

All for His Glory

“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



WEDNESDAY NIGHT
BIBLE STUDY
Spring 2026

QR Code



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SOAR

Instructions:

You will find a corresponding Bible reading plan to go along with each week's message. You will read this plan after you meet. While the plan is not mandatory, we encourage you to read and journal between meetings. Go at your own pace and try the SOAR method explained below.

Before you begin, pray and ask God for His guidance as you read through His Word.

S: SCRIPTURE

In this section, fill in the verse or passage that grabbed your attention.

O: OBSERVATION

What does God seem to be revealing through the Scripture? Answer the who, what, where and why questions. If you would like to go deeper, look up the Hebrew or Greek meaning and cross-reference different Scriptures with similar themes.

A: APPLICATION

How can you begin to apply this Scripture to your life today?
How can you live differently in light of what God has spoken to you?

R: REFLECTION

Take a moment to be still and let God show you how to walk out this Scripture. Write a prayer asking God for wisdom and guidance.

ACTS Prayer Method

Prayer is a gift we are given to talk with God and interact with Him often! God wants to connect with you, and because of Jesus, you have access to Him. He is personally present, and when you pray, you are declaring He is your source. Your faith in Him will grow through your conversations with Him. Whether individually or in a group, prayer is essential for spiritual growth and community. Praying with others strengthens your sense of community, provides accountability and amplifies faith and worship. Prayer helps you experience the fullness of God's presence, assurance and peace.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace

Philippians 4:6-7

A: ADORATION

Worship and praise God, focusing directly on who He is, His character and His promises. He is almighty, holy and near. He is your counselor and peace. He is present and powerful!

C: CONFESSION

Remember your need for His grace. Admit your sin and ask God for forgiveness. Ask Him to search your heart and reveal what you need to confess and repent. Decide to turn away from doing things your way and come into agreement with Him, receiving His forgiveness and extending forgiveness to others.

T: THANKSGIVING

Cultivate faith and contentment. Take time to thank God for what He has done. Thank Him for His presence in your life, salvation, the many blessings, protection, provision, healing, open doors, opportunities and answered prayers.

S: SUPPLICATION

Confirm your dependence on God. Bring Him all your cares and worries. Ask God for His divine help to meet needs, bring healing and for His will to be done. Ask Him to help you see where He is working in your life and in the lives of those you are praying for.

Bible Reading Plan:

The Bible reading plan will reinforce the week's teaching and discussion questions. We encourage you to read and SOAR (optional) the Scriptures listed to gain understanding and knowledge of this week's study.

Week 1: Greeting, Thanksgiving, the Problem

- 1 Corinthians 1:1-17
- Philippians 2:1-11
- John 17

Week 2: Wisdom of God/Boasting in the Lord

- 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- Isaiah 55:8-13
- James 3:13-18

Week 3: God's Power

- 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
- 1 Kings 2:6-14
- Acts 4:1-21

Week 4: Spiritual Wisdom

- 1 Corinthians 2:6-16
- Romans 8:18-30
- Proverbs 2:1-15

Week 5: Spiritual Immaturity & Spiritual Growth

- 1 Corinthians 3:1-9
- Hebrews 5:11-14, 6:1-12
- Ephesians 4:1-16

Week 6: Foundation of Christ vs. Human Wisdom

- 1 Corinthians 3:10-23
- Matthew 7:24-29
- Ephesians 2:19-22

Week 7: The Humility of God's Faithful Ones

- 1 Corinthians 4:1-13
- John 1:1-18
- Matthew 23

Week 8: Paul's Warning

- 1 Corinthians 4:14-21
- Proverbs 3:1-13
- Hebrews 12:1-17

Week 9: Immorality of the Church

- 1 Corinthians 5:1-8
- Matthew 18:15-20
- Galatians 5:16-26

Week 10: Discipline in the Church

- 1 Corinthians 5:9-13
- Proverbs 17:9, 17
- Matthew 5:43-48, Matthew 7:1-5

Week 11: Judged by Unbelievers

- 1 Corinthians 6:1-11
- Proverbs 25:1-10
- 2 Timothy 2

Week 12: Glorifying God, Body & Spirit

- 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
- Psalm 139:1-16
- Romans 12

Week 13: Principles of Marriage & Singleness

- 1 Corinthians 7:1-16
- Genesis 2:15-25
- Ephesians 5

Week 14: Life Situations: Unmarried and Widows

- 1 Corinthians 7:17-39
- Ruth 1-4
- Philippians 4:10-20

Week 15: Food Sacrificed to Idols

- 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
- Romans 14
- Galatians 5:1-15

Week 16: Freedom in Christ Jesus

- 1 Corinthians 9:1-27
- Philippians 3:1-21
- John 8:31-36

Intro to 1 Corinthians (Chapters 1-9)

By: Nick Marinho

Author: The Apostle Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus

Written around A.D. 54-55 from Ephesus during Paul's third missionary journey

Purpose:

To address the concerns and questions Paul had received from the church of Corinth. Paul addressed his concerns about their division, spiritual immaturity and faith in human wisdom opposed to the wisdom of Christ. Questions Paul addressed were on marriage, food sacrificed to idols and Christian freedom. He was deeply troubled over sin in the church and confusion over identity and purpose.

Tone:

Pastoral instruction and loving fatherly correction

"I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children." **1 Corinthians 4:14**

Keywords:

Wisdom (Greek: "sophia"). Definition: Divine insight, understanding and moral discernment; contrasts with human cleverness.

Body (Greek: "sōma"). Definition: The physical body; metaphorically, the body of believers as one organism under Christ.

Church (Greek: "ekklēsia"). Definition: An assembly, a called-out group or a gathering of people summoned for a purpose.

Audience:

The Church of God in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2): A mixed and divided congregation of Jews and Gentiles living in a wealthy, pagan city known for great depravity and intellectual pride.

Fun Fact:

Ancient Corinth was one of the largest and most cosmopolitan cities in the Roman Empire, known for wealth, trade and pervasive idolatry and immorality. In some Greek usage, the phrase "to Corinthianize" meant to live immorally, and the term "Corinthian" could be an insult. In Romans, Paul references cities like this in 1 Corinthians 1:18-32. While Romans 1:18-32 does not describe Corinth itself, it does capture the kind of moral and spiritual climate Paul often confronted in pagan cities like Corinth.

Summary

The entirety of 1 Corinthians 1-9 is a sort of roadmap for the church at Corinth. It is meant to guide them away from their carnal ways to a more Spirit-led, Christ-like identity. In this letter Paul deals with the sin and division that the church is struggling with and their inclination on relying on human wisdom. He rebukes them for tolerating sin within the congregation and for boasting about who baptized them and their social statuses. They were missing the true focus of unity in Christ and allowing division within the congregation.

Paul lovingly corrects and reminds the church at Corinth of their value in Jesus Christ. He does not dwell on their mistakes and turns quickly to encouraging them. He navigates them from the path of human wisdom and folly they were on back to the starting line of the race they were called to run. He skillfully guides them from salvation to the importance of unity with the body of Christ and with earthly partners. He then ends at the calling the cross demands from them.

