

1 CORINTHIANS

| DATE | BOOK | KEY THOUGHT | CONTENT | KEY LESSONS | JESUS IN THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE |
|-------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| | New Testament | | | | |
| | Pauline Epistles | | | | |
| 55 AD | 1 Corinthians 16 Chapters | Epistles of correction | These books are warnings not to sin in a number of areas: divisions, incest, lawsuits, sexual abstinence in marriage, divorce, order in the church and giving. | Don't let differences cause schisms | Jesus gives us the power and love of God |
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1 CORINTHIANS OUTLINE

1. The Letter Opening: God's Grace and Faithfulness in Christ

Introduction: 1:1–9.

2. The Wisdom of God: Embracing the Values of the Cross

Divisions in the Church: 1:10–4:21.

3. Issues of Purity, Both Corporate and Individual

- A. Immorality in the Church: chapter 5.
- B. Lawsuits between Christians: 6:1–11.
- C. The use of the body: 6:12–20.
- D. Christian marriage: chapter 7.

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4. The Freedom of the Gospel: Loving God and Loving One's Neighbor

Dealings between Christians and non-believers: 8:1–11:1.

5. Worship in Assemblies

A. Behavior when assembled for worship: 11:2–34.

B. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, including love: chapters 12–14.

6. Bodily Resurrection

Our resurrection: chapter 15.

7. The Continuing Work of the Gospel

A. Practical matters: 16:1–12.

B. Conclusion: 16:13–24.

1 CORINTHIANS

First Corinthians contains a frank discussion of the church and the issues that impacted real people in the first century. The Corinthian church was corroded with sin on a variety of fronts.

Paul provided an important model for how the church should handle the problem of sin in its midst. Rather than turn a blind eye toward relational division and all kinds of immorality, he addressed the problems head on.

In his bold call to purity within the Corinthian church, Paul made it clear that he was willing to risk the good opinion of some in order to help cleanse the sin that tainted the church.

1 CORINTHIANS

PAUL ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IN 1 CORINTHIANS:

1. Divisions
2. Immorality
3. Lawsuits among brethren
4. Selfishness
5. Abuses of the Lord's Supper
6. Spiritual gifts
7. Denials of the resurrection
8. Questionable practices

1 CORINTHIANS

Corinth was a large, international metropolis, filled with people from different backgrounds.

Idol worship to gods such as Aphrodite was particularly prominent in the city, though Corinth contained numerous temptations far beyond her temples.

1 CORINTHIANS

Corinth was very much like a modern urban area, containing unending opportunities to engage in sinful behavior without any apparent consequences.

Such a community clearly had a negative influence on the Corinthian church.

Paul's instruction to the believers was not to retreat from their city. This was not Paul's vision for the church then or now.

1 CORINTHIANS

The apostle Paul founded the church in Corinth (Acts 18). A few years after leaving the church, the apostle Paul heard some disturbing reports about the Corinthian church.

They were full of pride and were excusing sexual immorality. Spiritual gifts were being used improperly, and there was rampant misunderstanding of key Christian doctrines.

The apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians in order to restore the Corinthian church to its foundation—Jesus Christ.

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Paul tackles the issues the church faces, reprimands them for their shortcomings, and encourages them in love.

1 Corinthians is not a step-by-step guide to solving church problems.

Instead of telling the church precisely what to do, Paul proposes a new perspective - **put God's glory first.** This is the Christian philosophy.

1 Cor. 10: 31

31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.**

1 CORINTHIANS

The Corinthian church was plagued by divisions. The believers in Corinth were dividing into groups loyal to certain spiritual leaders.

1 Cor. 1: 10

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

The Corinthians were fighting each other, with one faction claiming Paul as their leader while others claimed the eloquent Apollos, the original apostle Peter (Cephas), or the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

1 Cor. 1: 12-13

12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.”

13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul reprimands them for their immaturity.

1 Cor. 3: 2-3

2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,

3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

God is the only one who deserves glory, not His servants.

1 Cor. 3: 4-7

4 For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not *mere men*?

5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one.

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul appealed to the church at Corinth to be united with no divisions.

