

CALLED TO BE DIFFERENT

The Gospel Transforms our Character

PART I

1 Corinthians 1–7

Table of Contents

Week 1	Introduction	Overview	5
Week 2	A Church Called By Grace	1 Corinthians 1	10
Week 3	The Wisdom of the Cross	1 Corinthians 2	16
Week 4	Growing Up in Christ	1 Corinthians 3-4	22
Week 5	A Holy Church	1 Corinthians 5	28
Week 6	Living Set Apart	1 Corinthians 6	34
Week 7	Faithfulness in Every Season	1 Corinthians 7:1-24	40
Week 8	Undivided Devotion	1 Corinthians 7:25-40	46
The Good News of the Gospel			52

Week 1: Introduction to 1 Corinthians

Overview of 1 Corinthians:

The book of 1 Corinthians is a pastoral letter written by the apostle Paul to the church in Corinth around A.D. 55 while he was in Ephesus (Acts 19). Corinth was a prosperous port city known for its wealth, diversity, intellectualism, and moral corruption. Although the church had experienced God's grace and possessed many spiritual gifts, it struggled with division, pride, sexual immorality, lawsuits, misuse of Christian freedom, disorder in worship, and confusion about the resurrection.

Paul writes to address reports he has received from Chloe's household (1 Corinthians 1:11) and to answer questions the Corinthians had written to him (1 Corinthians 7:1). Rather than merely correcting behavior, Paul continually points believers back to the gospel. Every issue—whether relationships, worship, spiritual gifts, or daily conduct—is ultimately rooted in their identity in Jesus Christ.

Throughout the letter, Paul reminds the church that following Christ transforms every area of life. The wisdom of the world is replaced by the wisdom of the cross. Pride gives way to humility. Self-centered living becomes sacrificial love. Spiritual gifts are exercised for the good of the body. Worship reflects God's holiness. And the resurrection of Jesus gives believers unshakable hope for both the present and the future.

Though written nearly two thousand years ago, 1 Corinthians speaks directly to the challenges facing the church today. It calls believers to pursue holiness in a culture of compromise, unity in a divided world, love in the midst of conflict, and unwavering hope because Christ has been raised from the dead.

Historical Background

Author: The Apostle Paul
Date Written: Approximately A.D. 55
Written From: Ephesus (during Paul's third missionary journey)
Audience: The church in Corinth—a diverse congregation of Jewish and Gentile believers.

Purpose of the Letter

- To correct problems within the church.
- To answer questions the Corinthians had written to Paul.
- To call believers back to spiritual maturity.
- To encourage unity centered on Christ.
- To teach that the gospel transforms every area of life.

Key Themes

- The Centrality of the Gospel
- Unity in Christ
- Spiritual Maturity
- Holiness
- Christian Freedom

Memory Verse

"For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 3:11 (ESV)

Teaching Notes: *Introduction to 1 Corinthians*

Week 1: Optional Group Discussion Questions

1. What drew you to Women's Bible Study? What are you hoping to get out of your time with this community?
2. What is one takeaway you had from the teaching today?
3. What most challenged you from the message and why?
4. On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you reading God's Word? How often do you find yourself in Scripture? What is your biggest hindrance to getting into God's Word in this season?
5. Is there any area of your life that you are hoping God will respond to through His Word?
6. How can your group encourage you in your walk with Jesus through the book of 1st Corinthians?

Week 2: A Church Called by Grace

Weekly Reading

1 Corinthians 1:1-31

Overview

Paul opens his letter by reminding the Corinthians of their identity in Christ. Though the church was struggling with division, pride, and spiritual immaturity, Paul begins with gratitude for God's grace at work among them. Their standing before God was based not on their performance but on His faithfulness.

As Paul addresses growing factions within the church, he points believers back to the message of the cross. The gospel unites people from different backgrounds and removes all grounds for boasting. True wisdom and strength are found not in human leaders or achievements but in Christ alone.

This chapter reminds believers that unity flows from a shared identity in Jesus and confidence in God's faithfulness.

Key Themes

- God's calling
- Unity in Christ
- The message of the cross
- God's faithfulness

Memory Verse

"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:9 (ESV)

Study Questions

1. How does Paul describe the Corinthian believers in verses 1–9?
2. What divisions had developed within the church?
3. Why was Paul concerned about these divisions?
4. What does the cross reveal about God's wisdom?
5. How does the gospel challenge human pride?