Throughout the letter, Paul reminds the Corinthians of their calling to be “the church.” The Greek word *ekklesia* refers to a people called out, a community set apart for God. This was exactly what Paul longed for them to embrace. Corinth itself was a wealthy, diverse and morally loose city known across the empire for its tolerance of idolatry and sexual immorality. Public prostitution was common, and relationships outside God’s design were culturally accepted. Philosophers, teachers and traveling speakers filled the streets with competing ideas, and the city housed notable pagan temples, including one dedicated to Aphrodite. Living in that environment created real confusion for believers who were trying to follow Jesus, which explains why the church wrote to Paul with questions about sexuality, singleness, marriage and divorce.

Paul must have felt sympathy for their dilemma, but still he made no excuses for it. He starts by reminding them that they are not their own and they are not to serve their own desires. Who baptized them had nothing to do with to whom they belonged. They were purchased by Jesus Christ and belonged to Him. They were the temple of the Holy Spirit and one in body with Christ. That body is the one they were to manage, protect and serve with devotion.

Paul was using this type of language not only because it must have been familiar to the church at Corinth due to their environment, but also to draw them a picture of the parallel between the spiritual union with the body of Christ and the carnal union between partners. This was to reveal to them that whomever they longed to connect with and were currently one with became one with Christ’s body through marriage. Paul valued singleness because it allowed undivided devotion, but he is equally clear that marriage is good and not inferior (1 Corinthians 7:7, 28). He encourages freedom: Marry or remain single without guilt.

Paul closes this section by answering their questions about food sacrificed to idols, marriage and financial support for ministry. As he addresses these concerns, he again draws their attention to the unity of the church as Christ’s body. Just as a physical body cannot be divided without causing harm, the spiritual body suffers when believers fracture relationships or dishonor one another. Paul encourages them to honor their commitments, remain faithful in their current relational situations and make choices that protect the unity and health of the entire church community.

Winning souls was Paul’s passion, calling and ministry. He reminded the church that this should in the same way be their desire and correct prize to strive for. Their gaze was to stay on the finish line and not on themselves or the temptations of the culture around them. Stewarding and increasing the body of Christ — the church — and not allowing their individual liberties to become a stumbling block was what mattered most to Paul.

WEEK 1:

Greeting, Thanksgiving, the Problem

Weekly Verse: “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.” **1 Corinthians 1:10**

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-17

1. In verses 1-4, who does Paul say is “called,” and what are they called to “be”? Why do you think he ends his greeting by emphasizing God’s grace toward them?
2. In verses 10-12, what specific disagreements and divisions does Paul address? How does his appeal in verse 10 speak directly to these issues?
3. Paul deals with division before he addresses other moral or spiritual problems in the church. Why do you think unity mattered so deeply to him? Do you agree that unity should come before everything else? Why or why not?
4. In verses 13-16, what seems to be the church’s main focus?

Deeper Exploration:

Paul redirects their attention from human leaders back to Christ and His cross. What does this reveal about the deeper issue behind their divisions? Were they truly divided over people, or had they lost sight of the power and purpose of the gospel? How might pride, status or misplaced identity still cause similar divisions in the church today?

Unity and the Supremacy of God's Wisdom

By: Bob James

In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul, “called as an apostle of Christ Jesus by God’s will, and Sosthenes our brother” (1 Corinthians 1:1 ESV), opens his letter to the Corinthian church, which he founded during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-18). Writing from Ephesus around A.D. 54-55, Paul gives thanks for their faith and gifts (1 Corinthians 1:4-9), and at the same time confronts their spiritual immaturity with a desire to help them grow to maturity. This chapter sets the foundation for addressing divisions and misconceptions, preparing for later discussions on issues like immorality and lawsuits in subsequent chapters.

Paul passionately appeals for unity, urging the Corinthians to “agree” and avoid divisions as reported by “Chloe’s people” (1 Corinthians 1:10-11). The church was fracturing over allegiances to Paul, Apollos or Peter (Cephas) (1 Corinthians 1:12). Corinth’s Greco-Roman culture, marked by a fascination with status and skillful speech, drove these factions, with some drawn to Apollos’ fine speaking style (Acts 18:24) and others to Peter’s authority as an apostle. Despite their distinct styles, Paul, Apollos and Peter were united in preaching the one true message of Christ crucified. As the Corinthian church’s founder, Paul’s concern drives his call to focus on Christ, not human leaders (1 Corinthians 1:17). He longs for the Corinthians to reflect this apostolic unity, growing in their relationship with God as a cohesive body and free from worldly rivalries. By centering on the gospel, the church can overcome its competitive tendencies and mature spiritually, embodying the unity Christ’s blood secures.

The Greeks at Corinth prided themselves on their intellectual superiority and education. Unfortunately, some of this way of thinking was seeping into the early church. Paul contrasts the “word of the cross” with human wisdom, declaring it “folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). Quoting Isaiah 29:14 — “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise” (1 Corinthians 1:19) — he shows that God’s redemptive plan through Christ’s crucifixion confounds human expectations. Jews, expecting a triumphant Messiah, found the cross a “stumbling block” (1 Corinthians 1:23). Greeks, immersed in Corinth’s philosophical culture, scorned it as foolishness, favoring more culturally familiar pursuits over the gospel truth. Paul emphasizes that the gospel message was unified and transcends these cultural divides, offering salvation through Christ’s blood. Paul reinforces this with Jeremiah 9:24, stating, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:31), urging the Corinthians to abandon pride in eloquence or status and to embrace the cross’s sanctifying power. God’s “foolish” wisdom surpasses human understanding, uniting believers in redemption.

Paul’s letter seeks to restore the Corinthian church’s health, addressing divisions and intellectual pride that hinder its growth. In chapter 1, he confronts these divisions and worldly wisdom, tying these issues to the gospel’s core: salvation and sanctification through Christ’s blood. In Corinth’s competitive social and Roman political context, Paul’s call for unity reflects the harmony of Paul, Apollos and Peter’s preaching. By centering on Christ, the church can mature, living as a sanctified and unified community and fulfilling Paul’s apostolic mission to nurture a healthy body devoted to the gospel.

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 1:1-17
- Philippians 2:1-11
- John 17

References 1. Ciampa, R. E., & Rosner, B. S. (2010).

The First Letter to the Corinthians. Eerdmans.

2. Fee, G. D. (1987). The First Epistle to the Corinthians. NICNT. Eerdmans.

WEEK 2:

Wisdom of God/Boasting in the Lord

Weekly Verse: “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” **1 Corinthians 1:18**

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- Isaiah 55:8-13
- James 3:13-18

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

1. Look back to verse 17 in the NIV translation. Regarding man's "eloquence," and comparing it to verses 18-20, what are the consequences of relying on the wisdom of the world?
2. In verses 21-25, how does God's wisdom appear to those who do not believe, and what does the cross mean to those who are "called" and trust in Christ?
3. In verses 26-27, how does the world view believers, and how does Paul redefine who they truly are in Christ?
4. In verses 27-31, who did God choose, and for what purpose? (Example: the foolish to shame the wise)

Deeper Exploration:

Compare your answers to question one from last week to verses 26-29. Connect those whom God chose to the purpose to which they were chosen. (Example: 1:1 be apostles; 1:27 seen as foolish to shame the wise) How does this affect what you believe and your future walk with God?