1 Cor. 3: 21-23

21 So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you,

22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you,

23 and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul wanted them to accept the wisdom and greatness of Jesus' work on the cross, instead of the wisdom and greatness of the preachers and teachers they were following.

Paul reminded them that God chose the weak, foolish, low and despised of this world, to preach the power of Christ crucified. So, when we boast, may we only boast in the Lord.

1 CORINTHIANS

The church was condoning sexual immorality:

A. One man was sleeping with his father's wife.

1 Cor. 5: 1-2

1 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.

2 You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.

B. Others have been seeing prostitutes.

1 Cor. 6: 16-18

16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For He says, "The two shall become one flesh."

17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

18 Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul encourages the saints at Corinth to flee from immorality.

1 Cor. 5: 7-8

7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ, our Passover also has been sacrificed.

8 Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul commanded them to expel the wicked man from the church.

1 Cor. 5: 13

13 But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul's direction was to recognize God's authority and glorify Him with the physical body.

1 Cor. 6: 19-20

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body.

1 CORINTHIANS

God has given us principles in chapter 7 to follow in marriage, divorce and being single.

1 Cor. 7: 17

17 Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so, I direct in all the churches.

Everyone is either single or married. While Paul was single and saw it as good, he considered both marriage and being single as a gift from God. Each one of us should embrace the life that the Lord has assigned to us. We are either to live faithfully to our spouse or be celibate.

1 CORINTHIANS

The church was not judging their own based on God's Word.

They were taking their disputes with other Christians to the secular courts.

1 Cor. 6: 1-2

1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?

2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent *to constitute* the smallest law courts?

1 Cor. 6: 5-7

5 I say *this* to your shame. *Is it so, that* there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren,

6 but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?

7 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul taught the Corinthians that it would be better to be taken advantage of than to damage their Christian testimony.

1 Cor. 6: 3-8

3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

4 So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church?

5 I say *this* to your shame. *Is it so, that* there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren,

6 but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?

7 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

8 On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. *You do this even to your* brethren.

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There is a call to Freedom in Christ, and a Call to Sacrifice your Liberty for Unity in chapters 8-10.

Take Care with Your Liberty and do not be a stumbling block to the weak.

1 Cor. 8: 9

9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

1 Cor. 8: 12-13

12 And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul declares his rights as an apostle in chapter 9.

1 Cor. 9: 1-2

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

1 Cor. 9: 25-27

25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul reminded the church that love for their brethren should prevail over their freedom to eat meat. Freedom in Christ is a delicate balance. While we are free to enjoy many things, we must consider if abstaining from certain things would be the more loving choice.

1 Cor. 10: 13

13 No temptation has overtaken you, but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide **the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.**

1 Cor. 10: 32-33

32 Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God;

33 just as I also, please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the *profit* of the many, so that they may be saved.

1 CORINTHIANS

Christians are to reflect on the order in worship assemblies in chapters 11-14.

The Lord's Supper is not to be taken irreverently.

The Lord's Supper was causing problems in the Corinthian church. Paul explained that they were taking it irreverently and selfishly. That is a dangerous thing to do. He called on them to examine themselves before they took of the bread and cup, or they would face discipline from the Lord.

1 Cor. 11: 28-29

28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.

1 CORINTHIANS

Believers all have different talents. These talents are to be used in love.

Church is not a place we attend once a week to fill a seat and then leave. The Church is meant to function as a body. If one part is hurting, we all should hurt.

1 Cor. 12: 26

26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

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1 Cor. 13: 4 – 8

4 Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant,

5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,

6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away.

1 Cor. 13: 13

13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Love trumps faith, hope and our talents. Without love, our talents are useless.

One day when we see Jesus, we will no longer need faith or hope. We will experience love for all of eternity!

1 CORINTHIANS

The first century church received spiritual gifts. These spiritual gifts ceased during the early church.

They were not given for self-glorification but to glorify God and to build up the body of Christ.

Paul shares with the saints at Corinth instructions on how to use these gifts in chapter 14.

1 CORINTHIANS

Christ's resurrection removes the sting of death in chapter 15.

1 Cor. 15: 55-58

55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.

We can stand firm because death has been swallowed up in victory and we have a hope of resurrection with Christ. We can be immovable. We can work hard serving the Lord knowing that our labor is not in vain. There is a sure hope of eternal life with Jesus one day!

