

1 Corinthians

Word of Faith International Christian Center – St. Thomas

Teaching the Word, Doing the Work, Touching the World

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

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Author: Paul, along with Sosthenes, as noted in 1 Corinthians 1:1. Sosthenes was most likely acting as Paul's secretary (also called an *amanuensis*), writing down Paul's words. This may also be the same person mentioned in Acts 18:17.

Audience: Paul wrote to Gentile Christians living in Corinth. This letter was sent a few years after he personally founded the church in that city. These believers were condemned for pride, sexual immorality, misuse of spiritual gifts, and misunderstanding various Christian beliefs such as the Lord's Supper.

Date: AD 55, perhaps in the first half of the year while Paul was still in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8–9).

Book Type: The New Testament's second Pauline Epistle; the seventh book of the New Testament; the forty-sixth book of the Bible.

Background: Corinthians was written while Paul was coming out of Ephesus. The church at Corinth gave Paul a lot of problems because it was very unstable. Since it was largely composed of Gentile who had not training in the Old Testament Scripture. Their religious attitude and their moral characteristics were the exact opposite of Christian living. Paul understood much teaching was required to bring them to spiritual maturity. He was especially effective in dealing with the Jews, since he knew the Old Testament well and could argue publicly in convincing fashion.

Paul was on a tour that took him back to Palestine and then to Ephesus. During this period, or shortly after his return to Ephesus, he wrote "*Corinthians*," not first or second Corinthians. This is another letter. In this letter he stated in **1 Corinthians 5:9**, "*I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators..*" The moral atmosphere of Corinth was really bad. It would take absolute separation from the evil they were involved if the church was to survive.

Evidently there had been some misunderstanding in this area. He was not telling them to start a commune and separate themselves from the world. But he wanted them to separate from professing Christians who persisted in this sin.

1 Corinthians

This book is “*Corinthians*” was considered the “*Lost Letter.*” We will never know the full content of this letter because it was lost. What we have is fragments of this letter Paul originally wrote. This is before 1st Corinthians and 2nd Corinthians. This is a lost letter. The response to that first letter was not very good. As a result, Apollos and Peter moved to other fields, and when they left the church with inadequate leadership, then the church fell into confusion. Rumors of the condition of the church drifted back to Ephesus. Finally three members of the church, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, brought a contribution to Paul and also a letter containing certain questions that the Corinthians wanted clarified. In response Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. It was composed near the end of his stay in Ephesus.

First Corinthians is the most varied in content and style of all the epistles of Paul. The topics range from schism to finance and from church decorum to the resurrection.

In 1st Corinthians the apostle’s who drew their support from the local churches boasted of their Jewish ancestry and of their activity as ministers of Christ and they invaded the Corinthian church and belittled Paul to the church. Then the offending members of the church were unrepentant. The situation was very tense in this church. So Paul decided that he would not return to Corinth until the church adopted a different attitude.

When Paul reached Troas after leaving Ephesus and he looked for Titus but Titus did not appear. Titus went to Corinth and found out that revival had broken out in the Corinthians church and that it’s attitude had changed from one of carelessness and obstinacy to one of repentance. With Joy Paul sat down and wrote II Corinthians.

The Central Theme of 1st Corinthians: The doctrine of the cross and it and its social application. How does it apply to your everyday life?

Key Verses (ESV):

- **1 Corinthians 3:3:** *"For you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?"*
- **1 Corinthians 6:19–20:** *"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 10:13:** *"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but*

1 Corinthians

- *with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."*
- **1 Corinthians 10:31:** *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*
- **1 Corinthians 13:4–7:** *"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."*
- **1 Corinthians 15:3–8:** *"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me."*

Outline of 1 Corinthians: The Problems at Corinth: Each problem in the Corinthian Church was met by applying a spiritual principle.

I.	Salutation	1:1-9
II.	Reply to Report from “House of Chloe”	1:10-6:20
	a. Party Strife	1:10-3:23
	b. Defense of Paul’s Ministry	4:1-21
	c. Criticism of Immorality	5:1-13
	d. Criticism of Lawsuits	6:1-11
	e. Reply to Libertinism	6:12-20
III.	Reply to Questions in Letter	7:1-16:9
	a. Marriage	7:1-24
	b. Virgins	7:25-40
	c. Things Sacrificed to Idols	8:1-11:1
	i. Evaluated by the idol	8:1-13
	ii. Evaluated by Freedom	9:1-27
	iii. Evaluated by relation to God	10:1-22
	iv. Evaluated by relation to others	10:23-11:1
	d. Problems of Worship	11:2-34
	i. The covering of the head	11:2-16
	ii. The Lord’s Table	11:17-34

1 Corinthians

e. Spiritual Gifts	12:1-14:40
f. The Resurrection of the Body	15:1-58
g. The Collection	16:1-9
IV. Concluding Salutations	16:10-24