WEEK 3:

God's Power

Weekly Verse: “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” **1 Corinthians 2:2**

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle, or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1. In verse 1, Paul mentions not coming with “eloquence or human wisdom.” What does this reveal about his approach to preaching the gospel, and why do you think he chose this method instead of relying on persuasive speech?
2. Compare Paul’s decision in verse 2 to focus solely on “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” to the world’s tendency to depend on intelligence, power or appearance. What does this contrast show about the difference between human confidence and spiritual dependence?
3. In verses 3-4, Paul admits to coming in “weakness, fear and much trembling.” Why do you think Paul saw his weakness as valuable for ministry? How does this challenge common ideas about what makes someone effective or powerful?
4. In verse 5, Paul explains that his message and preaching were meant to rest not on human wisdom but on “the power of God.” How can this truth reshape the way you approach challenges, leadership or sharing your faith today?

Deeper Exploration:

Reread 1 Corinthians 2:1–5. Paul emphasizes coming in weakness, fear and humility so that the gospel rests on God’s power rather than human wisdom. What does this reveal about the heart issue behind relying on human ability versus trusting God? How might embracing your own weaknesses or limitations open the door for God’s power to work through you in ministry, relationships or daily life?

Spiritual Maturity and Wisdom

By: Al Garcia

In chapter 1, Paul introduces his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God and affirms the calling and sanctification of the Corinthian church as saints in Christ. He thanks God for enriching them with every spiritual gift, in speech and in knowledge. Yet he quickly addresses a serious concern: reports of division and allegiance to different human leaders. His desire was that they would be united in Christ alone, reflecting God's wisdom rather than the foolishness of worldly thinking.

In chapter 2, Paul reminds them of the nature of his initial ministry among them and emphasizes the centrality of Christ crucified. His message did not rely on polished speech or human brilliance. Instead, he "determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). In contrast to the cultural influence of the church, Paul later writes in 2 Corinthians 11:5-6 that he is not inferior to the so-called "super apostles." He was a skillfully trained orator, but he chose to deviate from persuasive speech that was in the likeness of their cultural influences and instead focus on true knowledge: the knowledge of Christ. Still, he refused to boast in worldly wisdom. What mattered most was the truth of the gospel.

Paul explains that his preaching did not rest on persuasive human wisdom but on the demonstration of the Spirit and power, so their faith would stand on God and not man (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). He did speak wisdom among the spiritually mature, but not the wisdom of the age. It was the hidden wisdom of God, revealed by the Holy Spirit. Because the Corinthians were still worldly in mindset, prideful and impressed by showmanship, they struggled to receive the deeper truths of God. This is why Paul first reminded them of Christ and the cross. Many had shifted their focus away from the heart of the gospel. They were full of pride over their spiritual gifts and presumed this made them superior or uniquely favored. In doing so, they lost sight of redemption, which was the foundation of their faith. Their immaturity left them vulnerable to false teachers who appealed to the flesh and flattered human intellect with fancy speech.

To understand the challenge Paul faced, we must remember the context. Corinth was morally permissive, wealthy, pluralistic and heavily influenced by Greco-Roman rhetoric of status culture. Planting and sustaining a Christian church in such a place was a miracle in itself. But these believers, influenced by their culture, were tempted by eloquent philosophies and impressive personalities rather than the humble message of the cross.

Consequently, Paul wrote chapter 2 to reset their spiritual trajectory and get them on track. He sought to realign their hearts with the true center of Christian faith: Christ crucified and the Spirit-given wisdom that reveals God's truth. His teaching aimed to draw them out of immaturity and into deeper discipleship. Only through spiritual wisdom could they discern what was of God and what was of man.

Ultimately, Paul's goal was restoration and growth. The Corinthian believers needed to remember that salvation was the greatest gift they would receive — not their abilities, not their knowledge and certainly not the approval of worldly leaders. The messages of Christ crucified and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit were meant to anchor their identity and strengthen them against deception.

In the second chapter of this letter to Corinth, Paul sought to realign the spiritual climate of the church and remind Christians in Corinth of the true purpose of their faith. It also served as a vehicle to help the church to grow into mature believers. Paul's ultimate aim was to bring restoration and guidance to a young church that had drifted from the truth and lacked the spiritual growth Paul had hoped for them. He did so by proclaiming the wisdom of God through the Holy Spirit, centering on the message of the cross of Christ and exposing the emptiness of man's so-called wisdom.

Works Cited:

Nelson's New King James Study Bible. Edited by H. Wayne House, Thomas Nelson Publishing.

Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, editors. The Bible Knowledge Commentary. Contributing author: David K. Lowery ("1 Corinthians"), David C. Cook Publishing.

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
- 1 Kings 2:6-14
- Acts 4:1-21

WEEK 4:

Spiritual Wisdom

Weekly Verse: “These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”

1 Corinthians 2:10-11

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 2:6-16
- Romans 8:18-30
- Proverbs 2:1-15

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

1. In verses 6-8, Paul contrasts the wisdom of the “mature” with the “rulers of this age.” What are the differences between these two types of wisdom, and where does each originate?
2. Read Isaiah 64:4, which Paul quotes in 1 Corinthians 2:9. How does this prophecy relate to the wisdom discussed in verses 6-8, and why do you think Paul used Isaiah’s words here?
3. In verses 10-13, Paul explains how we receive wisdom that is not of “this age.” Where does this wisdom come from, and what impact does it have on how we understand God and His purposes?
4. In verses 14-16, Paul contrasts the natural person and the spiritual person in what they understand and how they are perceived. How does this comparison challenge or encourage you in your personal walk with God, and what practical steps could you take to grow in spiritual understanding?

Deeper Exploration:

Reread Romans 8:26-27 and James 1:5. How do these verses provide encouragement and guidance for understanding 1 Corinthians 2:16, where Paul speaks of having “the mind of Christ”? What implications do these truths have for your prayer life, decision-making and growth in spiritual discernment?

WEEK 5:

Spiritual Immaturity and Spiritual Growth

Weekly Verse: “For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building.” **1 Corinthians 3:9**

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Read 1 Corinthians. 3:1-9

1. In verses 1-3, how does Paul describe the Corinthians, and how do you think these descriptions contributed to the divisions in the church?
2. In verses 4-5, we are given specific details about what was causing the division. What dangers come from this kind of division, and how might it compare to divisions we see in churches or communities today?
3. Paul gives us the succession of ministry in verses 6-9. What is the sequence, and what surprises you about how God works through different servants?
4. “Growth” is given by God. Read James 5:7-11. As we grow in Christ, what are we told to be, what can we expect and how are we to act during this process?

Deeper Exploration:

Read Hebrews 5:11-14 and Ephesians 4:11-16. What are the results when we intentionally choose to grow in Christ, and what are the consequences when we neglect this path of growth? How does this shape the way you approach your spiritual maturity and relationships within the church?

