

“Introduction To The Book Of 1 Corinthians”

1 Corinthians 1:1-18

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Teaching Aim: To explore the circumstances surrounding Paul’s writing of “1 Corinthians.” To recognize how local culture can infiltrate and corrupt the church if Christians don’t keep their eyes on Jesus and His Word. To realize there is no room for personality cults within the church body; Christ should always be the focus. To understand salvation comes not through human wisdom, but through the simple message of the cross!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Paul’s greeting to the church of Corinth and thanksgiving to God (1 Cor. 1:1-9)

1. Paul was called to be “*an apostle*” of Jesus Christ (**vs. 1**). What is an “*apostle*?” (See Dictionary) What can we learn about Paul’s apostleship from **verse 1**? Paul mentioned a second individual in **verse 1**. Who? What significant role in Corinth had this individual played in the past? (See **Acts 18:11-17**) Note: Apparently this individual had converted to Christ following this incident and here possibly served as Paul’s secretary.

2. What can we learn about the church at Corinth from the words, “*To the church of God which is at Corinth*” (**vs. 2**)? Is this true of any Christian church? How should the behavior of the saints be affected by this truth?

3. What is the meaning of the word, “*sanctified*” as found in **verse 2**? (See Dictionary) What is the difference is there between “*positional sanctification*” and “*practical sanctification*?” On a scale of 1-10, how are you doing in your practical sanctification?

4. We find a combination of greetings in **verse 3**. The Greco-Roman culture generally offered the greeting of “*grace*” while the Jews offered “*peace*” (“*shalom*”). How do you see the Apostle Paul uniting both cultures through his greeting? Should we be attempting to unite different cultures within the body of Christ today? (See **1 Cor. 12:12-13**) If so, how?

5. With every church Paul always tried to find something positive he could thank God about. What does Paul thank God for in **verse 4**? Notice, Paul thanks God for God's own work, not for what the corrupt Corinthians were doing with their giftedness. What are spiritual gifts? What is their purpose? How many spiritual gifts does each Christian have? What do you see as your strongest spiritual gifts? (See **Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-30; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 4:10-11**)

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| 1. | 9. | 17. |
| 2. | 10. | 18. |
| 3. | 11. | 19. |
| 4. | 12. | 20. |
| 5. | 13. | 21. |
| 6. | 14. | 22. |
| 7. | 15. | 23. |
| 8. | 16. | 24. |

6. According to **verse 5-7**, what confirmed that the testimony of Christ was in the Corinthian believers? How blessed were the Corinthian believer with spiritual gifts (**vs. 7**)? What should every Christian be anxiously anticipating (**vs. 7b**)? Why? How should this affect the way we live our lives today?

7. What can every born-again Christian look forward to on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ? (See **Rom. 8:1**) Why? (See **Phil. 1:6**)

8. Today our salvation is based on God's faithfulness, not on the way we feel. What truth can we learn for today from "*the golden chain of salvation*?" (See **Rom. 8:29-30**)

Part II: Paul addresses divisions within the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:10-16)

1. The main body of the letter begins in **verse 10**. What problem did Paul address first to the Corinthian Church (**vs. 10**)? In whose name did Paul plead with the Corinthian believers? Why do you think he used this name? What was Paul's request to the church in **verse 10b**? How was Paul's request similar to the High Priestly prayer of Jesus in **John 17:20-23**? How should the High Priestly prayer of Christ relate to the church today?

2. How did Paul originally find out about the contentions in Corinth (**vs. 11**)? Do we know for sure if this individual was male or female? Why is it significant that Paul named the informer right off the bat? Should the church still do the same? What do you think would happen to gossip in the local church if the people spreading it had to step forward and give up their names to the congregation?

3. According to **verse 12**, what kind of division did Paul first address in his letter to the Corinthians? Why was this sectarianism dangerous to the spiritual wellbeing of the church in Corinth? Why is it dangerous for our churches today to focus on their pastor or other gifted individuals today?

4. In **verse 13** Paul focused on the unity the church has in Christ. Who should the focus be on in any Christian church? Is it wrong to look up to our spiritual leaders? When does it become wrong?

5. Paul mentioned two individuals that he baptized in **verses 14 & 15**. What is the significance of each individual Scripturally? (See **Acts 18:6b-8; Rom. 16:23**) Was Paul minimizing the importance of Christian baptism in any way? What was he doing?

6. In **verse 16**, Paul remembered baptizing the household of Stephanas but can't think of anyone else. Those in the household of Stephanas were the first converts in the city of Corinth and were well respected throughout the congregation for their devotion to God. Why was Paul minimizing the importance of his involvement in the baptisms?

Part III: There are only two kinds of people in the world (1 Cor. 1:17-18)

1. According to **verse 17**, what was Paul commissioned to do? Is Christian baptism also important? Paul's primary call from the Lord was to evangelize, the rest he turned into a team effort; the glory was not to go to Paul but rather to Christ! Have you followed the Lord in water baptism? Why is it important that every Christian be baptized? (See **Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:1-14**)

2. Is there a precedence in Scripture for Paul not to do the baptizing personally? (See **John 4:1-2; Acts 10:46b-48**) Does your pastor always have to be the one doing the baptisms or can other Christians who have a close walk with Christ do it?

3. The Greeks put a high priority on "*the wisdom of words*;" they loved intellectualism and philosophy (**vs. 17**). What did Paul preach? How did the cross of Christ relate to the Biblical gospel? If you were asked to share the gospel with someone, what would you say?

4. In reality, there are only two kinds of people on earth, those who are saved and those who are not. According to **verse 18**, how do unbelievers look at the cross of Christ? The Greek word for "*foolishness*" can be translated "*moronic*." Do many of the intellectually elite today still look at Christians as "*moronic*?" Do you have family members or friends who think that you are a religious fanatic because of your Christianity? (See **2 Cor. 4:3-6**)

5. What does the cross of Christ represent for those who are being saved (**vs. 18**)? (See **Rom. 1:16**) Why is it important for Christians to preach the cross of Christ today, even if the message is not palatable to many in modern society? (See **Acts 4:12**) When have the greatest spiritual revivals taken place in American history? What was the message?

6. How is the church in America today similar in many ways to the church at ancient Corinth? What are some of the similarities? Is there hope for the church today as we see it getting weaker and weaker? (See **2 Chron. 7:14**) How can we make the church relevant again?

7. Have you received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? If not, why not do so right now in prayer? If you are a Christian, are you willing to commit to a closer walk with God?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The gospel message brings the hope of salvation to even the most wicked cities on earth!
- No matter how bad things might appear to be in our lives, we can always thank God knowing that He is working for our good! (See **Rom. 8:28**)
- It is God who works in us so that we will be presented blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ!
- The focus of a ministry should never be on the minister, but always on Jesus Christ!
- Baptism symbolizes our identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the glory belongs to Jesus, not the person officiating the baptism!
- There are only two kinds of people in the world: 1) Those who are saved; and 2) Those who are lost!
- The message of the cross is foolishness to the lost, but life and hope to the believer!