the working class, and slaves.
- **Impact on the Church:** Believers brought these rigid social ranks into the congregation, leading to elitism, factions, and humiliation during the communal Lord’s Supper where the wealthy ate well while the poor went hungry (1 Corinthians 11).

ii. Moral and Sexual License

- **“Corinthianize”:** The city was so famous for prostitution, hedonism (high-living, pleasure-seeking), and debauchery that the Greek verb *korinthiazomai* (“to act like a Corinthian”) became slang for sexual immorality.
- **Pagan Normalcy:** Temple prostitution and loose sexual ethics were woven into daily civic and religious life.
- **Impact on the Church:** Members struggled to break away from their former habits, leading to severe sexual misconduct within the fellowship that the community initially tolerated (1 Corinthians 5).

iii. Intellectualism and Rhetoric

- **Prizes for Eloquence:** Roman-Greek culture deeply valued polished public speaking, philosophical debates, and rhetorical posturing.
- **Impact on the Church:** The congregation formed personality cults around eloquent leaders (like Paul or Apollos), treating the gospel like a trendy philosophy rather than a call to humble service and a crucified Messiah.

iv. A Litigious and Status-Driven Society

- **Public Courts:** Corinthian culture was fiercely competitive and litigious (controversial), prone to settling personal grievances through public legal systems.
- **Impact on the Church:** Christians eagerly dragged fellow believers into pagan public courts to fight over status and minor disputes, ruining their collective witness.

When was the Book Written? Probably in the spring of 57 A.D., shortly before the Jewish feast of Pentecost (1 Corinthians 16:8), during his third missionary journey (Acts 19:1-41).

Paul's Missionary Journeys

Journey	Biblical Record	Main Companions	Main Events
First Missionary Journey. Key Stops: Antioch → Seleucia → Cyprus: Salamis, Paphos → Perga → Pisidian Antioch → Iconium → Lystra → Derbe → return through the same region → Attalia → Antioch	Acts 13:1–14:28	Barnabas; John Mark (until Perga)	Holy Spirit commissions Paul and Barnabas; Elymas the sorcerer is struck blind; Sergius Paulus believes; John Mark leaves the team; Paul preaches in Pisidian Antioch; Jews and Gentiles respond, Paul heals a cripple at Lystra; Paul and Barnabas are mistaken for gods; Paul is stoned and left for dead; churches are strengthened and elders appointed.
Second Missionary Journey Key Stops: Antioch → Syria/Cilicia → Derbe → Lystra → Phrygia/Galatia → Troas → Philippi → Thessalonica → Berea → Athens → Corinth → Ephesus → Caesarea → Jerusalem → Antioch	Acts 15:36–18:22	Silas, Timothy, Luke; Priscilla and Aquila later associated with Paul	Paul and Barnabas separate over John Mark; Timothy joins Paul; Holy Spirit redirects the mission; Paul receives the Macedonian vision; Lydia is converted; Paul and Silas are beaten and imprisoned; earthquake opens prison doors; Philippian jailer believes; opposition in Thessalonica; Bereans examine Scripture; Paul preaches at the Areopagus/Mars Hill; spends about 18 months in Corinth.
Third Missionary Journey Key Stops: Antioch → Galatia/Phrygia → Ephesus → Macedonia → Greece/Corinth → Philippi → Troas → Assos → Mitylene → Miletus → Cos → Rhodes → Patara → Tyre → Ptolemais → Caesarea → Jerusalem	Acts 18:23–21:17	Timothy, Luke, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus, Sopater, Secundus, Tychicus, Trophimus and others	Paul strengthens established churches; spends roughly three years ministering around Ephesus; disciples receive the Holy Spirit; extraordinary miracles occur; gospel dramatically affects Ephesus; converts abandon occult practices; Demetrius and the silversmiths provoke a riot; Paul travels through Macedonia and Greece; Eutychus is raised after falling from a window; Paul gives an emotional farewell to the Ephesian elders at Miletus; warnings are given concerning his coming imprisonment in Jerusalem.
Journey to Rome (<i>not technically a missionary journey</i>)	Acts 27:1–28:16	Luke, Aristarchus; Julius the centurion and others	Paul appeals to Caesar; sails toward Rome as a prisoner; warns of danger at sea; violent storm threatens the ship; Paul assures everyone God will preserve their lives; shipwreck on Malta;

Journey	Biblical Record	Main Companions	Main Events
Key Stops: Caesarea → Sidon → Myra → Cnidus → Fair Havens, Crete → Malta → Syracuse → Rhegium → Puteoli → Rome			Paul survives a poisonous snakebite; heals Publius's father and others; arrives in Rome and continues preaching the gospel.
Probable Post-Roman-Imprisonment Travels Possible visits to Crete, Ephesus, Macedonia, Miletus, Troas, Corinth, Nicopolis, and perhaps Spain	Not recorded in Acts; reconstructed mainly from 1–2 Timothy and Titus	Timothy, Titus, Tychicus, Erastus and others	Paul appears to have been released after the imprisonment described at the end of Acts; leaves Titus in Crete; Timothy ministers in Ephesus; Paul plans to winter at Nicopolis; later Paul is imprisoned again in Rome; writes 2 Timothy anticipating his death. These travels are reconstructed rather than explicitly narrated in Acts.

i. First Journey: Establishing Churches

The first journey represents Paul's major expansion into intentional Gentile mission. Paul and Barnabas did more than preach and move on. On their return route, they revisited the believers, strengthened them, encouraged them to persevere, and appointed elders in the churches (Acts 14:21–23). The pattern was essentially: evangelize → disciple → establish leadership → strengthen the church.

ii. Between Journeys 1 and 2: The Jerusalem Council

Although it was not a missionary journey, Acts 15 is critical. Around AD 49/50, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem to address whether Gentile converts needed circumcision and observance of the Mosaic Law to be saved. The council affirmed that salvation was by God's grace and that Gentiles did not first have to become Jews. This decision profoundly shaped Paul's subsequent ministry.

iii. Second Journey: The gospel enters Macedonia and Greece

The second journey marks an important geographical expansion. At Troas, Paul receives the vision of the Macedonian man saying, in effect, "come over and help us" (Acts 16:9). Paul then enters Macedonia, leading to ministries in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth.

Acts 16:9 (ESV). *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."*

This journey also demonstrates how Paul responded when God changed his plans. Paul intended to preach in certain areas but Acts 16:6–10 says the Spirit prevented him. What looked like a closed door became divine redirection.

iv. Third Journey: Strengthening and Deepening Established Churches

The third journey is particularly important because Paul spends an extended period in Ephesus, which becomes a strategic center for ministry throughout Asia Minor. The journey shows Paul functioning not merely as an evangelist but also as a teacher, pastor, mentor, church planter, and leader of leaders.

v. Rome: Paul was a prisoner, but the gospel was not imprisoned

Paul's trip to Rome wasn't formally a missionary journey; he went there under arrest. Yet it became missionary in purpose. The book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about Jesus Christ "with all confidence" (Acts 28:30–31).

Acts 28:30–31 (ESV). *He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.*

That makes the ending of Acts especially powerful: Paul may be chained, but the gospel kept moving.

A helpful way to remember the progression is:

- **Journey 1: Establish.** Paul plants churches.
- **Journey 2: Expand.** The mission pushes into Macedonia and Greece.
- **Journey 3: Strengthen.** Paul spends extended time teaching and developing established churches.
- **Journey to Rome: Endure.** Chains, storms, and shipwreck did not stop Paul's mission.

Summary of the Letter

Paul's aim is to bring the Corinthian church to maturity in their thinking and practices. The tone of his letter is a harsh response to their departure from his original teaching and practices, as well as a response to their reply to his original letter. Paul is writing to them regarding certain practices that have become acceptable or normative in his absence that he passionately disagrees with and wants to correct them on. The letter is forceful, but not unkind.

1 Corinthians 4:14-15 (ESV). *I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

So, the purpose is to warn them, to save them, and to bring them to maturity in Christ where they can be true witnesses to Jesus.

Problems in the Church of Corinth

The Corinthian church was spiritually gifted, but it was also dealing with serious problems involving division, morality, relationships, worship, doctrine, and spiritual maturity.

Problem in the Corinthian Church	Scripture Reference (1 Corinthians)	What Was Happening
1. Divisions and factions	1:10–13; 3:3–9	Members were dividing themselves according to preferred leaders—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, etc.
2. Pride and spiritual arrogance	4:6–8, 18–20; 5:2	Some believers had become proud and self-important rather than humble.