6. What does God's faithfulness mean in this chapter?
7. Where are people tempted to find identity apart from Christ?
8. How can believers pursue unity despite differences?
9. What forms of pride most often threaten Christian community?
10. What truth from this chapter do you most need to remember this week?

Prayer Prompt

Father, thank You for calling me by Your grace and making me part of Your family. Forgive me for the ways pride and self-focus create division in my relationships. Help me find my identity in Christ alone and pursue unity with other believers. Teach me to boast only in the cross and to trust in Your faithfulness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Prompt

Reflect on your identity in Christ.

- Where are you tempted to seek approval or significance apart from Jesus?
- Are there any relationships that need reconciliation?
- How does God's faithfulness encourage you today?
- What would it look like to live from your identity in Christ this week?

Teaching Notes: *A Church Called by Grace*

Week 3: The Wisdom of the Cross

Weekly Reading:

1 Corinthians 2

Overview

Paul explains that his ministry was not built upon impressive speech, persuasive arguments, or worldly wisdom. Instead, he centered everything on Jesus Christ and His crucifixion. The power of the gospel does not depend upon human ability but upon God's Spirit.

Paul contrasts worldly wisdom with God's wisdom. Human wisdom often values success, status, and self-sufficiency, while God's wisdom is revealed through the humility and sacrifice of Christ. Spiritual truth is understood through the work of the Holy Spirit, who enables believers to know God's heart and purposes.

This chapter reminds believers that spiritual maturity begins with dependence upon God's Spirit rather than confidence in human understanding.

Key Themes

- God's wisdom
- The Holy Spirit
- Dependence upon God
- The centrality of Christ

Memory Verse

"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV)

Study Questions

1. How does Paul describe his approach to ministry?
2. Why does Paul reject reliance on worldly wisdom?
3. How is God's wisdom different from human wisdom?
4. What role does the Holy Spirit play in understanding truth?
5. Why is the message of the cross difficult for some to accept?

6. What does Paul mean by having "the mind of Christ"?
7. Where are you tempted to trust your own understanding?
8. How can believers become more dependent on the Spirit?
9. What does humility look like in your spiritual growth?
10. How can Christ remain central in your life this week?

Prayer Prompt

Father, thank You for revealing Your wisdom through Jesus Christ. Forgive me for relying on my own understanding rather than seeking Your guidance. Fill me with Your Spirit and teach me to discern Your truth. Help me keep Christ at the center of my life and decisions. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Prompt

Consider where you seek wisdom.

- What voices most influence your decisions?
- How do you seek God's guidance?
- Where do you need greater dependence on the Holy Spirit?
- What would it look like to pursue God's wisdom above your own?

Teaching Notes: *The Wisdom of the Cross*

Week 4: Growing Up in Christ

Weekly Reading:

1 Corinthians 3–4

Overview

Paul confronts the Corinthians for their spiritual immaturity. Their divisions, jealousy, and competition revealed that they were thinking more like the world than like followers of Christ. Although leaders such as Paul and Apollos played important roles, God alone produced spiritual growth.

Paul uses several illustrations to describe the church: God's field, God's building, and God's temple. Each image highlights God's ownership and purpose. Christian leaders are servants entrusted with God's work, not celebrities to be admired or followed.

This passage challenges believers to pursue maturity, humility, and faithful stewardship while recognizing that all growth comes from God.

Key Themes

- Spiritual maturity
- Humility
- Servanthood
- God's work in His church

Memory Verse

"So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."

1 Corinthians 3:7 (ESV)

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul describe the Corinthians as spiritually immature?
2. What evidence of immaturity was present in the church?
3. What does the planting and watering illustration teach?
4. What foundation must every believer build upon?
5. How does Paul describe Christian leaders?

6. Why is faithful stewardship important?
7. What areas of spiritual growth are currently developing in your life?
8. How does pride hinder maturity?
9. Where do you need greater humility in serving others?
10. What step toward spiritual growth is God inviting you to take?

Prayer Prompt

Father, thank You for patiently growing me in Christ. Reveal areas where immaturity still exists in my life. Help me walk in humility, serve faithfully, and trust You for spiritual growth. Use my life to build up Your church and bring glory to Your name. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Prompt

Reflect on your spiritual growth.

- Where have you seen God mature you recently?
- What attitudes or behaviors reveal areas of immaturity?
- How are you contributing to the health of your church?
- What is one step of growth you can pursue this week?