Spiritual Infancy Leads to Disorder & Division

By: Al Garcia

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul continues confronting the divisions within the Corinthian church, exposing the immaturity of believers who attach themselves to human leaders rather than to Christ. He uses imagery of spiritual infancy, agriculture and construction to illustrate true Christian growth and the nature of ministry. The chapter concludes with a warning against worldly wisdom and a reminder that all things belong to those who are in Christ.

He begins by addressing their immaturity: “Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly — mere infants in Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:1).

Though believers, their behavior reveals jealousy, strife and division (1 Corinthians 3:3). Their loyalty to Paul or Apollos shows their reliance on human status rather than spiritual unity.

Scripture frequently distinguishes between spiritual maturity and infancy. Hebrews 5:12-14 contrasts milk with solid food. James 3:16 warns that jealousy and selfish ambition produce disorder. Romans 8:5-8 defines the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. The “Expositor’s Bible Commentary” notes that Paul’s frustration lies not in their salvation but in their prolonged immaturity: They should have grown, but remained infants in faith (Vol. 10, p. 260).

Paul then clarifies the role of church leaders: They are servants, not saviors. Each fulfills a God-given task, yet God alone causes growth: “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow” (1 Corinthians 3:6). Matthew Henry comments that ministers are nothing without God’s blessing, though God often blesses faithful labor even if results vary. This truth demands humility and unity, for ministry is about God’s kingdom, not human recognition. Paul next turns to the foundation of the church: “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

He introduces a building metaphor: He laid the foundation and others built upon it. However, each person’s work will be tested by fire on the Day of Judgment (1 Corinthians 3:13). Some build with things that endure — faith, truth, love — while others rely on works that cannot withstand God’s testing, such as pride or false teaching. Ephesians 2:20 affirms that the church is built on the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone. The “New Bible Commentary” explains that the “fire” represents divine evaluation — not of salvation, which is secure in Christ, but of reward or loss (p. 1112). Therefore, believers must build with eternal purpose. Motives matter as much as visible results.

The apostle then begins identifying the church as God’s temple. “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). 2 Corinthians 6:16 reinforces this identity. Paul warns that anyone who corrupts or divides this temple will face God’s judgment (1 Corinthians 3:17). According to the NIV Study Bible, this refers primarily to false teachers or divisive influences. Thus, unity and holiness are sacred responsibilities. Division, gossip and pride defile God’s dwelling place.

Paul concludes with a call to true wisdom: “Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become ‘fools’ so that you may become wise” (1 Corinthians 3:18). Worldly wisdom, rooted in pride, leads people away from God. True wisdom begins with humility and reverence for Him (Proverbs 9:10). James 3:13-18 contrasts earthly disorder with the peaceable wisdom from above.

Finally, Paul reminds them that all things — leaders, the present, the future, even life and death — belong to those who belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God (1 Corinthians 3:21-23). The “Expositor’s Bible Commentary” notes that this truth eliminates any justification for rivalry or boasting (p. 267). Paul’s message is clear: Spiritual maturity rejects worldly divisions and recognizes that everything of eternal value flows from our union with Christ. Growth, unity and wisdom are the fruit of a church firmly built on Him.

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 3:1-9
- Hebrews 5:11-14, 6:1-12
- Ephesians 4:1-16

WEEK 6:

Foundations of Christ vs. Human Wisdom

Weekly Verse: “For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” **1 Corinthians 3:11**

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 3:10-23
- Matthew 7:24-29
- Ephesians 2:19-22

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-23

1. In verses 10-15, Paul describes “construction” and building on a foundation. Think about what happens to a building with a faulty foundation. How could this example relate to your personal walk with God?
2. Read Matthew 7:24-27. What is the “wise” foundation, and what are the results of building on this foundation compared to a poor one?
3. In verses 16-17, Paul compares believers to a temple where God dwells, referencing Leviticus 26:11-12. What are some ways we could “destroy” or defile His temple in our lives?
4. As this chapter closes, Paul states in verse 18, “Let him become a fool that he may become wise” (ESV). Compare this to 1 Corinthians 1:18. What do you think Paul means by “become a fool,” and how does this perspective shape the way you approach wisdom and humility?

Deeper Exploration:

Read Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6:46-49. Both passages describe what happens to the foolish builder and the wise builder. Both builders “hear” God’s words. What causes the different results in the stability of their houses, and how does this challenge you to evaluate the foundation of your own life?

WEEK 7:

The Humility of God's Faithful Ones

Weekly Verse: “Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.” **1 Corinthians 4:5**

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle, or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-13

1. In verses 1-2, Paul states that we are to be regarded as servants and stewards. Read Philippians 2:5-8. How does Paul expand on the attitude and example of a servant, and what does this teach us about humility and leadership?
2. In verses 4-5, Paul clarifies who the true “Judge” is. Who is the Judge, when will the judgment occur, what is disclosed and what is the ultimate result for believers and leaders?
3. In verses 6-7, Paul addresses a faulty mindset among the Corinthians. What attitude or thinking is he warning against, and what specific words does he use to describe this mindset?
4. Read Paul’s hardships in 2 Corinthians 11:23-29. How do his experiences model faithful endurance, and what lessons can you apply to your own life when facing challenges or opposition?

Deeper Exploration:

Read 1 Corinthians 4:8-13 and Philippians 2:5-8. What is the difference between being respected or applauded, and living a life of humble service? How does humility strengthen leadership, and how can applying this principle transform your influence in your church, workplace or community?

Maturing in Christ: The Wisdom Found in Humility

By: Alexis Patterson

Coming off of his plea to reject human wisdom through the exaltation of human leaders, Paul shifts the focus of the church of Corinth to what it truly means to be a faithful manager and a servant leader of God's people.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 says, "A person should think of us in this way: as servants of Christ and managers of the mysteries of God. In this regard, it is required that managers be found faithful." Paul is communicating what really matters in leadership: A true leader is a servant, and a leader is faithful to the assignment he's been entrusted with. He continues to emphasize the point made in 1 Corinthians 3:21-22 by letting the church at Corinth know that as a servant leader faithful to the mysteries of God, human evaluation is not what concerns him. Paul says he doesn't even judge himself, leaving the matters of his own heart to the judgment of God. God alone knows the heart and motives of a person. We see this echoed in 1 Samuel 16:7. Paul's statements reinforce his warning not to put too much trust in human leaders or in human wisdom.

In 1 Corinthians 4:6-13, Paul gives intense imagery of humility in apostleship contrasted with Corinthian cultural values of status, riches and excess. The people of Corinth chased materialism and high social positions. This led the Corinthian Christians to arrogance, viewing life from a surface level and not spiritual depth. They placed greater emphasis on appearances rather than on God Himself. Their wealth and comfort created a sense of self-sufficiency, living with ease and without need. Paul uses this part of his letter to expose how opposite this is from their suffering Savior. The real privilege is to share in the reproach and rejection of Jesus, as Paul and the other apostles had done.