Problem in the Corinthian Church	Scripture Reference (1 Corinthians)	What Was Happening
3. Spiritual immaturity	3:1–3	Paul described them as spiritual infants because jealousy and strife remained among them.
4. Sexual immorality	5:1–5	A man was involved sexually with his father's wife, and the church had tolerated the situation.
5. Failure to discipline sin	5:2, 6–13	The church was tolerating blatant sin instead of addressing it.
6. Lawsuits among believers	6:1–8	Christians were taking one another to secular courts rather than resolving disputes within the church.
7. Sexual sin/prostitution	6:15–20	Some apparently did not understand that sexual behavior mattered because their bodies belonged to Christ and were temples of the Holy Spirit.
8. Confusion about marriage and sexual relations	7:1–16	They had questions and misunderstandings concerning marriage, celibacy, sexual intimacy, divorce, and unbelieving spouses.
9. Confusion about singleness and marriage	7:25–40	They needed guidance about whether believers should marry or remain single.
10. Misuse of Christian liberty	8:1–13; 10:23–33	Some exercised their freedom without considering how their actions affected weaker believers.
11. Issues involving food sacrificed to idols	8:1–13; 10:14–22	They needed to distinguish Christian freedom from participation in idolatry.
12. Idolatry	10:7, 14, 20–22	Paul warned them against participating in practices connected with pagan worship.
13. Questions about Paul's apostleship and authority	9:1–18	Some questioned Paul's rights and legitimacy as an apostle.
14. Improper conduct involving head coverings and worship	11:2–16	There were disputes concerning appropriate conduct, honor, and order when men and women prayed and prophesied.
15. Divisions during the Lord's Supper	11:17–22	Their gatherings reflected social divisions rather than Christian unity.
16. Abuse of the Lord's Supper	11:20–34	Some ate excessively while others went hungry, and some became drunk.
17. Confusion about spiritual gifts	12:1–31	They needed instruction concerning the source, diversity, and purpose of spiritual gifts.
18. Lack of love in exercising gifts	13:1–13	Spiritual gifts were being emphasized without the love that should govern their use.
19. Misuse/overemphasis of tongues	14:1–25	Tongues were being used in ways that did not necessarily edify the entire congregation.
20. Disorderly worship services	14:26–40	Too many people were apparently speaking without proper order, producing confusion rather than edification.
21. Women speaking/questions during worship	14:34–35	Paul addressed a particular problem involving speech and order during the gathering; the interpretation and application of this passage are debated.
22. Denial of the resurrection	15:12–19	Some members were saying that there was no resurrection of the dead.

Problem in the Corinthian Church	Scripture Reference (1 Corinthians)	What Was Happening
23. Confusion about the resurrection body	15:35–54	They had questions about how the dead would be raised and what kind of bodies they would have.
24. Lack of concern for weaker believers	8:9–13; 10:24	Some focused on their rights instead of the spiritual welfare of others.
25. Failure to recognize the unity of the body	12:12–27	Differences in gifts and roles were creating attitudes of superiority and inferiority.

The Deeper Problems Beneath the Problems

Many of these issues can actually be traced to a few underlying spiritual conditions:

1. **Pride.** *“Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.”* (1 Corinthians 8:1, KJV)
2. **Carnality/Spiritual Immaturity.** *“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions...”* (1 Corinthians 3:3, KJV)
3. **Self-centeredness.** They frequently emphasized their rights, preferences, knowledge, status, and gifts rather than the good of others. (1 Corinthians 6:7; 8:9; 10:24; 11:21; 12:21)
4. **Lack of love.** This helps explain why Paul places the great chapter on love, 1 Corinthians 13, right in the middle of his discussion of spiritual gifts.

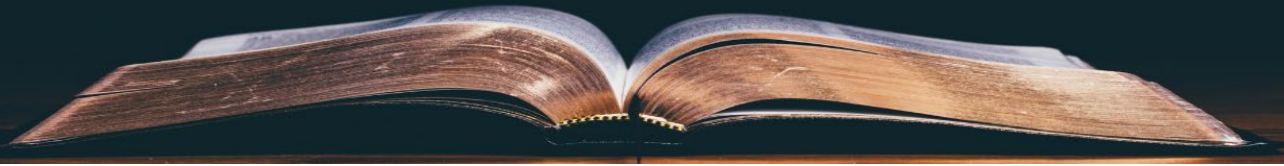
The Book: Four Major Sections

1. **Problems Paul had heard about (Chapters 1–6)**
Divisions, pride, immaturity, sexual immorality, church discipline, lawsuits, and sexual purity.
2. **Questions the Corinthians had asked Paul (Chapters 7–10)**
Marriage, singleness, divorce, food offered to idols, Christian liberty, Paul's apostleship, and idolatry.
3. **Problems concerning corporate worship (Chapters 11–14)**
Order in worship, the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, love, prophecy, tongues, and orderly gatherings.
4. **Resurrection and concluding instructions (Chapters 15–16)**
The resurrection of Christ, resurrection of believers, victory over death, giving, ministry plans, and final exhortations.

A one-sentence theme for 1 Corinthians: God calls His church to spiritual maturity, holiness, unity, love, and orderly worship in a culture that constantly pressures believers to live otherwise.

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 1



When the Church Looks Too Much Like the Culture Problems Paul Heard About (Chapters 1–6)

Central Theme: God does not call the church merely to gather; He calls the church to be transformed.

Key Scripture: “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*” (1 Corinthians 3:16, KJV)

Introduction: A Gifted Church with Serious Problems

The church at Corinth presents an interesting contradiction. It was a church blessed with spiritual gifts yet plagued by serious spiritual problems.

Paul told them:

“*Ye come behind in no gift.*” (1 Corinthians 1:7)

Yet only a short time later, he told them:

“*For ye are yet carnal.*” (1 Corinthians 3:3)

- They were gifted, but they were immature.
- They had spiritual manifestations, but they also had divisions.
- They had knowledge, but they struggled with pride.
- They gathered as God’s church, yet some of their attitudes and behaviors still reflected the surrounding culture.

The first six chapters of 1 Corinthians address several problems Paul had heard were occurring in the church:

1. Divisions
2. Pride
3. Spiritual immaturity
4. Sexual immorality
5. Failure to exercise church discipline
6. Lawsuits among believers
7. Sexual impurity

But beneath these individual problems was a larger issue:

The Corinthian believers had come out of Corinth, but too much of Corinth was still in them.

Reflection: What has Christ brought me out of physically that still needs to come out of me spiritually?

1. Divisions In the Church

1 Corinthians 1:10–17; 3:1–9

“Now I beseech you, brethren...that there be no divisions among you.” (1:10)

Members of the church began identifying themselves according to their preferred leaders:

- “I am of Paul.”
- “I am of Apollos.”
- “I am of Cephas.”
- “I am of Christ.”

Paul immediately challenges their thinking: *“Is Christ divided?” (1:13)*

The Problem

- They had turned legitimate appreciation for spiritual leaders into unhealthy allegiance.
- The problem was not that they respected Paul, Apollos, or Peter.
- The problem was that their preferences were becoming the basis for division.

There is nothing wrong with appreciating the people God uses. The problem comes when our loyalty to people, traditions, denominations, personalities, or preferences becomes stronger than our commitment to the unity of Christ’s body.

Paul brings everything back to Christ:

- Paul didn’t die for you.
- Apollos didn’t save you.
- Cephas wasn’t crucified for you.
- Jesus was.

Practical Application

Ask yourself whether your preferences have become spiritual requirements.

We must learn to distinguish between biblical truth and personal preference.

Not everything we prefer is something God requires.

Introspective Questions

1. Do I contribute to unity or division in my church?
2. Do I talk about people in ways that encourage others to take sides?
3. Have I confused my preferences with biblical principles?
4. Can I genuinely support someone whose style or personality is different from mine?
5. Am I more loyal to a person, denomination, ministry, or tradition than I am to biblical truth?
6. Is there someone in the Body of Christ I have dismissed simply because they are “not my type”?

Personal Challenge

Before criticizing another believer, ask: “Will what I am about to say strengthen the Body or divide it?”

2. Pride: When We Think Too Highly of Ourselves

1 Corinthians 1:26–31; 3:18–23; 4:6–8

Pride was underneath many of Corinth's problems.

Paul asks them: *"For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?"*

(1 Corinthians 4:7, ESV)

What do you have that God did not give you?

If God gave it, why behave as though you created it?

Pride can wear church clothes.

Spiritual pride does not always look boastful.

Practical Application

Whenever God increases your influence, gifting, knowledge, or responsibility, increase your humility with it.

The more God gives us, the less reason we have to boast, as everything we have ultimately came from Him.

Introspective Questions

1. Do I secretly believe I am more spiritual than certain people?
2. How do I respond when someone corrects me?
3. Do I need recognition for what I contribute?
4. Do I compare my ministry, gifts, church, knowledge, or accomplishments with others?
5. Can I celebrate someone else's success without mentioning my own?
6. When was the last time I admitted, "I was wrong"?

Personal Challenge

Identify one area in which success has tempted you toward pride and intentionally give God the credit.

3. Spiritual Immaturity

1 Corinthians 3:1–9

Paul makes a painful assessment:

"I...could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." (3:1)

They were Christians but they were immature Christians.

Paul identifies evidence of their immaturity:

"For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal?" (3:3)

Notice that Paul does not measure maturity by how loudly they worship, how many gifts they possess, or how much Scripture they know.