1 CORINTHIANS

In chapter 16, Paul addresses the attitude of the Corinthian saints towards giving.

1 Cor. 16: 1-2

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

1 CORINTHIANS

Many of the problems and questions the Corinthian church was dealing with are still present in the church today. Churches today still struggle with divisions, with immorality and love towards the brethren.

The Book of 1 Corinthians very well could have been written to the church today and we would do well to heed Paul's warnings and apply them to ourselves. Despite all the rebukes and corrections, 1 Corinthians brings our focus back to where it should be—on Christ. Genuine Christian love is the answer to many problems (chapter 13).

A proper understanding of the resurrection of Christ, as revealed in chapter 15, and thereby a proper understanding of our own resurrection, is the cure for what divides and defeats us.

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul directed us to live out our commitment to Christ ever more faithfully. It shows the world that God is first in the Christian walk of life.

Paul expected that Christians would shine their light into the dark places of their world by worshiping in a unified assembly that was accountable to one another.

He expected that we would settle our problems internally, that Christians would encourage one another in the pursuit of purity, and that Christians would strive together by holding tightly to the hope of our bodily resurrection to come.

2 CORINTHIANS

| DATE | BOOK | KEY THOUGHT | CONTENT | KEY LESSONS | JESUS IN THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE |
|------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---|--|---|
| | New Testament | | | | |
| | Pauline Epistles | | | | |
| | | | These books are warnings not to sin in a number of areas: divisions, incest, lawsuits, sexual | | |
| 51 - 52 AD | 2 Corinthians 13 Chapters | Epistles of correction | abstinence in marriage, divorce, order in the church and giving. | Do everything to please Jesus Christ (5:9) | Jesus is the down payment of what's to come |

2 CORINTHIANS

In 2 Corinthians, Paul defends his character from critics who said that he was a fake apostle.

He uses a description of his own ministry as an exhortation for the Corinthians to live godly and open-hearted lives.

Paul describes how he's been honest, hopeful and devoted while suffering. These things have blessed his ministry.

2 CORINTHIANS

2 Cor. 2: 17

17 For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

2 Cor. 4: 7

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

2 Cor. 6: 14

14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

2 CORINTHIANS

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul expresses his relief and joy that the Corinthians had received his “severe” letter (now lost) in a positive manner.

That letter addressed issues that were tearing the church apart, primarily the arrival of self-styled (false) apostles (2 Corinthians 11:13) who were assaulting Paul’s character, sowing discord among the believers, and teaching false doctrine.

They appear to have questioned his veracity (2 Corinthians 1:15–17), his speaking ability (2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:6), and his unwillingness to accept support from the church at Corinth (2 Corinthians 11:7–9; 12:13).

There were also some people in Corinth who had not repented of their licentious behavior, another reason he had sent the “severe” letter. (2 Corinthians 12: 20–21).

2 CORINTHIANS

Paul was overjoyed to learn from Titus that the majority of Corinthians had repented of their rebellion against Paul (2 Corinthians 2:12–13; 7:5–9).

The apostle encourages them for this in an expression of his genuine love (2 Corinthians 7:3–16). Paul also urged the Corinthians to finish collecting an offering for the poor (chapters 8–9) and to take a harder stance against false teachers (chapters 10–13).

Finally, Paul vindicated his apostleship, as some in the church had likely questioned his authority (2 Corinthians 13: 3).

2 CORINTHIANS

2 Corinthians applies to our lives today. One thing is stewardship, not only of money, but of time as well.

The Macedonians not only gave generously, but “they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will” (2 Corinthians 8:5). In the same way, we should dedicate not only all we have to the Lord, but all that we are. He really doesn’t need our money. He is omnipotent! He wants the heart, one that longs to serve and please and love. Stewardship and giving to God is more than just money.

God does want us to monetarily as we have purpose in our heart, and He promises to bless us when we give to Him. There is more though. God wants 100%. He wants us to give Him our all. Everything we are. We should spend our lives living to serve our Father. We should not only give to God from our paycheck, but our very lives should be a reflection of Him. We should give ourselves first to the Lord, then to the church and the work of the ministry of Jesus Christ.