Paul's language becomes almost sarcastic as he highlights the contrast: The apostles appear weak, foolish and dishonored, while the Corinthian Christians see themselves as strong, wise and honorable. In 1 Corinthians 4:11-13, Paul shows how the apostles imitate Christ not only in their ministry but also in how they are treated: reviled, persecuted and slandered. Bible teacher and preacher H.P. Barker wrote this warning:

"It is positive disloyalty to seek our crown before the King gets His. Yet this is what some of the Christians at Corinth were doing. The apostles themselves were bearing the reproach of Christ. But the Corinthian Christians were 'rich' and 'honorable.'" They were seeking a good time where their Lord and Master had such a hard time."

Paul then shifts his tone in 1 Corinthians 4:14-21. Like a loving father, he explains that his words are not to shame them but to warn them. Verse 15 says, "For you have countless instructors in Christ, but you don't have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel." Paul became their

spiritual father by bringing them the gospel with deep love and concern for their salvation. Therefore, he urges them in verse 16 to “Imitate me.” Christians at Corinth are to follow the example Paul laid out in 1 Corinthians 4:11-13.

Because he could not be there yet, Paul sent Timothy (1 Corinthians 4:17), a trustworthy student and servant of Christ, who would remind them of Paul’s ways in Christ. But Paul also warned them of their arrogance and announced his plan to visit (1 Corinthians 4:18-19). He stated that arrogant talk had no place in God’s kingdom. 1 Corinthians 4:20 says, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.” In other words, pompous speech is cheap; true kingdom power is shown in transformed lives that live out the gospel.

Paul ends by giving the Corinthians the power of choice: When he arrived, would he come with reproach for unchanged behavior, or with the gentleness of a loving father walking with faithful children (1 Corinthians 4:21)?

Reading Plan:

- o 1 Corinthians 4:1-13
- o John 1:1-18
- o Matthew 23

WEEK 8:

Paul's Warning

Weekly Verse: "I urge you, then,
be imitators of me." **1 Corinthians 4:16**

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 4:14-21
- Proverbs 3:1-13
- Hebrews 12:1-17

Read: 1 Corinthians 4:14-21

1. In verses 14-15, Paul compares himself to a father and the church to his children. What is he communicating about his relationship with the Corinthians, and why does he frame it in terms of family?
2. In verse 17, Paul sends Timothy to the church. Contrast the path of following a human example like Timothy to relying solely on human opinion or leaders. What does this reveal about the difference between guidance rooted in God versus human wisdom?
3. In verse 16, Paul urges the Corinthians to imitate him. Why do you think he gives this instruction, and do you agree that following a godly example is important? Why or why not?
4. In verse 21, Paul asks whether he will come “with a rod” or “in love and a spirit of gentleness.” How does this choice challenge the way you approach correction, leadership or influencing others? What approach do you think reflects Christ’s character most effectively?

Deeper Exploration:

Remember from last week’s reading that Paul endured many hardships. Then, in 1 Corinthians 4:16, he urges us (the church) to imitate him. Why do you think he wants that for us?

WEEK 9:

Immorality in the Church

Weekly Verse: “Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

1 Corinthians 5:8

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Read: 1 Corinthians 5:1-8

1. Why is unrepentant sin within the church so dangerous to the whole body? Read 1 Corinthians 15:33 and Joshua 7:1, 6-8, 19-21 and 24-26.
2. How should the church balance grace and accountability when confronting sin? Read Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1 and John 8:10-11.
3. What does Paul mean by “hand this man over to Satan,” and what is the intended outcome? Refer to 1 Timothy 1:19-20, Job 2:6 and Hebrews 12:5-11.
4. How does the imagery of Passover and leaven help us understand holiness in the church? Read Exodus 12:14-20, 1 Peter 1:15-16 and 1 Corinthians 5:7.

Deeper Exploration:

Personal Application: What “old leaven” (habits, influences, attitudes) do you need to remove and surrender to God so you can walk in sincerity and truth? Ask Him to help you grow closer to Him by releasing this thing.

Loving Enough to Correct: Church Discipline With Purpose

By: Alexis Patterson

Paul continues extending the power of choice to the church of Corinth by revealing that he has received a report of sexual immorality in the congregation. Worse than one man's sinful behavior is the fact that no one in the church is grieved by this known iniquity. They have not dealt with the matter justly by removing this person from fellowship (1 Corinthians 5:2). This reveals a serious issue of spiritual health and maturity of the church. To ignore sin is the sin of omission. Allowing evil to remain unaddressed among God's people gives space for more sin to abound. The church must grieve this sin and judge it to protect the purity and integrity of the community (1 Corinthians 5:3).

Though Paul is not physically present, he is with them in spirit; and as their spiritual father, he has already pronounced judgment. His question becomes this: If he can judge this from afar, how could they be present in the flesh and not act? Paul gives a firm command: "Hand over that one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 5:5). In other words, excommunicate the man and remove him from the covering and protection of the church so that he may be brought to repentance. The intent is that his flesh be destroyed so his spirit can be saved. Discipline is designed to correct and restore. Thus, excommunication is never meant to be permanent but to serve as a time to stir up repentance and lead the believer back into fellowship with God.

Paul again confronts the arrogance and boasting that has blinded them, saying it is NOT GOOD (1 Corinthians 5:6)! Whether through tolerance or making excuses, they have neglected necessary discipline. He continues with a clear warning: "Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole batch of dough?" Paul uses Passover imagery familiar to them. Leaven represents sin: Just a little left in the dough corrupts the whole batch. Likewise, tolerated sin spreads and abounds. As believers who have been cleansed through Christ's sacrifice, they are the unleavened dough, made pure and holy in Him. Therefore, they must purge the leaven that corrupts unity with God (1 Corinthians 5:7). In 1 Corinthians 5:8, Paul encourages them to celebrate their fellowship with God through sincerity and truth, not with the leaven of malice and evil. Their lives should reflect the transformation that Christ's atonement has accomplished.

In 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, Paul sets clear expectations for dealing with sexually immoral sin in the church. He specifies that the command to avoid association applies to those who claim to follow Christ yet openly live in unrepentant sin. The world is not held to the same standard. If believers were never to associate with immoral unbelievers, they "would have to leave the world." Christians must remain present and witness to an unsaved world. They also need to be aware of the depths of the sins they were saved from.

Paul then intensifies his instruction. They must disassociate not only from the sexually immoral believer but also from those who are greedy, verbally abusive, drunkards, swindlers or idolaters (1 Corinthians 5:11). He emphasizes, "Do not even eat with such a person." Fellowship is a spiritual affirmation; sharing a table implies unity and covenant agreement. For outsiders, Paul says their judgment is God's responsibility (1 Corinthians 5:12). But for those who claim allegiance to Christ and know the cost of their salvation, accountability must exist. The church must judge those inside the community, while God judges those outside.

Paul ends this section with a strong command, echoing Deuteronomy 17:7: “Remove the evil person from among you.” Holiness requires action. Spiritual maturity demands confronting sin, not to shame, but to restore; not to condemn, but to protect the health and witness of Christ’s church.

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Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 5:1-8
- Matthew 18:15-20
- Galatians 15:16-26

WEEK 10:

Discipline in the Church

Weekly Verse: “God judges those outside.
Purge the evil person from among you.”