He looks at how they treat one another.

Introspective Questions

1. Am I more spiritually mature today than I was a year ago?
2. What situations consistently bring out immature reactions in me?
3. How do I respond when someone disagrees with me?
4. What fruit of the Spirit is noticeably increasing in my life?
5. What behavior have I excused by saying, “That’s just how I am”?

Personal Challenge

Choose one immature pattern in your life and stop defending it. Bring it before God and begin intentionally working on it.

4. Sexual Immorality in the Church

1 Corinthians 5:1–8

A man was involved sexually with his father's wife. But Paul’s concern was not only the man’s behavior. He was also disturbed by the church’s response.

And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. (5:2, ESV)

The Problem Was Sin AND Tolerance of Sin

- The church apparently knew about the situation but was failing to deal appropriately with it.
- Paul makes clear that grace does not mean pretending sin is acceptable.
- There is a difference between loving sinners and celebrating sin.
- There is also a difference between struggling with sin and settling comfortably into sin without repentance.
- The issue was persistent immorality combined with a church unwilling to address it.

Introspective Questions

1. Is there an area of my life where I want God’s forgiveness but resist His correction?
2. Am I dealing with sin in my life as I should, or have I become comfortable with it?
3. Do I extend grace to struggling believers while still encouraging holiness?
4. Have I mistaken tolerance for love?

Personal Challenge

Ask God: “Lord, show me anything I have learned to tolerate that You are calling me to confront.”

5. Church Discipline

1 Corinthians 5:9–13

Paul teaches that the church has a responsibility toward believers who persist openly in sin. This passage is sometimes misunderstood.

Paul is **not** telling Christians to isolate themselves from unbelievers.

In fact, he explains that avoiding all sinful people would require leaving the world entirely.

“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.” (5:9-10, KJV).

His concern is someone who claims to belong to Christ while persistently embracing sexual sin without repentance.

The Purpose of Discipline

Biblical discipline should never be motivated by revenge, embarrassment, superiority, or control. Its purpose should be restoration, protection, repentance, and holiness.

A healthy church needs both grace and accountability.

- Grace without truth can become permissiveness.
- Truth without grace can become harshness.

Jesus embodied both: *“Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”* (John 1:17)

Introspective Questions

1. Do I surround myself only with people who agree with me?
2. When I see another believer struggling, is my goal restoration or condemnation?
3. Do I gossip about people’s failures instead of helping them?
4. Can I speak truth without becoming self-righteous?

Personal Challenge

Become the kind of believer who is safe enough to confess to and mature enough to correct.

6. Christians Taking Christians to Court

1 Corinthians 6:1–8

Believers were suing other believers.

Paul asks:

“Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” (6:7)

Paul is not teaching that Christians must never use the legal system, particularly in matters involving crime, abuse, protection, legal obligations, or situations requiring lawful intervention.

His concern here involves believers taking their ordinary disputes before unbelieving courts because they were unable or unwilling to resolve their conflicts as Christians.

The Deeper Issue

Again, the lawsuit was the visible problem.

The heart problem was deeper: They valued winning more than witness.

Paul essentially asks: What does your conflict communicate about Christ?

Sometimes we can win the argument and damage the witness.

Practical Application

Before asking: “Am I right?” ask, “Does my response look like Christ?”

Being right does not give us permission to behave wrongly.

Introspective Questions

1. Do I always have to prove that I am right?
2. When conflict happens, do I seek reconciliation or vindication?
3. Would an unbeliever watching how I handle disagreement see Christ in me?
4. Is winning more important to me than maintaining a godly witness?

1. Sexual Purity: Your Body Belongs to God

1 Corinthians 6:12–20

Paul concludes this section with one of Scripture’s strongest teachings concerning the believer’s body.

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you...and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body...”
(6:19-20)

Christianity does not teach “It’s my body, so I can do whatever I want.”

It teaches “My body belongs to the One who purchased me.”

Sexual purity is not simply about rules, it is about ownership, worship, identity, and honor.

Paul says:

“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.” (6:12)

In other words, spiritual maturity asks more than “Can I?” It asks, “Should I?”

It also asks, “Will this help me become more like Christ?”

Paul says, *“I will not be brought under the power of any.”* (6:12)

A powerful question for us today is: Is anything controlling me that I claim I can control?

Introspective Questions

1. Are my private choices consistent with my public Christianity?
2. Is there anything I watch, consume, practice, or participate in that weakens my spiritual sensitivity?
3. What habit has more control over me than I want to admit?
4. Do I ask only, “Is this sinful?” or do I also ask, “Is this beneficial?”

Personal Challenge

Before making questionable choices this week, ask three questions: Is it permissible? Is it beneficial? Does it glorify God?

The Common Thread Through Chapters 1–6

At first glance, these chapters appear to contain unrelated problems: division, pride, immaturity, sexual immorality, lawsuits, discipline, and sexual purity.

But they are connected.

The Corinthians had not fully learned to view themselves through their new identity in Christ.

Paul repeatedly reminds them:

You belong to Christ.

- 1 Corinthians 1:2 — You are sanctified in Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 3:9 — You are God’s building.
- 1 Corinthians 3:16 — You are God’s temple.
- 1 Corinthians 3:23 — You belong to Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 6:11 — You were washed, sanctified, and justified.
- 1 Corinthians 6:15 — Your bodies are members of Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 6:19 — Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Corinthians 6:20 — You were bought with a price.

Paul’s solution is not merely “Behave better.”

His argument is “Remember who you are and live accordingly.”

The “But Such Were Some of You” Moment

1 Corinthians 6:9–11

One of the most powerful statements in these chapters is “*And such **were** some of you...*” (6:11)

Were.

- That word speaks of transformation.
- Paul does not deny their past.
- But he refuses to let their past define their future.

He continues:

- “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified...”
- The gospel does not simply forgive us.
- The gospel changes our identity.
- Therefore, we should not keep returning to identities, behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyles from which Christ has redeemed us.

Reflection

Ask yourself: What should be part of my testimony rather than my present lifestyle?

Personal Spiritual Inventory

1. **Unity:** Am I creating peace or division?
2. **Humility:** Can I receive corrections without becoming defensive?
3. **Maturity:** Am I growing, or have I simply been saved for a long time?
4. **Holiness:** Is there anything I have normalized that God wants me to confront?
5. **Conflict:** Do I want reconciliation or do I just want to win?
6. **Purity:** Does my private life agree with my public profession of faith?
7. **Freedom:** Is anything mastering me?
8. **Identity:** Am I living like someone who belongs to Christ?

Group Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between spiritual giftedness and spiritual maturity?
2. Which is more dangerous to a church: obvious sin or hidden pride? Why?
3. Where should the church draw the line between showing grace and tolerating sin?
4. What does healthy biblical accountability look like?

The Challenge

Paul's message to Corinth is still relevant:

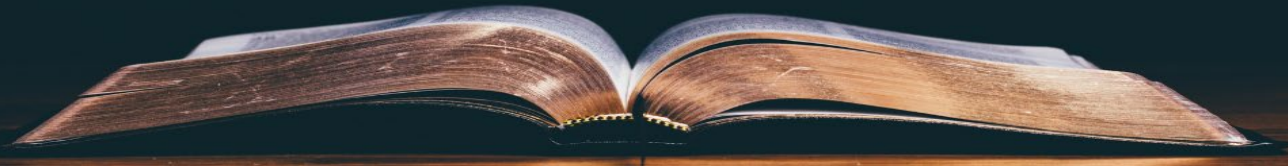
- Don't merely attend church. Become the Church Christ intended you to be.
- Don't settle for being gifted but immature.
- Don't settle for being knowledgeable but prideful.
- Don't settle for being active in ministry but careless about holiness.
- Don't settle for being right but divisive.

And don't allow the surrounding culture to shape you more than Christ does.

This week, instead of asking God primarily to change someone else, pray: "Lord, show me where Corinth is still in me."

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LESSON 2



My Rights, My Relationships, and My Responsibility to Christ **Questions the Corinthians Asked Paul (1 Corinthians 7–10)**

Central Theme: Christian maturity is not demonstrated simply by knowing what we are free to do, but by willingly submitting our relationships, rights, choices, and freedoms to the lordship of Christ.

Key Scripture: “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*” (1 Corinthians 10:31, KJV)

Introduction: “Now Concerning the Things Whereof Ye Wrote unto Me”

In chapters 1–6, Paul primarily addresses problems he had heard were occurring in Corinth. Beginning in chapter 7, the tone changes.

Paul writes:

“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me...” (1 Corinthians 7:1)

Apparently, the Corinthians had written Paul asking questions about Christian living. Their questions concerned very practical matters:

- Should Christians marry?
- Is it more spiritual to remain single?
- What happens when marriage becomes difficult?
- What if a Christian is married to an unbeliever?
- Can Christians eat food associated with idols?
- How much freedom does a Christian really have?
- What rights do Christian leaders have?
- When should believers surrender their rights?
- How close can Christians get to idolatrous practices without actually committing idolatry?

