

PASTOR'S

BIBLE  
CLASS

# 1 Corinthians

GOOD NEWS FOR

*Bad Christians*

STUDY

GUIDE

HOST

DR. SAMUEL BULGIN

ATLANTA BELVEDERE SDA CHURCH  
[belvederesdachurch.org](http://belvederesdachurch.org)



## *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*

### Introduction

**F**irst Corinthians like Romans contain the same mature theology. This masterful theology is birthed out of the same period of Paul's life as Romans. However, they are very different.

Romans is theology-centered while 1 Corinthians is life-centered, or problem-centered.

Those in leadership can learn three things:

<b>One</b>	<b>Two</b>	<b>Three</b>
<p>Leaders must take risks and overcome fear. Leaders must be willing to stand alone. When necessary, confront sin without help from others. Use new methods and strategies</p>	<p>Leaders must pour themselves into building up other leaders.</p>	<p>Leaders must be both tough and tender. Compassion must undergird all that they do. They must balance love and discipline.</p>

First Corinthians opens doors and windows through which we can see Christians at home, in the public square and at church.

The Corinthian Christians were living in a culture much like ours with many of the same temptations and problems. The tensions between the world and the church can be seen in living colors. First Corinthians is a book for our time.

## **THE BACKGROUND OF THE LETTER**

Luke places the presentation of the gospel to the Corinthians during the time of Paul's second missionary journey. Paul spends eighteen months there (Acts 18:11) around AD 50-51. Paul is accompanied by Silvanus and Timothy. He first preached in the synagogue then in the house adjacent to the synagogue which resulted in the conversion of both Gentiles and Jews. It must not be overlooked, however, that Paul faced fierce opposition from some of the Jewish people which resulted in a court case before proconsul Gallio (Acts 18:12-17). As a result, the church gained some protection.

The church in Corinth was made up largely of Gentiles (12:2), most from the lower class (1:26ff). A few were of higher class (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 11:21-22; Rom. 16:23), and some were Jews (Acts 18:4, 8; 1 Cor. 7:18).

Corinth was the capitol city of the province of Achaia. It was a commercial center notorious for sensuality. There you had the temple prostitutes associated with Aphrodite. Paul was there when he wrote of the moral corrupt of the pagan world (Rom. 1:18-32).

The people/residents of Corinth were Romans, Greeks, and Orientals. They brought with them their religion. They worshiped Jupiter, Aphrodite, Isis, Osiris, Cybele, Attis, Atargatis, and Yahweh of the Jews. The city hosted the biennial games to the adjoining town—Isthmia. Life in Corinth was so seductive it was said that "not every man should go to Corinth."

The church had to deal with the pressures of paganism: idolatry and idolatrous feasts, gluttony, lax sexual behavior, superstition, magic, demonism, religious frenzy, philosophical skepticism, materialism, and social unrest.

On Paul's third missionary journey disturbing news came to him at Ephesus regarding problems in the church in Corinth. Paul sent Timothy to Corinth by way of Macedonia to deal with the problem (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; Acts 19:22).

Later Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus came to Paul regarding questions facing the church (1 Cor. 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1).

Paul deals with the problems in this order:

1	Disunity.
2	Incest.
3	Lawsuits between church members.
4	Union with prostitutes.
5	Marriage.
6	Food offered to idols.
7	Disorder in worship including the use of spiritual gifts.
8	Disbelief in the resurrection.
9	Stewardship/collection.

## THE PLACE OF WRITING AND DATE

The letter was written in Ephesus (16:8) and was probably carried there by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17). The date was about the Spring of AD 54 or 55.



## QUESTIONS

1. What are the theological contrasts between the books of Romans and 1 Corinthians?

---

2. What does it mean to you that 1 Corinthians is life-centered?

---

3. What are the three things that church leaders can learn from 1 Corinthians?

---

4. Which of these three would be most challenging for you and why?

---

5. What are some of the implications of a diverse congregation?

---

6. What can we learn from this as we live and worship in diverse communities?

---

7. What lessons can we learn from the topic addressed by Paul?

---

## OUTLINE

### Introduction (1:1-9)

- I. Greeting (1:1-3)
- II. Thanksgiving (1:4-9)



### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. When you review the details of Paul's call, what thoughts do you have about your own call?

---

2. Considering the problems that Paul will address within the Corinthian church, what lessons can we learn from his greetings?

---

3. Why do you think Paul is thanking God for the constancy of God's grace towards the church in Corinth and what does it say to you as you view the defective nature of the church today?

---

4. How does Paul's ultimate wish for the Corinthians "*That you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus*" shed light on the nature and work of Christ?