1 Corinthians 5:13

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 5:9-13
- Proverbs 17:9, 17
- Matthew 5:43-48, 7:1-5

Read: 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

1. Why do you think Paul emphasizes the difference between those inside the church and those outside it when it comes to judging sin? Reference John 17:14-18, Romans 12:2 and Titus 2:11-14.
2. How does ignoring sin within the church harm the reputation of Christ and the witness of the gospel? Read Romans 2:24, Matthew 5:14-16 and 1 Peter 2:9-12.
3. Read Matthew 18:15-17, 2 Corinthians 2:6-8 and Hebrews 12:10-11. What role does biblical church discipline play in protecting and restoring the body of Christ?
4. Who in your life needs you to lovingly speak truth, pray for their repentance or call them back to Christ, and how will you obey God in that this week? Reference James 5:19-20, Galatians 6:1-2 and Jude 22-23.

Deeper Exploration:

God's Role vs. Human Responsibility and Accountability: Paul notes that God judges outsiders, but the church must judge those inside. How do we discern the line between God's ultimate judgment and the church's responsibility to act? What principles can guide this balance in modern church communities?

WEEK 11:

Judged by Unbelievers

Weekly Verse: “When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to the law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?

1 Corinthians 6:1

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Read: 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

1. Why do you think Paul is so concerned about believers taking disputes before unbelievers rather than resolving them within the church? For reference read Matthew 18:15-17, James 4:11-12 & Romans 14:10-13.
2. What does Paul mean when he says believers will judge the world and even angels? How does understanding this help us see the gravity of unresolved disputes in the church? Reference the following passages: 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, Daniel 7:22 & Revelation 20:4.
3. Paul lists behaviors that exclude people from God's kingdom but reminds believers that they were once like this. How does this passage detail both accountability and the transformative power of Christ? Read Galatians 5:19-23, Ephesians 2:1-10 & Colossians 3:5-11
4. How can you personally pursue reconciliation, forgiveness or integrity in disputes with fellow believers this week rather than resorting to an outside intervention? Review Romans 12:17-21, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 and Matthew 5:23-24 for reference.

Deeper Exploration:

Spiritual Maturity: Paul suggests that being wronged or cheated is preferable to taking disputes before unbelievers. How does this challenge our understanding of spiritual maturity and reliance on God's justice versus human legal systems? Read Romans 12:19, 1 Peter 2:23 and James 1:19-20 to support your answers.

When Culture Creeps Into the Church

By: Tony Dungy

In chapter 5, we saw Paul tackle the issue of spiritual pride in the church. He did it by highlighting a circumstance he couldn't believe: The church had not sanctioned a man who was sexually involved with his stepmother. Paul said to have sin thriving within the church was terrible. We don't know whether the Corinthians were trying to be engaging to everyone and not be judgmental, or whether they were just very casual about this kind of immorality because it was so prevalent in their society. But Paul came down hard on them for disregarding God's rules and making their own rules about what was acceptable in the church and what was not. He emphasized that while we shouldn't have a judgmental attitude toward non-Christians, we cannot condone immoral behavior among Christians.

In chapter 6, Paul continues with that theme by hitting some other behavior that is not appropriate for Christians. He starts with taking other believers to court. Paul condemns that, but it's only a symptom of the problem. Paul knows that, even in a church setting where you're dealing with other believers, disputes are going to arise. That's going to happen in life, and that is not what had Paul upset. He did not like the fact that these believers were not solving the disputes themselves. They were taking their disagreements to worldly, non-Christian judges, and that was not only setting a bad example but it was also leading to ungodly results.

The real problem, as Paul saw it, was a spirit within the body of Christ that accepted sinning. Verse 9 is the key verse of 1 Corinthians 6: "Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God?"

Paul had preached to these people over and over again that we are saved because we have faith in Jesus Christ and not because of our works. However, some of them were misinterpreting that message and concluding that they could continue living worldly lifestyles. They thought they could continue to sin because God loves us and promises to forgive us. Paul wanted to make it very clear that is not the case. You cannot accept Christ and continue to live an immoral lifestyle.

Paul emphasizes sexual sin, but he lists many other things that offend God just as much. His point is that we as believers cannot make a practice of engaging in any form of sin. And we cannot make a practice of condoning sin within the body of Christ.

The Corinthian believers lived in a society where these things were common. These behaviors were widely accepted in their culture. In fact, many of those new Christians came directly from that type of lifestyle. Paul tells them that, yes, Jesus saved them. But He also cleansed them from these sinful ways for a reason. Jesus expects His family members to live holy lives, and the Corinthians could not accept this behavior anymore. Paul says that as Christians we must live for God, not for ourselves or for the world around us. This is a powerful chapter for us to study because 21st-century America is very similar to 1st-century Corinth, and these lessons should speak loudly to us today.

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 6:1-11
- Proverbs 25:1-10
- 2 Timothy 2

WEEK 12:

Glorifying God, Body and Spirit

Weekly 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

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
- Psalm 139:1-16
- Romans 12

Read: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

1. How do you distinguish between what is permissible and what is beneficial in your life? Cross references: Galatians 5:13, Romans 6:12-13 and Philipians 4:8.
2. Why does Paul emphasize that the body is not for sexual immorality and that believers' bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, Romans 13:13-14 and Leviticus 18:6-30.
3. How does sexual immorality affect your personal integrity and spiritual union with Christ according to this passage? Read Ephesians 5:28-30, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and Hebrews 13:4.
4. Considering that anyone joined to the Lord is "one spirit with Him," how can you deepen your daily awareness of this union in the way you live, speak and make decisions? Read John 15:4-5, Galatians 2:20 and Colossians 3:3-4.

Deeper Exploration:

Indwelling of the Holy Spirit and Sanctification: Paul calls believers' bodies "temples of the Holy Spirit" and reminds them they were "bought at a price." How does this theological truth inform our understanding of sanctification, stewardship of the body and the believer's ethical responsibility in daily life?

WEEK 13:

Principles of Marriage and Singleness

Weekly Verse: “But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.” **1 Corinthians 7:2**

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Read: 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

1. According to verses 2-5, what is the purpose of sexual relations within marriage, and how does Paul describe the mutual responsibilities of husband and wife? Also reference Genesis 2:24 & Ephesians 5:28-29.
2. Paul presents two paths for those struggling with sexual desire: remaining single or marrying (verses 8-9). How do the benefits and challenges of each path compare, and what factors does Paul consider in guiding each choice? Read Matthew 19:11-12 & 1 Timothy 4:1-3.
3. Paul gives instructions about marriage and divorce, including guidance for believers married to unbelievers (verses 10-16). Do you think these instructions are primarily protective, relational or spiritual in nature? Why? Reference Malachi 2:16, Matthew 5:32 & 1 Peter 3:1-2.
4. After reading this passage, how would you explain the balance between self-control, marriage and spiritual growth to someone seeking guidance on relationships? What principles would you emphasize and why? Reference Galatians 5:22-23, Proverbs 5:18-19 & Colossians 3:18-19.

Deeper Exploration:

Singleness as a Spiritual Gift: Paul describes singleness as a gift from God (verses 7-8). How does viewing singleness as a divine calling change our perspective on life choices, service and devotion to God? Cross references: Matthew 19:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 7:32-34.