1. Marriage: Love Requires Mutual Responsibility

1 Corinthians 7:1–9

Corinth was known for sexual immorality, but apparently some believers were moving toward the opposite extreme; believing that abstaining from marital intimacy might somehow make them more spiritual.

Paul corrects this thinking.

He teaches that husbands and wives have responsibilities toward one another.

“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.” (7:3)

One of the striking features of Paul’s teaching is mutuality.

- He speaks to both husband and wife.
- Marriage is not designed to be one person taking and the other giving.
- It is a relationship in which both people learn to consider the needs of each other.

Practical Application

Marriage can suffer when both people insist on protecting their individual rights rather than serving one another.

Instead of constantly asking “What am I getting from this marriage?” we should sometimes ask, “What am I contributing to this marriage?”

2. Singleness: Complete Does Not Mean Married

1 Corinthians 7:6–9, 25–40

Paul challenges another assumption that still exists today:

- Marriage is not the only meaningful Christian life.
- Paul himself was unmarried when he wrote this letter.
- He describes both marriage and singleness in terms of God’s gifting: *“Every man hath his proper gift of God...” (7:7)*
- Paul does not demean marriage. Neither does he demean singleness.
- His primary concern is: How can your present life be devoted to God?
- In verses 32–35, Paul explains that singleness can provide opportunities for undivided attention to the things of the Lord. That does not mean every single Christian automatically has more time for God.
- A single person can be just as distracted as a married person.
- Paul’s point is that singleness can provide unique opportunities for service and devotion.

Practical Application

Do not spend so much time wishing for another season that you waste the season God has given you. A married person can idolize freedom. A single person can idolize marriage. Both can miss what God wants to accomplish now.

Personal Challenge

Stop treating your present season as a waiting room. Ask God what faithfulness looks like right now.

3. Divorce and Difficult Marriages

1 Corinthians 7:10–16

Paul reinforces the permanence and seriousness of marriage.

“Let not the wife depart from her husband.” (7:10)

He also addresses a situation that would have been especially common among first-generation Christians: What happens when one spouse becomes a Christian and the other does not? Paul says that if the unbelieving spouse is willing to remain in the marriage, the Christian should not automatically leave.

“If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.” (7:12)

The believer’s conversion should not become an excuse for abandoning marriage.

However, Paul also recognizes that the unbelieving spouse may choose to leave:

“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart.” (7:15)

Then Paul gives an important principle: “God hath called us to peace.”

Important Pastoral Caution

These verses should never be used to pressure someone to remain in immediate danger.

Situations involving abuse, violence, coercive control, child endangerment, or criminal behavior require protection, wise pastoral counsel, and where appropriate professional and legal intervention.

“God hates divorce” should never be twisted into “God requires you to remain physically unsafe.”

Practical Application

Marriage requires commitment, but commitment is not the same as pretending serious problems do not exist. Sometimes the most loving action is getting help.

4. Serve God Where You Are

1 Corinthians 7:17–24

Three times in this section Paul emphasizes remaining faithful in one’s calling.

“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.” (7:20)

Paul is not saying that circumstances can never change.

Rather, he challenges the belief that we must first change our external circumstances before we can faithfully serve God.

Paul says Start serving God where you are.

Your present circumstances do not prevent God from developing your character.

Introspective Questions

1. What circumstance am I using as an excuse for spiritual stagnation?
2. Am I waiting for something to change before obeying God?
3. Can I recognize God’s purpose in an ordinary season?
4. What can I faithfully do for God today with what I currently have?

5. Knowledge Without Love

1 Corinthians 8:1–13

Paul now addresses food offered to idols.

- In Corinth, meat sold in markets or served socially could have been associated with pagan sacrifices.
- Some Christians understood that idols were nothing. Their reasoning was: “We know an idol isn’t really a god, so eating this meat doesn’t matter.” Technically, their theology contained truth.
- But Paul identifies another problem: “*Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*” (8:1)
- They knew something. But they were not sufficiently concerned about how their actions affected other believers.

Being Right Is Not Enough

Christian maturity requires more than accurate information. You can be right and still be unloving. You can win a theological argument and wound a brother or sister.

Paul teaches that mature believers sometimes voluntarily limit their freedom because they love others.

“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” (8:13)

Not every disagreement is a matter of sin versus righteousness.

Some are matters of conscience and wisdom.

The Mature Question

The immature question is: “Can I do it?”

The mature question is: “What effect might my choice have on someone else?”

Introspective Questions

1. Am I willing to give up something permissible if it harms someone else?
2. Do I care more about proving that I am right than protecting someone’s spiritual well-being?
3. Has knowledge made me more loving or simply more argumentative?

Personal Challenge

Never allow your freedom to become someone else's stumbling block.

6. Paul’s Apostleship: Rights that He Refused to Demand

1 Corinthians 9:1–18

Some people questioned Paul’s apostleship.

Paul responds: “*Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*” (9:1)

- Paul explains that as an apostle he had legitimate rights.
- Among them was the right to receive material support for gospel ministry.

He uses several illustrations:

- A soldier does not serve at his own expense.
- A farmer expects to eat from his vineyard.
- A shepherd receives benefit from the flock.

Yet Paul voluntarily chose not to exercise some of those rights in Corinth.

Why? Because he did not want anything to hinder the gospel.

A Major Principle

- Having a right does not mean you must exercise it.
- That runs contrary to much of modern culture.
- Culture says: “Know your rights and demand them.”
- Paul says: “Know your rights and sometimes surrender them for something greater.”
- Jesus Himself modeled this principle. He had every right to glory, honor, and worship, yet humbled Himself for our salvation.

Personal Challenge

Ask: “What am I willing to give up so that someone else can encounter Christ?”

7. “All Things to All Men”

1 Corinthians 9:19–23

Paul makes one of his most famous statements:

“I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” (9:22)

- Paul is not saying that he compromises biblical truth.
- He changes his approach, not his message.
- He adapts himself culturally and relationally so unnecessary barriers do not prevent people from hearing the gospel.

Application for the Church

Sometimes we confuse tradition with truth.

The gospel must never change but our methods sometimes should.

- Music styles change.
- Communication methods change.
- Technology changes.
- Cultures change.

But the message remains: Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

8. Run to Win

1 Corinthians 9:24–27

Paul moves from freedom to **discipline**.

“So run, that ye may obtain.” (9:24)

Athletes exercise discipline because they have a goal.

Paul says Christians should live with the same intentionality.

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection...” (9:27)

Christian freedom does not mean living without discipline. In fact, true freedom requires self-control.

If I cannot say no to something, I may not be as free as I think.

Introspective Questions

1. What area of my life lacks discipline?
2. What do I repeatedly intend to do but fail to follow through on?
3. Does my body control my decisions, or does the Spirit govern my body?
4. Am I spiritually training or merely spiritually attending?

Personal Challenge

Choose one spiritual discipline, like prayer, Scripture, fasting, worship, service, giving, or another practice. Identify at least one way you can grow stronger in that area, and then intentionally put it into practice.

9. Israel's Failure: Privilege Does Not Guarantee Faithfulness

1 Corinthians 10:1–13

Israel experienced extraordinary spiritual privileges.

- They experienced God's deliverance.
- They passed through the sea.
- They experienced supernatural provision.
- They drank water from a rock.

Yet many still fell into sin.

Paul warns:

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (10:12)

This is especially important after discussing Christian freedom.

- Spiritual experiences do not make us immune to temptation.
- Past victories do not guarantee future faithfulness.
- Years in church do not make us incapable of falling.
- Titles do not protect us.
- Knowledge does not protect us.

God's Faithfulness in Temptation

Paul then gives tremendous encouragement:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13, KJV)

- God promises that temptation will not be irresistible.
- He provides a way of escape.
- But we must take it.

Personal Challenge

Do not merely pray for strength against temptation. Identify your escape route before temptation comes.

10. Flee Idolatry

1 Corinthians 10:14–22

Paul's language suddenly becomes direct:

“Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” (10:14)

- Notice that Paul does not say study idolatry, debate idolatry, or see how close you can get to idolatry. He says flee (run away).
- Some things should not be managed. They should be escaped.
- The Corinthians apparently believed they could participate in certain pagan activities without spiritual consequences.
- Paul warns them that fellowship with Christ is incompatible with participation in idolatry.

A good thing can become an idol when it becomes an ultimate thing or too important.

Introspective Questions

1. “What am I most afraid of losing?” The answer may reveal what has become too important.
2. What competes with God for my attention?
3. Is there something I need to stop managing and simply flee?

Personal Challenge

Identify anything competing with God for first place in your heart. Do not simply reduce it, put it back in its proper place.

11. Christian Liberty: “Is It Lawful?” Is Not the Only Question

1 Corinthians 10:23–33

Paul returns to Christian liberty:

“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient...” (10:23)

Paul provides a better framework for decision making.

Decision-Making Framework

Instead of simply asking “Can I?”

