

Lesson 10
The Book of First Corinthians
Chronological Study of the New Testament
Second Semester

Key Verse: I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. NIV

PRAYER FOCUS: Pray the key verse to the Lord. Ask Him what you need to do to insure that you would not be the source of division, and that there would be unity in the body of Christ.

Corinth and Ephesus were on opposite sides of the Aegean Sea and both were very pagan cities. Corinth was located on a thin isthmus that connected Achaia with Macedonia. Corinth was a crowded and prosperous city with two harbors one on the west toward Italy and one on the east toward Asia. This resulted in an influx of people from varied ethnic groups and religious beliefs. The temple of Aphrodite was a major attraction in Corinth and it was serviced by 1,000 temple prostitutes. The city was very materialistic and superstitious, having major religions based on idols that promoted sexual perversions. Their reputation was so bad in that day, one of the worst things you could say about a person was that he/she was a Corinthian.

Paul came to Corinth from Athens on his second missionary journey and founded the church at Corinth where he remained for 18 months (Acts 18:11). He wrote what we call First and Second Thessalonians while in Corinth. After establishing the church in Corinth, Paul continued his missionary journeys.

Scholars think that while at Ephesus on his third missionary journey, Paul received word of problems in the church at Corinth and wrote a letter that has been lost. “When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with the people who indulge in sexual sin.” 1 Corinthians 5:9. Paul received another message about difficulties in the church and wrote the letter (epistle) we now refer to as First Corinthians. As you study this letter to the church in Corinth, compare it to many of our churches today. The Corinthian church was influenced by the pagan culture around it and within the church itself there was jealousy resulting in divisions, a tolerance for sexual immorality and drunkenness. Sound familiar?

Paul could have lashed out at these people with page after page of condemnation. Instead he began his letter with a positive approach by pointing out the high calling of believers in Jesus Christ. Every believer should prayerfully read the first nine verses of the chapter. Christians have a calling from God to be holy as He is holy. What happens in our churches does not stay in our churches; it filters out into the community. We are to be a light to the world not a reflection of the world.

Paul begins his letters with a blessing of grace and peace. Paul realized that Christians must be confident in the fact that they are eternally saved by grace alone or they could never experience true peace. Paul’s greeting of grace and peace would have reminded Jews of the words of the LORD given to Moses in Numbers 6:22-26. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.’”

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Day One:

Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

1. To whom did Paul write this letter? V. 2 _____

2. What is a saint? _____

3. How have we been equipped? _____

4. With whom are we in partnership? _____

❖ Describe how your life reflects this partnership?

Day Two:

Read 1 Corinthians 1: 10 – 4:21

Apollos was a Jewish Christian from Alexandria in Egypt. You can read about him in Acts 18:24-28. He became a helper to Paul in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 3:4-6, 22).

1. What was one major problem in the church? 1:10-17 _____

2. What advice did Paul give? V. 10 _____

3. What are some ways our churches today are divided? _____

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4. What did Paul mean by milk and meat (solid food)? Ch. 3 _____

5. How did Paul want the people to look at him and the other teachers? 4:1

❖ Do you view yourself in that way? Explain:

Day Three:

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-12 & 6:18

1. What was the sin that was in the church at Corinth? 5:1 _____

2. How had the Corinthian brethren treated this sin? 5:2 _____

3. How did Paul tell the people to deal with this problem? 5:2 & 6:18 _____

4. Who did Paul tell us not to keep company with? 5:9 – 11 _____

❖ In your opinion would “keeping company with” include inviting those types into your home through various media? Why or Why not?

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Day Four:

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1 – 13; 11:1, 3, 17, 23-29

Chapter 7 is about marriage and we would need a whole semester to cover that subject. Chapter 8 is about food dedicated to idols. It was the custom during that period of time for the pagan temples to sacrifice animals to their gods and then sell it in the market place (agora) or serve it to the people. The temple of Asclepius at Corinth had 3 dining rooms. Remember that was just one of the many temples in Corinth. There were even places associated with Egyptian gods. We can apply Paul's teachings to our lives i.e. 8:9. Paul was under accusation and made his reply in chapter 9. We, like Paul, should follow the example in 9:24-27.

1. Why did Paul refer to the Israelites & Moses in the first five verses? 10:6 & 11 _____

2. What warning did he give? 10:12 & 13. _____

3. Why should we follow Paul's example? 11:1 & 3 _____

4. Why did Paul criticize the church? 11:17 _____

5. How did Paul know what was proper? 11:23. _____

What is proper? 11:24-29 _____

Day Five:

Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-5, 9; 15:3-8, 45-47, 51-53

In Chapters 12 -16 Paul wrote about unity in the church and how our Spiritual gifts are to benefit the entire body of believers. There is great diversity in the church but the entire body of believers must function as a whole in order for the church to grow. There is a saying about having too many chiefs and not enough Indians which is applicable. Without diversity churches stagnate yet diversity without unity is unproductive also.

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1. What Spiritual gift should we desire? _____ Why? 14:1-5 _____

2. Why is it important not to use “Christianese” when sharing your faith? 14:9

3. What was the Good News that Paul preached? 15:3 -8 _____

4. Explain why Paul called Jesus Christ the “last Adam”. 15: 45-47 _____

5. What wonderful secret did Paul share in 15:51-53? _____

Revelation 22:20b “Amen! Come Lord Jesus!”