Union and Devotion: Living Pure in Body and Spirit

By: Nick Marinho

In chapter 6, Paul rebukes the church at Corinth for being complacent with sexual and immoral sin. He tries to make them understand that since believers are spiritually united with Christ, their sexual sin is not harmless but violates that union, as if dragging the members of Christ into immorality. Paul uses this body analogy to show that believers are inseparably united to Christ. That unity means our physical choices have spiritual consequences, which prepares the way for the relational and sexual issues he addresses in chapter 7.

In chapter 7, Paul starts by acknowledging that human sexual desire is real and natural, and marriage is an honorable way to meet it. He also makes a point to state that his preferred status for them is to stay single. We can see that Paul is replying to questions posed to him, and he makes a point to clarify that these are teachings inspired by Christ but not necessarily commands. He goes on to explain that singleness is a gift, and while it is not required for everyone, it can be an advantage for those who are single after divorce. Singleness allows one to focus on God and His affairs without any distractions.

Paul's main focus in this chapter was unity through marriage, and he draws a parallel between that and the spiritual union with Christ. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Sexual union produces a one-flesh bond, so we must be careful of whom we form our oneness with. Sexual sin violates our union with Christ. If we sin sexually, we breach our unity with the Holy Spirit.

1. **Christian married to Christian:** Paul tells them to honor the marriage and not withhold anything from each other. They are one, and so they do not belong to themselves but to each other (1 Corinthians 7:4).
2. **Christian married to non-Christian:** Paul tells them to be faithful to that union because marriage is a physical bond, and it is next to impossible to remove a member from the body without harming it. Salvation also doesn't nullify the marriage. He does address the issue of the unbelieving partner wanting to leave; and in that case, he says Christian is to let them leave (1 Corinthians 7:15).
3. **Unmarried Christians:** This includes singles and divorced believers. Paul reiterates his desire for them to stay single, but understands if they need to get married due to strong desires (1 Corinthians 7:32-35).
4. **Widows:** Paul extends the same counsel of contentment and devotion to God. He encourages them to remain as they are if they can, devoted wholly to the Lord, but grants full permission to remarry if they so choose — as long as it is “in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 7:32-35, 39-40).

We can conclude from this chapter that marriage is a physical representation of a spiritual truth. Just as we are united to the Lord Jesus Christ, we are united to our spouse through the covenant of marriage. This union is both spiritual and

physical: Our bodies belong to Christ, and in marriage we offer ourselves to one another in mutual love and authority, as Paul describes. We honor and shepherd that relationship through humility, servanthood and sacrificial love. We no longer live only for ourselves; we belong to Christ first, and we commit ourselves to our spouse in a covenant of mutual love, faithfulness and shared responsibility.

Whether married, divorced or single, we are called to remain faithful in the place God has set us, running the race before us with all our strength and devotion to Him.

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 7:1-16
- Genesis 2:15-25
- Ephesians 5

WEEK 14:

Life Situations: Unmarried and Widows

Weekly 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

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 7:17-39
- Ruth 1-4
- Philippians 4:10-20

Read: 1 Corinthians 7:17-39

1. Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24. How does Paul instruct believers to live in their current circumstances (circumcision, marital status, slavery or freedom), and what principle underlies these instructions? Also refer to Romans 12:2 and Philippians 4:11-13.
2. Paul contrasts the lives of the married and the unmarried (verses 32-35). How do the concerns and freedoms of each path differ, and what advantages does Paul highlight for remaining unmarried in order to serve the Lord? Cross references: Matthew 19:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 7:7-8.
3. In verses 26-28 and 36-38, Paul gives guidance regarding marriage and engagement during “the present distress.” Do you think his advice is primarily protective, practical or spiritual? Why? How might applying these principles today affect the way we view marriage and commitment? Read Ecclesiastes 3:1 and Proverbs 19:14.
4. Paul teaches that believers should live faithfully in the situation in which God called them (verses 17, 20, 24). How does this principle challenge societal expectations about status, marriage or personal freedom? How would you counsel someone to embrace their calling and circumstances while remaining devoted to God? Use Colossians 3:23-24 and James 1:27

Deeper Exploration:

Marriage as a Covenant and Spiritual Responsibility: In verses 27-28 and 39, Paul addresses the permanence of marriage and the responsibility it carries. How does this passage show that marriage is not only a social arrangement but also a spiritual covenant? What does it teach about honoring God in relationships and commitments? Cross references: Genesis 2:24 and Ephesians 5:31-33.

WEEK 15:

Food Sacrificed to Idols

Weekly Verse: “Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This” knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up.”

1 Corinthians 8:1

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Read: 1 Corinthians 8

1. According to 1 Corinthians 8:1-6, what does Paul teach about knowledge, love and the reality of idols? How should this understanding shape the way believers approach daily decisions, like eating food sacrificed to idols? Read 1 John 4:7-8 and Romans 14:17.
2. Paul contrasts those with knowledge about idols and those with a weak conscience (verses 7-11). How do the actions of the “knowledgeable” person and the “weak” believer differ, and what are the potential consequences of each path? Read Romans 14:13-15 and Galatians 5:13.
3. Paul emphasizes that exercising freedom without love can harm others (8:9-13). How should we evaluate the balance between Christian liberty and responsibility to others? Can knowledge ever justify actions that might cause another believer to stumble? Cross-reference Romans 14:20-21 and Philipians 2:3-4 to help you answer.
4. If you were faced with a situation where your actions might lead a weaker believer to sin, how would Paul’s teaching guide your decision? How does this passage shape your understanding of love, conscience and the practical outworking of faith in community? Refer to John 13:34-35 and 1 Thessalonians 5:14 for more supporting text.

Deeper Exploration:

Knowledge for Supremacy or Eternity: Paul warns that knowledge alone can “puff up,” while love builds up (verse 1). Think of a situation where someone might use their knowledge about Scripture, faith or life skills to correct, judge or show superiority over others. How does this behavior reflect pride rather than love? How could the same knowledge, when guided by love, be used to encourage, teach or support someone instead? Reflect on a real-life scenario in your school, work or community where you have seen or could see this principle in action.

Knowledge, Love and the Stumbling Block

By: Bob James

Chapter 8 in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians addresses a practical dispute in the Corinthian church: whether or not Christians may eat meat sacrificed to idols. To some, it was seen as a good way to get the best meat at low prices. Others feared it would make you unclean. He begins with, "Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that 'all of us possess knowledge'" (1 Corinthians 8:1a ESV1). Yet he immediately qualifies this: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Corinthians 8:1b). The contrast between "knowledge" and "love" is the main theological idea of the chapter. Knowledge here denotes intellectual certainty about the nonexistence of idols ("an idol has no real existence," 1 Corinthians 8:4); whereas love denotes restricting your freedoms out of concern for the conscience of others.

Paul's argument unfolds in three movements. First, he concedes the theological points that "food will not commend us to God" (1 Corinthians 8:8) or bring us closer to God, and idols are "so-called gods" (1 Corinthians 8:5) with no base in reality. Knowing there is one true God means it is just regular meat — nothing spiritually different about it. Second, he introduces the pastoral complication: "But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak" (1 Corinthians 8:9).