Ask:

1. **Is it beneficial?** “All things are not expedient.” (10:23)
2. **Will it build up others?** “All things edify not.” (10:23)
3. **Am I considering someone besides myself?** “Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.” (10:24)
4. **Will it glorify God?** “Do all to the glory of God.” (10:31)
5. **Could it unnecessarily hinder someone's spiritual journey?** (10:32–33)

The Christian Liberty Test

Before doing something questionable, ask:

- Is it permissible?
- Is it beneficial?
- Is it constructive?
- Could it control me?
- Could it harm someone else?
- Could it damage my witness?
- Can I sincerely thank God for it?
- Can I do it for God's glory?

If we have to work extremely hard to justify something, that itself may be worth examining.

The Common Thread Through Chapters 7–10

1. Marriage
2. Singleness
3. Divorce
4. Food offered to idols
5. Christian liberty
6. Apostolic rights
7. Evangelism
8. Self-discipline
9. Temptation
10. Idolatry

At first, these topics seem disconnected, but they repeatedly return to one question: **Who is Lord of my choices?**

The immature Christian asks **“What do I want?”**

The legalistic Christian asks **“What are the rules?”**

The rebellious Christian asks **“How close can I get to the line?”**

The mature Christian asks **“What would most glorify God?”**

The question changes from **“Do I have the right?”** to **“What is the loving thing?”**

Then **“What advances the gospel?”** and finally, **“What glorifies God?”**

From Rights to Responsibility: Progression of the Chapters

- Chapter 7: My relationships belong to God.
- Chapter 8: My knowledge must be governed by love.
- Chapter 9: My rights can be surrendered for the gospel.
- Chapter 10: My freedom must be governed by God's glory. That is spiritual maturity.

Personal Spiritual Inventory

1. **Relationships.** Do my closest relationships reflect the character of Christ?
2. **Contentment.** Am I faithfully serving God in my present season?
3. **Marriage.** Am I more concerned with what I receive or what I contribute?
4. **Freedom.** Do I use Christian liberty responsibly?
5. **Love.** Am I willing to limit my freedom for someone else's spiritual good?
6. **Rights.** What am I unwilling to surrender?
7. **Discipline.** What appetite or habit needs greater self-control?
8. **Temptation.** Where am I spiritually overconfident?
9. **Idolatry.** What competes with God for first place in my heart?
10. **Glory.** Can I honestly say that my everyday choices glorify God?

Group Discussion Questions

1. How can we distinguish biblical commands from personal convictions?
2. What is the difference between adapting our methods to reach people and compromising biblical truth?
3. What warning should we take from Israel's failures in 1 Corinthians 10?
4. What does "do all to the glory of God" look like in ordinary decisions—our money, relationships, entertainment, social media, careers, and leisure?

The Challenge: Stop Asking Only, "Can I?"

For the next week, whenever you face a decision in an area where Scripture does not give a direct command, resist making "**Is it allowed?**" your only question.

Instead ask:

- Will this help me spiritually?
- Will this build up others?
- Could this master me?
- Could this cause someone else to stumble?
- Will this strengthen or weaken my witness?
- Does this move me toward Christ or away from Him?

And finally:

"Can I do this for the glory of God?"

Final Thought

1 Corinthians 7–10 teaches us that Christian freedom is not freedom to live for ourselves. It is freedom to live fully for Christ.

Maturity is demonstrated when we can say:

- I may have the right, but I don't have to exercise it.
- I may have freedom, but love may ask me to limit it.
- I may have the knowledge, but humility must govern it.

- I may have the opportunity, but wisdom must evaluate it.
- I may be able to do it, but God's glory matters more than my preference.

Paul ultimately gives us one of the clearest principles for Christian decision-making in the entire New Testament:

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”
(1 Corinthians 10:31, KJV)

The question, then, is not merely: **“Is this wrong?”**

The deeper question is: **“Does this glorify God?”**

Final Reflection Question

If glorifying God, not simply satisfying myself, became the deciding factor in every area of my life, what would I need to change?

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 3



Worship That Honors God and Builds the Body

Problems Concerning Corporate Worship (Chapters 11-14)

Central Theme: Corporate worship should glorify God, strengthen believers, reflect love, and operate with spiritual order rather than confusion, competition, or self-promotion.

Key Scripture: *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”* (1 Corinthians 14:40, KJV)

Introduction: When Worship Becomes About Us

In 1 Corinthians 11–14, Paul turns his attention to the way the Corinthian believers were gathering for worship.

The church did not lack participation.

- People were speaking.
- People were praying.
- People were prophesying.
- People were exercising spiritual gifts.
- People were gathering for the Lord’s Supper.

Yet Paul still had to correct them.

Why? Because activity does not automatically equal healthy worship.

The Corinthian problem was not that nothing was happening.

- The problem was that too much of what was happening reflected self-interest, disorder, division, competition, and lack of consideration for others.
- These chapters teach us that true corporate worship is not simply about “What did I get out of the service?” It is also about “Did God receive glory, and was the Body of Christ strengthened?”

1. Honor and Order in Worship

1 Corinthians 11:1–16

- Paul begins by addressing men and women praying and prophesying in the congregation.
- This passage includes the difficult issue of head coverings and cultural expressions of honor.
- While Christians differ in how they understand the continuing application of head coverings, Paul’s larger concern is clear: Worship should reflect honor, respect, and proper order.

- The Corinthians lived in a culture where outward appearance could communicate messages about honor, shame, morality, and social relationships.
- Paul did not want their worship practices to communicate dishonor or create unnecessary scandal.

The Larger Principle

Even when cultural expressions change, the principle remains:

Our worship should honor God rather than draw inappropriate attention to ourselves.

Corporate worship is not the place for:

- Self-promotion
- Competition
- Showing off
- Drawing attention to ourselves
- Dishonoring others
- Intentionally creating distraction

Introspective Questions

1. When I participate in worship, am I seeking to glorify glory or to get people's attention?
2. Do I bring an attitude of reverence into worship?
3. Is there anything about my conduct that unnecessarily distracts people from Christ?

Personal Challenge

Enter worship asking not only, "What will I receive?" but also, "How can I honor God and contribute to the spiritual good of others?"

2. Division At the Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11:17–22

Paul's tone becomes very strong.

"I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse." (11:17)

Imagine gathering for church and Paul saying: Your gathering is actually doing more harm than good.

- The Lord's Supper was intended to demonstrate unity in Christ.
- Instead, social and economic divisions were showing themselves.
- Some had plenty to eat, others had little or nothing. Some were even becoming drunk.
- Their gathering supposedly celebrated Christ's sacrifice, yet their behavior contradicted the meaning of the meal.

A Powerful Contradiction

They were celebrating the body of Christ given for them while failing to care for the Body of Christ sitting beside them. That is the heart of the problem.

Practical Application

We cannot claim to honor Christ while treating His people carelessly.

Worship is vertical: God and me. But worship is also horizontal: me and the people God has joined me to.

Introspective Questions

1. Do I treat some believers as more important than others?
2. Is there someone I routinely overlook?
3. Do I celebrate communion while harboring bitterness against another believer?
4. Does my behavior toward God's people agree with my worship of God?

Personal Challenge

Look for someone in your congregation whom you do not normally engage and intentionally show them genuine care.

3. Examining Ourselves at The Lord's Table

1 Corinthians 11:23–34

Paul reminds the church of what Jesus established:

“This is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.” (11:24) and
“This cup is the new testament in my blood...” (11:25)

Communion is not merely a religious ritual.

It is:

- **Remembrance:** We remember Christ's sacrifice, His broken body, and His shed blood for our redemption.
- **Proclamation:** We publicly declare the significance of Christ's death and proclaim the gospel through our participation.
- **Examination:** We examine our hearts, attitudes, relationships, and walk with God before partaking.
- **Gratitude:** We give thanks for the grace, forgiveness, salvation, and new life made possible through Jesus Christ.
- **Fellowship:** We celebrate our communion with Christ and our shared relationship with one another as members of His body.
- **Anticipation:** We look forward with hope to Christ's return and the day when we will be with Him forever.

Paul says: *“But let a man examine himself...”* (11:28)

Notice: **“Examine himself.”**

- Communion is not the time to examine everyone else.
- It is a time to ask: “Lord, what is happening in me?”

Self-Examination Is Not Self-Condemnation

Paul is not saying we must become perfect before taking communion. If perfection were required, no one could participate. The issue is taking the Lord's Supper carelessly, selfishly, or without recognizing its significance.

Introspective Questions

1. Has communion become routine to me?
2. Do I pause to remember what Christ actually suffered for me?
3. Is there someone I need to forgive?
4. Is there someone from whom I need to seek forgiveness?

Personal Challenge

Before your next communion, spend intentional time asking God to search your heart rather than waiting until the elements are being served.

4. Spiritual Gifts Come from The Same Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:1–11

Paul now turns to **spiritual gifts**.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." (12:1)

The Corinthians were highly interested in spiritual manifestations.

Paul does not tell them to reject spiritual gifts.