---

**BODY**

- I. Paul's response to reports about the church at Corinth (1:10-6:20).
  - a) Sectarianism is sin (1:10-17).
  - b) Christ the power and wisdom of God (1:18-25).
  - c) Glory only in God (1:26-31).
  - d) Christ crucified (2:1-5).
  - e) Spiritual wisdom (2:6-16).

**QUESTIONS**

1. *Why is Jesus so central to Paul?*

---

2. *What does the knowledge of the wisdom of God do for you when you face difficult situations?*

---

3. *What does it mean to have the mind of Christ?*

---

- f) Sectarianism is carnal (3:1-4).
- g) The task of watering, working, and warning (3:5-17).
- h) Avoid worldly wisdom (3:16-22).
- i) Stewardship of the mysteries of God (4:1-5).
- j) Fools for Christ's sake (4:6-13).
- k) Paul's compassionate care (4:14-21).

- l) Immorality within the church (5:1-8).
- m) Confronting immorality within the church (5:9-13).
- n) Settling differences (6:1-11).
- o) Glorifying God in body and spirit (6:12-20).



## QUESTIONS

1. What are the indicators Paul uses to support his indictment of the Corinthian believers in Chapter 3 with respect to disunity?

---

2. What does Paul mean when he says, “*We are to become fools so we can be wise?*”

---

3. In Chapter 4:2 Paul uses the term “*stewards*”, what does faithfulness in stewardship mean to you?

---

4. How should we relate to the counsel Paul provides in the way we should relate to individuals who are sexually immoral?

---

5. How should Christians relate to civil and criminal lawsuits?

---



**ANSWERS TO THE INQUIRIES OF CORINTHIAN CHURCH (7:1-15:58)**

- I. Paul's answer to marriage and celibacy (7:1-40).
  - a. The principles of marriage (7:1-9).
  - b. Keep your marriage vow (7:10-16).
  - c. Live in harmony with your calling (7:17-24).
  - d. To the unmarried and widowed (7:25-40).
  - e. Idol – Offerings (8:1-11:1)
    - i. Be sensitive to conscience (8:1-13).
    - ii. A pattern of self-denial (9:1-18).
    - iii. Serving all men (9:19-21).
    - iv. Striving for a crown (9:24-27).
    - v. Old Testament examples (10:1-13).
    - vi. Flee from idolatry (10:14-27).
    - vii. All to the glory of God (10:23-11:1).
- II. Public Worship (11:2-14:1-40)
  - a. Head covering (11:2-16).
  - b. Disorder at the feasts (11:17-34).
  - c. Use and abuse of spiritual gifts (12:1-30).
  - d. The supereminence of love (12:31-13:13).
  - e. Use and abuse of the tongues (14:1-40).
- III. The Resurrection of the Dead (15:1-58)
  - a. The risen Christ – faith's reality (15:1-11).
  - b. The risen Christ – our hope (15:12-19).
  - c. The last enemy destroyed (15:20-28).
  - d. The effects of denying the resurrection (15:29-34).
  - e. A glorious body (15:35-49).
  - f. Our final victory (15:50-58).



## QUESTIONS

1. How should Christians approach marriage?

---

2. In Chapter 7:20, what does Paul mean that each one should retain the place in life which God assigns him?

---

3. In your choice of food, Paul teaches that we should be considerate of others. How should we apply that principle today?

---

4. In Chapter 9, according to Paul, should everyone who serves in the church be paid? Explain?

---

5. What are the examples Paul cites from Israel's history and what can we learn from them today?

---

6. How should we relate to Paul's teaching on head covering and other cultural practices outlined in 1 Corinthians 11?

---

7. In Chapters 12-14 Paul deals with spiritual gifts. Why does he regard love as the preeminent gift?

---

8. What difference does it make to you after you have studied Paul's teaching on the resurrection of Christ?

---

## **CONCLUSION (16:1-24)**

- I. Collection for the Saints (16:1-4)
- II. Personal Plans (16:5-13).
- III. Final Exhortations (16:13-18).
- IV. Greetings and Farewell (16:19-24).



## **QUESTION**

1. Why was Paul concerned about the collection for the believers in Jerusalem and how should we relate to the mission and needs of believers in other places?

---

---

## *Notes*

---





- I want to be baptized
- I need more Bible study
- Pray for me
- Please contact me

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_ Suffix \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Apt# \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

*(Complete and email to us at the email address below.)*

**ATLANTA BELVEDERE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**

3567 Covington Highway, Decatur GA 30032

404.299.1359 | 404.299.1336(fax)

belvederesdachurch.org

belvederesda@gccsda.com

Dr. Samuel Bulgin, Lead Pastor

Dr. Donnieval Walker, Associate Pastor