The "weak" are believers whose consciences remain scarred by prior paganism. Eating such meat would violate their faith and potentially fall away from the faith (1 Corinthians 8:10-11). Third, Paul models self-limitation: "Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat" (1 Corinthians 8:13). Liberty yields to love. A key historical point is that meat sacrificed to idols was the "best meat at a lower price" due to pagan superstition. Historical analysis of the text and Greco-Roman market practices supports this. In Corinth, a major port city, temples like those of Asclepius and Demeter conducted daily sacrifices. After the gods' "portion" was burned, remaining meat was either eaten in temple dining rooms or sold in the local marketplace. William L. Lane notes that "the bulk of meat available in the public markets of Corinth had passed through the temples."² Anthony C. Thiselton cites the Corinthian marketplace inscriptions indicating sacrificial resale. Surplus meat — often prime cuts — was discounted to avoid waste. We always want to get a good deal; thus, the "knowledgeable" Corinthian believers likely viewed idol meat as both economical and spiritually harmless — a double incentive Paul counters with a call to show love.

Some argue that Paul's call to abstain from idol meat risks sliding into the legalism he fiercely opposes elsewhere, especially in Galatians, where he rebukes those who "compel the Gentiles to live like Jews" (Galatians 2:14) and declares that "for freedom Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1). If self-restraint becomes a church-wide rule enforced on consciences, it morphs into the very bondage Paul dismantles. Yet 1 Corinthians 8 is not legalism but brotherly love in action. Legalism imposes external obligations to earn favor with God. Love voluntarily limits a genuine right to protect a sibling's faith. Paul grounds his restraint not in ritual purity or fear of divine displeasure, but in Christ's own self-emptying: "Though I am free... I have made myself a servant to all" (1 Corinthians 9:19). The difference is motive and scope: Legalism binds everyone; love binds only the strong, and only when the weak are present.

Paul's conclusion is radical: The strong must voluntarily abstain when in the presence of the weak (1 Corinthians 8:13). This is not legalism but brotherly love, mirroring Christ who "though he was rich, yet for your sake became poor" (2 Corinthians 8:9). The application transcends meat: Any permissible act (social media use, alcohol, entertainment) must be filtered through the question, "Will this build up or tear down my brother's faith?"

Sources Cited

1. Holy Bible, English Standard Version (Crossway, 2001).
2. Lane, William L. "1 Corinthians." *The International Bible Commentary*, ed. F. F. Bruce. Zondervan, 1986.
3. Thiselton, Anthony C. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. NIGTC. Eerdmans, 2000.

Reading Plan:

- o 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
- o Romans 14
- o Galatians 5:1-15

WEEK 16:

Freedom in Christ Jesus

Weekly Verse: “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.” **1 Corinthians 9:24-25**

Notes:

Reflection Question:

What insight, principle or observation from this teaching did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or challenging, and why?

Questions:

Read: 1 Corinthians 9

1. Paul argues that he has the rights of an apostle, including being supported by the church. Yet in verses 12 and 15, he chooses not to use those rights. Why does Paul willingly give up his rightful benefits, and what does this show us about his priorities in ministry? Read 2 Corinthians 11:7-12, Philippians 2:5-8 and 1 Peter 2:21.
2. Throughout this chapter, Paul contrasts living by his rights with living for the sake of others. What is the difference between exercising personal freedom (verses. 4-7, 11-12) and surrendering freedom for the gospel (verses 19-23)? What impact does each path have on the spread of the gospel and the unity of the church? Refer to Galatians 5:13, Romans 14:13-15 and Philippians 1:12-14 to cross-reference.
3. Paul says he disciplines his body and choices “so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified” (verses 27). How does Paul’s commitment to self-control and accountability challenge modern believers, especially in a culture that expects comfort and personal rights? Do you think the church today emphasizes this same self-discipline? Why or why not? Cross references: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 2 Timothy 4:7-8 and Hebrews 12:11.
4. Paul becomes “all things to all people” to reach more for Christ (verses 19-23). What would it look like for you to set aside a personal right, preference or comfort in order to better reach someone for Jesus? What specific group of people or context might God be calling you to adapt to? Read Matthew 9:36-38, 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 and Romans 12:9-13 to support your answer.

Deeper Exploration:

Running with Purpose: Paul compares the Christian life to a race in which believers compete for an imperishable crown (verses 24-27). Reflect on your personal spiritual journey: Are you running aimlessly, or intentionally pursuing God’s purposes? What practical steps can you take to run “with purpose” in your faith this week? Cross references: 2 Timothy 4:7-8 and Philippians 3:13-14

Running for the Eternal Prize

By: Tony Dungy

In chapter 8, Paul addressed one specific question that the Corinthians were asking: Is it okay to eat food that had been sacrificed to idols? The question arose because in Corinth at that time, it was a common practice for pagan priests to perform a sacrificial offering to a heathen god and then sell the meat to a local supermarket. So, if you bought meat or ate meat in Corinth, there was a good chance that some of it may have been part of a sinful ceremony. The Corinthians wanted to know if they were sinning if they ate this meat. But they were really asking a couple of bigger questions.

“Paul, since you say we are saved by faith in Jesus and not by works, why do we have to obey these old-school laws? And what do we do when we face a situation that the Bible doesn’t specifically address?” Paul answered by saying that in those cases, God’s Spirit should guide us. We need to pray for answers individually and be guided by what we hear from God. But we also must be considerate of our brothers and sisters in Christ who might feel differently than we do about a situation. When Scripture is silent on an issue, maturity means we don’t treat our opinions like God’s voice. Paul is confronting believers who were driven more by personal preference than by love and wisdom.

In chapter 9, Paul expands on that thought by explaining to the Corinthians how he gave up many of his “rights” as an apostle so that people would welcome the gospel message. Paul says that as an apostle he has the “right” to have his needs met by the church. He has a “right” to be paid for his efforts in sharing the word. But Paul says he would give up his right to anything if it would help someone receive the good news of Jesus Christ. As a Christian, Paul had been granted many promises from God and had been given abilities by God to do many things. But Paul says he has let go of many of those things in order to be a better witness to those who need Jesus. His goal was not to get everything he was entitled to in this life, but rather to receive God’s commendation for helping others come to know about Jesus.

His overriding thought is captured in verses 24-25:

“Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize” (1 Corinthians 9:24-25 NLT)

The message for us is very clear: We need to have goals and aspirations. We need to work hard and expect to be successful in whatever we choose to do. Succeeding in life, providing for our families and leaving an inheritance for our descendants is important. But we must have our eyes on the ultimate goal. We have to value our salvation more than anything else in the world. And we have to be obedient to Jesus’ command to tell others about Him and make disciples. That has to be our focus. We shouldn’t go through life telling everyone what we deserve, but should instead pursue a faithful life that is obedient to God through following Jesus.

Reading Plan:

- 1 Corinthians 9:1-27
- Philippians 3:1-21
- John 8:31-36



Grace Family Church



WEDNESDAY NIGHT
BIBLE STUDY