He corrects their understanding of them.

One of his first emphasis is: Different gifts but same Spirit.

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." (12:4)

He continues:

- **Differences of administrations:** The diverse ways, offices, and practical functions through which spiritual gifts are expressed and applied to serve the Lord within the church.
- **Differences of operations:** The diverse ways God actively works, manifests, and displays His power through different people using their spiritual abilities.
- Same Lord
- Same God

This implies unity within diversity.

Your Gift Does Not Make You Superior

- A spiritual gift is not a trophy.
- It is not a badge of importance.
- It is not evidence that God loves you more.
- It is not proof that you are more spiritual.
- A gift is something God gives you for the benefit of others.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (12:7)

Practical Application

The question is not “How impressive is my gift?”

The question is “Who is my gift serving?”

If our gifts mainly make us feel important, we have misunderstood their purpose.

5. One Body, Many Members

1 Corinthians 12:12–27

Paul gives one of Scripture’s greatest pictures of the church: The human body.

“For as the body is one, and hath many members...so also is Christ.” (12:12)

A body requires diversity, many members.

If everything were an eye, where would hearing be?

If everything were hearing, where would smelling be?

God intentionally designed the church with different people, personalities, abilities, callings, and gifts.

Two Dangerous Attitudes

1. Inferiority

- *“Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body...” (12:15)*
- This says: “Because I cannot do what they do, I don’t matter.”

2. Superiority

- *“The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee.” (12:21)*
- This says: “Because my role is more visible, I don’t need you.”

Both are wrong.

Comparison Damages the Body

- **Comparison** says, “I wish I had their gift.”
- **Pride** says, “They should have my gift.”
- **Maturity** says, “God designed us differently because we need one another.”

Introspective Questions

1. Do I feel insignificant because my contribution is not visible?
2. Do I compete with people I should cooperate with?
3. Can I celebrate gifts I do not possess?
4. Have I mistaken visibility for importance?

6. “A More Excellent Way”

1 Corinthians 12:31–13:13

At the end of chapter 12, Paul says, *“Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”*

Then comes 1 Corinthians 13.

This chapter is often read at weddings, but its original setting is a church fighting over spiritual gifts.

Paul is essentially saying: You can be extraordinarily gifted and still completely miss the heart of God.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass...”

He goes further.

You could:

- Prophecy
- Understand mysteries.
- Possess great knowledge.
- Demonstrate tremendous faith.
- Give away your possessions.
- Make enormous sacrifices.

and still lack what matters most.

The Ultimate Measurement

Not: “How gifted am I?”

But: “How loving am I?”

Paul describes love as:

- Patient
- Kind
- Not envious
- Not boastful
- Not arrogant
- Not selfish
- Not easily provoked
- Not keeping a record of wrongs
- Rejoicing in truth
- Bearing
- Believing
- Hoping
- Enduring

This makes 1 Corinthians 13 one of the most challenging self-assessment passages in Scripture.

Put Your Name in the Passage

- Instead of “Love is patient...” Ask “Am I patient?”
- Instead of “Love is kind...” Ask “Am I kind?”
- Instead of “Love does not keep record of wrongs...” Ask “Am I keeping a mental record of what someone did to me?”

Personal Challenge

Choose one description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 that currently challenges you most and intentionally practice it this week.

7. Prophecy and Tongues: Edification Matters

1 Corinthians 14:1–25

Paul begins:

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” (14:1)

Again, Paul does not reject spiritual gifts.

His concern is edification, exhortation, and comfort.

Prophecy

- **Forthtelling:** In the New Testament prophecy is less about predicting the future and much more about delivering timely, God-given truth to build up people’s faith.
- **Foretelling:** While Old Testament prophecy often included long-range predictions, New Testament prophecy focuses heavily on forthtelling (sharing God’s heart and truth for the present moment) rather than foretelling (predicting future events).

Edifying (Forthtelling) vs. Foretelling

Feature	Edifying (Forthtelling)	Foretelling
Primary Focus	The Present. Applying God’s truth to current life, attitudes, and struggles.	The Future. Revealing upcoming events, judgements, or divine plans.
How it works	A believer receives a prompt or insight from the Holy Spirit to share a word that strengthens, corrects, or encourages someone.	A prophet receives a specific vision or message detailing something that has not happened yet.
Biblical Goal	To bring edification (building up), exhortation (encouragement/challenging), and comfort (14:3).	To demonstrate God’s sovereignty over history and warn people to prepare.
Modern Equivalence	Dynamic, spirit-led preaching, targeted counseling, or a timely word of encouragement that perfectly hits a person’s hidden need.	Predictive declarations (e.g., Agabus predicting a famine in Acts 11:28).

- A major word running through chapter 14 is the concept of building others up.
- Paul’s concern about uninterpreted tongues in the public gathering is that the congregation may not understand what is being said.
- Prophecy, by contrast, communicates understandably.
- Paul says, *“Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.”* (14:12)

The Question Is Not Simply:

- “Did I express my gift?” but “Did what I did strengthen anybody?”
- Corporate worship must consider the people present.
- A spiritual manifestation should never become an opportunity for spiritual performance.

Intelligibility Matters

- Paul asks how someone can say “Amen” if they do not understand what has been said.
- That principle applies broadly, not just to tongues.
 - Preaching while people cannot understand does not help them.
 - Praying in ways designed to impress people does not help them.

- Using unnecessarily complicated language does not automatically demonstrate spiritual depth.
- The purpose of communication is not to make the speaker sound impressive, it is to help the hearer understand.

Introspective Questions

1. When I speak publicly, am I trying to impress or communicate?
2. Do I use spiritual language others may not understand without explaining it?
3. Am I teachable about how my gift should function in the church?

Personal Challenge

Before speaking, singing, teaching, praying, or exercising a gift publicly, ask: “Will this edify the Body?”

8. Spiritual Gifts Require Self-Control

1 Corinthians 14:26–33

Paul describes a very active gathering:

“Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation...”

Then he gives the governing principle:

“Let all things be done unto edifying.” (14:26)

Apparently, several believers were eager to participate. The result was chaos. So, Paul establishes order.

For tongues (verse 27):

- Two to three speakers
- One person speaks at a time.
- Interpretation required

For prophecy:

- Two to three speakers
- Others discern what is said.
- Speakers take turns.

Then Paul states:

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace...” (14:33)

Genuine Spirituality Is Not Uncontrollable Chaos

“The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” (14:32)

Being moved by the Spirit does not eliminate self-control.

A person cannot simply excuse disruptive behavior by saying, “The Spirit made me do it.”

The Holy Spirit produces self-control.

Practical Application

Order does not quench the Spirit.

Biblical order actually creates an environment where spiritual gifts can benefit everyone.

9. Women, Speech, and Order in The Gathering

1 Corinthians 14:34–35

This is one of the most debated passages in 1 Corinthians.

Paul tells women to “keep silence in the churches,” yet earlier in 1 Corinthians 11:5 he refers to women praying and prophesying.

Because of this, Christians interpret chapter 14 in several ways.

- Some understand Paul’s instruction as restricting authoritative teaching in gathered worship.
- Others believe he is addressing disruptive questioning or speech by certain women in the Corinthian setting.
- Others understand it within a broader framework of order and submission during the evaluation of prophecy.

Whatever interpretation one adopts, we should avoid reading verses 34–35 as though Paul had just contradicted what he acknowledged in chapter 11.

The Larger Context

- Chapter 14 repeatedly addresses when people should speak and when they should remain silent.
- Tongue speakers without interpreters are told to be silent (versus addressing the congregation in tongues).
- Prophets are told to yield when another receives revelation.

The repeated concern is orderly worship that builds the congregation.

Practical Application

Some biblical passages require humility. We should distinguish between what the text clearly says and where sincere Christians disagree about interpretation and application.

Introspective Questions

1. Am I willing to study difficult passages rather than ignoring them?
2. Can I disagree with another believer’s interpretation without questioning their faith?
3. Do I approach Scripture wanting God to correct me or merely wanting Scripture to confirm me?

10. “Let All Things Be Done Decently and In Order”

1 Corinthians 14:36–40

Paul concludes: “*Let all things be done decently and in order.*” (14:40)

- Notice he does not say, “Let nothing happen.”
- Nor does he say, “Let anything happen.”

He wants:

- Freedom with order.
- Gifts with love.
- Participation with consideration.

- Spiritual expression with spiritual maturity.

He even says, “*Forbid not to speak with tongues.*” (14:39)

Therefore, Paul’s correction is not anti-Spirit, it is anti-confusion.

The Common Thread Through Chapters 11–14

At first, the subjects seem different:

- Head coverings
- Communion
- Spiritual gifts
- The body of Christ
- Love
- Prophecy
- Tongues
- Worship order

But they share one central problem: The Corinthians were bringing too much self-centeredness into corporate worship.

The corrective is repeated throughout these chapters:

- **Honor:** Honor God and one another.
- **Unity:** Recognize that you belong to one Body.
- **Love:** Let love govern every gift.
- **Edification:** Use your gift to strengthen others.
- **Order:** Allow spiritual expression to function in a way that benefits the whole congregation.