Teaching Notes: *Growing Up in Christ*

Week 5: A Holy Church

Weekly Reading:

1 Corinthians 5

Overview

Paul addresses a serious case of unrepentant sin within the Corinthian church. Rather than grieving over the sin, the congregation had become complacent and tolerant. Paul calls the church to respond with humility, repentance, and loving discipline.

Using the image of leaven spreading through dough, Paul teaches that unchecked sin affects the entire community. God calls His people to pursue holiness because they belong to Christ and have been made new through His sacrifice.

This chapter reminds believers that holiness matters. God's grace never minimizes sin; instead, it empowers repentance and transformation.

Key Themes

- Holiness
- Repentance
- Church discipline
- Christ our Passover Lamb

Memory Verse

"Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

1 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)

Study Questions

1. What sin was being tolerated within the church?
2. Why was Paul concerned about the church's response?
3. What does leaven symbolize in this chapter?
4. How does unaddressed sin affect a community?
5. Why is church discipline an act of love?

6. What role does repentance play in spiritual growth?
7. How does Christ's sacrifice motivate holiness?
8. Are there areas of compromise in your life that need attention?
9. How can believers balance grace and truth?
10. What step of repentance is God inviting you to take?

Prayer Prompt

Father, thank You for the cleansing work of Christ. Reveal any areas of sin or compromise in my life that need repentance. Give me a tender heart that responds quickly to Your correction. Help me pursue holiness with humility and dependence upon Your grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Prompt

Reflect on your pursuit of holiness.

- Are there habits or attitudes God is asking you to surrender?
- How have you experienced His grace through repentance?
- What does genuine holiness look like in your daily life?
- How can you encourage others toward faithfulness?

Teaching Notes: *A Holy Church*

Week 6: Living Set Apart

Weekly Reading:

1 Corinthians 6

Overview

Paul addresses several issues affecting the Corinthian believers, including lawsuits among Christians and sexual immorality. Rather than viewing faith as separate from everyday life, Paul teaches that every aspect of life belongs to Christ.

Believers have been redeemed by Jesus and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Because they belong to God, their choices, relationships, and actions should reflect His character and purposes.

This chapter calls Christians to live with a deep awareness of their identity in Christ and to honor God with both body and soul.

Key Themes

- Identity in Christ
- Purity
- Redemption
- Stewardship of the body

Memory Verse

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (ESV)

Study Questions

1. What conflicts existed among the Corinthian believers?
2. Why does Paul challenge them regarding lawsuits?
3. What does Paul teach about Christian freedom?
4. What does it mean that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?
5. Why does redemption affect how we live?

6. How does the gospel shape our view of purity?

7. How can believers honor God with their bodies?

8. What cultural messages conflict with Paul's teaching?

9. Where do you need greater surrender to Christ?

10. How can you glorify God in practical ways this week?

Prayer Prompt

Father, thank You for purchasing me through the sacrifice of Jesus. Help me remember that I belong to You in every area of life. Give me wisdom, purity, and integrity in my decisions. May my life honor You and reflect Your presence to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Prompt

Reflect on your identity in Christ.

- What does it mean that you belong to God?
- How does that truth affect your choices?
- Are there areas where you struggle with surrender?
- What practical changes might God be leading you to make?

Teaching Notes: *Living Set Apart*

Week 7: Faithfulness in Every Season

Weekly Reading:

1 Corinthians 7:1-24

Overview

The Corinthian believers had questions about marriage, singleness, and relationships. Some viewed singleness as spiritually superior, while others struggled to understand how faith affected their current circumstances.

Paul teaches that both marriage and singleness are gifts from God. Rather than focusing on changing their circumstances, believers are called to honor Christ faithfully wherever He has placed them.

This passage emphasizes contentment, obedience, and trust in God's sovereignty. Faithfulness in the present season is an act of worship and confidence in God's plan.

Key Themes

- Faithfulness
- Contentment
- Marriage and singleness
- God's calling

Memory Verse

"Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches."

1 Corinthians 7:17 (ESV)

Study Questions

1. What instructions does Paul give regarding marriage?
2. How does Paul speak about singleness?
3. Why does Paul emphasize remaining faithful in one's calling?
4. What repeated principle appears throughout verses 17-24?
5. How does contentment honor God?

6. What does faithfulness look like in everyday life?
7. Where are you tempted to compare your circumstances with others?
8. How can you trust God more fully in your current season?
9. What responsibilities has God entrusted to you?
10. How can you serve Christ faithfully this week?

Prayer Prompt

Father, thank You for Your wisdom and perfect timing. Help me trust You in every season of life and resist comparison or discontentment. Teach me to be faithful in the relationships and responsibilities You have given me. May my life bring honor to You wherever You have placed me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Prompt

Consider your current season of life.

- What circumstances are difficult to embrace?
- Where are you tempted toward dissatisfaction?
- How might God be using this season to grow you?
- What would greater faithfulness look like this week?

Teaching Notes: *Faithfulness in Every Season*

Week 8: Undivided Devotion

Weekly Reading:

1 Corinthians 7:25–40

Overview

Paul continues discussing marriage and singleness, encouraging believers to live with eternity in view. His concern is not to elevate one life circumstance above another but to help believers pursue wholehearted devotion to Christ.

Because this world is temporary, followers of Jesus must hold earthly concerns loosely and prioritize God's kingdom above all else. Marriage and singleness both provide unique opportunities to serve Christ faithfully.

This passage challenges believers to examine their priorities and live with an eternal perspective that shapes daily decisions and commitments.

Key Themes

- Undivided devotion to Christ
- Eternal perspective
- Kingdom priorities
- Faithful stewardship

Memory Verse

"This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none."

1 Corinthians 7:29 (ESV)

Study Questions

1. What group of people is Paul specifically addressing?
2. Why does Paul encourage believers to remain in their current situation?
3. How does Paul describe the temporary nature of this world?
4. What concerns can distract believers from devotion to Christ?
5. How does an eternal perspective shape daily living?

6. What does "undivided devotion" mean?
7. How does this passage affirm both marriage and singleness?
8. What priorities currently compete for your attention?
9. How can you focus more intentionally on God's kingdom?
10. What practical step can you take this week to deepen your devotion to Christ?

Prayer Prompt

Father, help me remember that this world is temporary and that my ultimate hope is found in You. Guard my heart from distractions that compete for my devotion. Teach me to seek first Your kingdom and align my priorities with Your purposes. May my life reflect wholehearted love for Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Journal Prompt

Evaluate your priorities before the Lord.

- What occupies most of your time and attention?
- Are there distractions pulling you away from Christ?
- How would your schedule change if eternity shaped your decisions?
- What is one step you can take toward deeper devotion this week?

Teaching Notes: *Undivided Devotion*

The Good News of the Gospel

If you've been reading through this study and are wondering what it means to have a personal relationship with God, the Bible has wonderful news for you.

God Loves You

God created you with purpose and desires to know you personally. He made you in His image and longs for you to experience His love, peace, and eternal life.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16 (ESV)

Our Sin Separates Us from God

Every one of us has sinned. We have all chosen our own way instead of God's perfect way, and sin separates us from Him.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

The consequence of sin is spiritual death and separation from God.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

Jesus Did What We Could Never Do

Because of His great love, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live the perfect life we could never live. Jesus willingly died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and rose again three days later, defeating sin and death forever.

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

Jesus alone is the way to be reconciled to God.

Salvation Is a Gift of Grace

We cannot earn God's love or work our way into heaven. Salvation is God's gift, received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)

When we repent—turning from our sin—and place our trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives us, adopts us into His family, and gives us new life.

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Romans 10:9 (ESV)

A Prayer of Faith

There are no special words that save us—only faith in Jesus Christ. If the desire of your heart is to trust Him today, you may pray something like this:

Heavenly Father,

I confess that I am a sinner and that I need Your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son, that He died on the cross for my sins, and that He rose again from the dead. Today I turn from my sin and place my trust in Jesus alone as my Savior and Lord.

Thank You for loving me, forgiving me, and giving me the gift of eternal life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and help me follow You each day. Teach me to know You, love You, and live for Your glory.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

If You Prayed This Prayer

If today you have trusted in Jesus Christ, the Bible says you are a new creation.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

We encourage you to continue growing in your faith by:

- Sharing your decision with a trusted Christian friend, your Women's Bible Study leader and a Women's Pastor at CA. We want to celebrate with you!
- Reading God's Word daily, beginning with the Gospel of John.
- Talking with God through prayer.
- Becoming part of a Bible-believing church where you can worship, learn, and grow.
- Being baptized as an outward declaration of your faith in Jesus Christ.

Welcome to the family of God! May the Lord continue to strengthen your faith as you walk with Him and experience the joy of knowing Christ.