Four Questions for Every Worship Service

1. Did God receive glory?
2. Was Christ honored?
3. Was the church strengthened?
4. Was love evident?

If the answer to those questions is yes, we are moving toward the worship Paul describes.

Personal Spiritual Inventory

1. **Worship:** Do I come primarily to give God glory or simply to receive something?
2. **Communion:** Do I approach the Lord’s Supper with reverence and self-examination?
3. **Relationships:** Am I trying to worship God while remaining divided from His people?
4. **Gifts:** Am I using what God gave me to serve others?
5. **Comparison:** Do I envy someone else’s gift?
6. **Pride:** Do I need my contribution to be noticed?
7. **Love:** Does my behavior look like 1 Corinthians 13?
8. **Edification:** Do my words build the church?
9. **Self-Control:** Can I submit my spiritual expression to biblical and pastoral order?

10. **Unity:** Do I recognize that believers who are different from me are still necessary to the Body?

Group Discussion Questions

1. How can communion become routine, and how can we recover its significance?
2. Which is more important: discovering our spiritual gift or developing spiritual character? Why?
3. How can a church create order without becoming rigid?
4. What is the difference between quenching the Spirit and exercising biblical discernment?
5. Would visitors watching the way we worship see competition, performance, and personalities or Christ, love, and unity?

The Challenge

Before your next corporate worship gathering, prepare yourself differently.

Instead of only praying, “Lord, bless me today.” also pray, “Lord, use me to bless someone.”

Instead of asking, “Will I enjoy the worship?” ask, “Will my worship honor You?”

Instead of wondering, “Will anyone notice my gift?” ask, “Will what I contribute strengthen Your people?”

And instead of examining everyone else’s worship, examine your own heart.

Final Thought

The goal of corporate worship is not to showcase the most gifted people in the room. It is not to create the loudest service. It is not to produce the most impressive experience. It is not to give everyone an opportunity to express themselves. The goal is for God to be glorified and His people to be built up.

The Corinthian church teaches us that gifts without love can become noise. Freedom without order can become confusion. Participation without consideration can become selfishness. Communion without unity can become hypocrisy. And worship without Christ at the center can become performance.

Paul gives us the better way:

- Use your gift but use it in love.
- Participate but consider others.
- Be spiritually expressive but remain self-controlled.
- Desire spiritual gifts but desire even more to build God’s people.
- Worship freely but worship orderly.
- And above all, “*Let all your things be done with charity.*” (1 Corinthians 16:14)

1 CORINTHIANS

LESSON 4

Because He Lives, We Live with Purpose Resurrection and Concluding Instructions (1 Corinthians 15–16)

Central Theme: The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christian hope, the guarantee of our future resurrection, and the reason believers can live faithfully, generously, courageously, and steadfastly now.

Key Scripture: *“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
(1 Corinthians 15:57, KJV)

Introduction: Everything Stands or Falls on The Resurrection

Paul has addressed many problems in the Corinthian church.

He has dealt with:

- Division
- Pride
- Sexual immorality
- Marriage
- Christian liberty
- Spiritual gifts
- Worship
- Love
- Tongues
- Prophecy
- Church order

But in chapter 15, Paul turns to something even more foundational: The resurrection.

Apparently, some in Corinth were saying there was no resurrection of the dead (like the Sadducees, a strictly localized aristocratic Jewish group).

Paul immediately shows how serious that idea is.

- Christianity is not simply a philosophy for living better.
- It is not merely a moral system.

It is not simply a collection of inspiring teachings.

The Christian faith stands on a historical claim: Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again.

If Christ did not rise, Paul says our faith collapses. But because Christ did rise, everything changes. And because eternity is real, how we live today matters.

1. The Gospel: Christ Died, Was Buried, And Rose Again

1 Corinthians 15:1–11

Paul begins by reminding them of the gospel he had preached.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...” (15:1)

Then he summarizes the message:

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:” (15:3–4)

This is the heart of the gospel.

The sequence:

- **Christ died:** Not merely as a martyr. He died **for our sins**.
- **Christ was buried:** His death was real.
- **Christ rose again:** Death could not hold Him.

The Christian faith is not built on wishful thinking. It is built on the risen Christ.

Practical Application

Sometimes Christians emphasize the cross while giving less attention to the resurrection. But the gospel includes both. The cross tells us the price was paid. The resurrection tells us the payment was accepted and death was defeated.

2. Grace Changed Paul

1 Corinthians 15:8–11

Paul pauses to speak about himself. He remembers that he once persecuted the church.

“For I am the least of the apostles...because I persecuted the church of God.” (15:9)

Then he makes one of Scripture’s most beautiful statements:

“But by the grace of God I am what I am...” (15:10)

Paul did not forget his past, but neither did he allow his past to disqualify him from his future. Grace transformed him.

Grace Does Not Erase the Story; It Redeems It

Paul could say, “I persecuted the church.” but he could also say, “Grace changed me.” This gives hope to anyone who believes they have failed too badly to be useful to God.

Practical Application

Your worst chapter does not have to become your final chapter.

God’s grace can take anything — mistakes, failures, wrong decisions, wasted years, brokenness, rebellion — and turn them into part of a testimony.

Introspective Questions

1. Do I allow my past to define me more than God’s grace does?
2. Have I received forgiveness but still refuse to forgive myself?
3. What part of my story could God use to help someone else?

Personal Challenge

Identify one area of your life where grace has changed you and intentionally use that testimony to encourage someone else.

3. What If There Were No Resurrection?

1 Corinthians 15:12–19

Paul now takes their denial of resurrection to its logical conclusion. He says, if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ did not rise.

If Christ did not rise:

- Preaching is vain.
- Faith is vain.
- The apostles are false witnesses.
- Believers are still in their sins.
- Dead believers are lost.
- Christians are among the most miserable people.

Paul is not minimizing the resurrection.

He is saying without the resurrection, Christianity falls apart.

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” (15:17)

4. Christ The Firstfruits

1 Corinthians 15:20–28

After describing the hopelessness of a world without resurrection, Paul declares:

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (15:20)

Firstfruits

- In the Old Testament, the firstfruits represented the beginning of the harvest and the promise that more was coming.
- Paul calls Jesus the firstfruits of those who have died.

In other words:

The resurrection of Christ guarantees our resurrection.

- Christ’s resurrection is not an isolated miracle.
- It is the beginning of a resurrection harvest.

Paul contrasts Adam and Christ:

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (15:22)

Adam introduced death into humanity. Christ brings resurrection life.

Practical Application

For the Christian, the grave is not the end. Death is real. Grief is real. Loss is painful. But death does not have ultimate authority.

Introspective Questions

1. How does belief in resurrection change the way I think about death?
2. Do I grieve as someone who still has hope?
3. Am I so focused on preserving this life that I forget the life to come?
4. Does eternity influence what I value today?

5. Live As Though Eternity Is Real

1 Corinthians 15:29–34

Paul raises several arguments showing that Christian sacrifice makes little sense if there is no resurrection.

He asks why he and others expose themselves to danger for the gospel if death ends everything. Then he warns against the philosophy: *“Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.”* (15:32) If there is no eternity, then living only for pleasure makes sense, but if resurrection is real, life must be lived differently.

What You Believe About Eternity Shapes How You Live Today

If this life is all there is:

- “Get everything you can.”
- “Protect yourself at all costs.”
- “Live for pleasure.”
- “Make yourself comfortable.”

But if eternity is real:

- Faithfulness matters.
- Sacrifice matters.
- Holiness matters.
- Service matters.
- Obedience matters.

Introspective Questions

1. Do my priorities demonstrate that I believe eternity is real?
2. What am I sacrificing for something eternal?
3. What choices would change if I regularly remembered that this life is temporary?
4. Am I investing more heavily in what passes away or what lasts forever?

What Kind of Body Will We Have?

1 Corinthians 15:35–49

Paul anticipates the question:

“How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” (15:35)

He uses the illustration of a seed.

A seed is planted into the ground. What emerges is connected to what was planted, but it is transformed.

Paul uses several contrasts:

- Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption.
- Sown in dishonor, raised in glory.
- Sown in weakness, raised in power.
- Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.

Introspective Questions

1. Do I view my present limitations as permanent?
2. Am I overly attached to physical appearance, strength, or youthfulness?
3. How might resurrection hope encourage someone struggling with physical decline?
4. Do I thank God for my body while remembering that something greater is coming?

Personal Challenge

Treat your present body with stewardship while remembering that your ultimate hope is resurrection, not physical perfection in this life.

7. The Mystery: We Shall All Be Changed

1 Corinthians 15:50–54

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (15:51-52)

The mortal will put on immortality.

The corruptible will put on incorruption.

“We Shall Be Changed”

Everything about our lives that is touched by mortality will one day be transformed.

- Weakness will not win.
- Decay will not win.
- Age will not win.
- Disease will not win.
- Death will not win.

Introspective Questions

1. What burden feels permanent to me right now?
2. Have I forgotten that God’s final word over believers is transformation?
3. Do I live with anticipation of Christ’s return?
4. What would change in my life if I remembered daily: “We shall be changed”?

8. Victory Over Death

1 Corinthians 15:54–57

Paul reaches one of the great climaxes of Scripture:

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (15:54-55)

Death remains an enemy.

Paul never pretends death is pleasant, but it is a defeated enemy.

Then comes the declaration: *“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (15:57)*

The Victory Is Through Christ. We do not defeat death through positive thinking, good behavior, religious activity, or personal strength.

Practical Application

Christian hope is not pretending painful things do not hurt.

Christian hope is knowing pain does not have the final say.

9. Therefore, Be Steadfast

1 Corinthians 15:58

Because resurrection is true, live differently now.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

This is one of the greatest encouragements for anyone serving God. Your labor is not in vain. You may not see the full harvest now. But God sees every act of faithfulness.

Introspective Questions

1. Have I mistaken lack of immediate results for lack of effectiveness?
2. What work for God have I started doing halfheartedly?
3. What would “always abounding” look like in my life?
4. Where is God calling me to become more steadfast?

Personal Challenge

Identify one area where you have become discouraged and recommit it to God instead of abandoning it.

10. Giving Should Be Intentional

1 Corinthians 16:1–4

Paul now moves from resurrection theology to a very practical subject:

Giving.

He instructs believers concerning a collection for needy saints.

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...” (16:2)

Paul was organizing this collection to financially support the destitute and impoverished Christian believers in Jerusalem who were suffering from severe poverty, likely worsened by a famine and the burden of supporting widows and local church members.

Several principles emerge.

- Giving was personal: “Let every one of you...”
- Giving was planned: “Lay by him in store...”
- Giving was proportionate: “As God hath prospered him...”
- Giving was not simply an emotional response at the last minute. It was intentional stewardship.

Introspective Questions

1. Has my generosity increased as God has increased my resources?
2. Do I see giving as worship or merely as an obligation?
3. Does my financial life reveal trust in God?

11. Ministry Plans: Plan, But Remain Flexible

1 Corinthians 16:5–12

Paul describes his travel plans.

- He hopes to visit Corinth.
- He intends to remain in Ephesus for a time.
- He mentions Timothy and Apollos.

This passage may appear less spiritual than chapter 15, but it contains valuable ministry lessons. Paul had plans. He thought strategically. He considered timing. He coordinated with other leaders. But his plans remained subject to God.

Ministry Requires Both Faith and Planning

- Spiritual people should not be afraid of planning.
- Planning does not mean we lack faith.
- But plans should never become idols.

We can say, “This is what I intend to do, as the Lord leads.”

An Open Door and Opposition

“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.”
(16:9)

Open door does not mean absence of opposition. Sometimes we assume if God opened the door, everything should be easy. Paul experienced the opposite. He had great opportunity and great opposition at the same time. Difficulty does not automatically mean God has closed the door.

Introspective Questions

1. Do I interpret opposition as evidence that I missed God?
2. Can I distinguish difficulty from divine redirection?
3. Do I make plans prayerfully?
4. Can God interrupt my plans without me becoming frustrated?

Personal Challenge

Do not abandon an assignment merely because resistance appears. Ask whether the opposition is a reason to stop or a reason to stand.

12. Final Exhortations: Five Commands for A Mature Church

1 Corinthians 16:13–14

Paul gives a powerful series of commands, pointing the Corinthian brethren toward maturity:

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.” (16:12-13)

Summary of Christian Maturity.

i. Watch

- Stay spiritually alert.
- Do not become careless.
- Watch your doctrine.
- Watch your relationships.
- Watch your temptations.
- Watch your heart.

Question: Where have I become spiritually careless?

ii. Stand Fast in The Faith

- Hold firmly to what you believe.
- Culture shifts.
- Opinions change.
- Popular teaching changes.
- But truth remains.

Question: What pressure am I facing to compromise something I know is true?

iii. Be Courageous

“Quit you like men” implies courage and maturity.

Faithfulness sometimes requires courage.

Question: Where is fear keeping me from obedience?

iv. Be Strong

- Not self-sufficient.
- Strong in the Lord.
- Strength for Christians comes through dependence, not independence.

Question: Am I trying to carry something in my own strength that I need to surrender to God?

v. Do Everything in Love

After an entire letter of correction, Paul returns to love:

“Let all your things be done with charity.” (16:14)

Not some things, all things.

Introspective Question

Can the people closest to me tell that love governs the way I live?

13. Honor Faithful Servants

1 Corinthians 16:15–18

- Paul mentions the household of Stephanas and others who had devoted themselves to ministry. He tells the Corinthians to recognize such people.
- This teaches an important lesson: Faithful service should be honored; not worshiped, not idolized, but appreciated.

Introspective Questions

1. When was the last time I thanked someone for serving?
2. Do I expect service without expressing gratitude?

Personal Challenge

Thank someone this week whose faithful service is easy to overlook.

14. Final Greetings: Relationships Matter

1 Corinthians 16:19–24

Paul closes with greetings from other believers and churches.

He mentions Aquila and Priscilla.

He sends love.

He emphasizes fellowship.

After addressing major doctrinal and moral problems, Paul does not end coldly.

He ends relationally.

“My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.” (16:24)

This is significant. Paul had corrected them strongly. But correction did not cancel love.

A Mature Christian Can Correct and Love at the Same Time

Biblical correction is not rejection.

Truth and love belong together.

Introspective Questions

1. When someone corrects me, do I automatically assume they are against me?
2. Do I maintain relationships only when there is no disagreement?
3. Can people experience both truth and love from me?

The Common Thread Through Chapters 15–16

At first, these chapters move through very different subjects:

- Resurrection
- Death
- Giving
- Travel
- Ministry

- Courage
- Service
- Relationships

But there is a strong connection.

Christ rose, life has eternal significance, therefore:

- **Be Hopeful.** Death does not win.
- **Be Steadfast.** Your labor is not wasted.
- **Be Generous.** Use temporal resources for eternal purposes.
- **Be Flexible.** Make plans but remain submitted to God.
- **Be Courageous.** Stand firm even when opposition comes.
- **Be Loving.** Let everything be governed by love.

The Resurrection of Christ Changes How We Live

The resurrection does not merely answer: “What happens after I die?” It also answers: “How should I live before I die?”

Personal Spiritual Inventory

1. **Gospel.** Is the resurrection central to my faith?
2. **Grace.** Am I allowing my past to define me more than God’s grace?
3. **Eternity.** Do my priorities reflect belief in eternal life?
4. **Hope.** What fear needs to be confronted by resurrection truth?
5. **Steadfastness.** Where am I tempted to quit?
6. **Service.** Am I faithfully doing the work God has given me?
7. **Giving.** Is my generosity intentional and consistent?
8. **Plans.** Can God redirect my plans?
9. **Opposition.** Have I mistaken resistance for a closed door?
10. **Courage.** Where do I need to stand firm?
11. **Love.** Are all my actions being governed by love?

Group Discussion Questions

1. Why is the resurrection essential to Christianity rather than merely an additional doctrine?
2. What does Paul’s statement “By the grace of God I am what I am” teach us about our past?
3. How should resurrection hope affect the way Christians face grief and death?
4. What difference should belief in eternity make in everyday decisions?
5. How can we remain faithful when we see little immediate fruit from our labor?

Personal Challenge

Live consciously in light of the resurrection.

- When you are discouraged: Remember your labor is not in vain.
- When you experience loss: Remember death does not have the final word.
- When you are tempted to quit: Be steadfast.
- When opposition comes: Do not automatically assume the door is closed.

- When God prospers you: Give generously.
- When circumstances change: Hold your plans loosely.
- When fear comes: Stand firm.

And in everything: Let love govern your response.

Final Thought

1 Corinthians begins with a divided, immature, troubled church. But Paul ends the letter pointing them toward something much greater than their problems: The risen Christ.

Their divisions, failures, immaturity, or death itself were not the final word. Jesus was.

And because Jesus rose, believers have reason to keep going.

We can continue serving when we are tired.

We can continue believing when we cannot see the outcome.

We can continue giving when sacrifice costs us.

We can continue standing when culture shifts.

We can continue loving difficult people.

We can continue working even when nobody notices.

Why?

Because *“Your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”* (1 Corinthians 15:58)

And because: *“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (15:57)

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the truth and wisdom You have given us through the book of 1 Corinthians. Help us not only to hear Your Word, but to live it.

Teach us to walk in unity, pursue holiness, use our gifts to serve others, and exercise our freedom with love and wisdom. Keep us humble, mature our faith, and let everything we do bring glory to You.

Above all, help us to remember that without love, our words, gifts, knowledge, and service amount to nothing. May the love of Christ be evident in the way we worship, serve, speak, and treat one another.

Keep us steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor in You is never in vain.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.