

1 Corinthians

Bible Study Guide

A 16 lesson study

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Lesson 1

1 Corinthians 1

Introduction

1. Paul traveled to the major cities of Rome on his journeys to spread the gospel. According to Acts 18:1-2, from where did Paul travel to the large, cosmopolitan port city of Corinth, and who did he meet there?
2. What did Paul do there at first, according to Acts 18:4-5?
3. How was Paul received and how did he respond according to 18:6-7?
4. Despite the attacks on Paul, what did God tell him and how long did he stay in Corinth, according to verses 18:9-11?

Read 1 Corinthians 1

5. After Paul left Corinth, he continued a strong relationship with the Corinthians, writing several times. According to 1 Corinthians 1:2, who was Paul writing to?
6. What does this suggest happened after the rocky start we saw in Acts 18:5-6?
7. What does Paul encourage the church members to do in 1 Corinthians 1:10?
8. According to verse 1:11, what had Paul heard that prompted him to say this to the church members?
9. What appears to be a cause of the disagreement according to verses 12-16?

10. According to verses 18-20, what seems like foolishness to those who are perishing?

11. How did God act in wisdom according to verses 20-21?

12. According to verses 22-23, what is the basic message for Paul preaches, and how is it received by the Jews and the Gentiles who are unable to accept it?

13. In what ways do you think the gospel of the cross might seem foolish to the wise?

14. According to verse 26, what was the condition of most of the believers before they came to Christ?

15. According to verses 28-29 what was God's purpose in choosing the foolish and lowly things (base and despised) of the world?

16. What is Jesus Christ to us who believe, according to verse 30?

Lesson 2

1 Corinthians 2

Read 1 Corinthians 2

1. Based on what Paul has just stated in chapter 1, why does his approach to those in Corinth, as described in 2:1, make sense?
2. According to verse 1, what did Paul want to proclaim to them, or tell them about?
3. What did Paul want to focus on, according to verse 2?
4. According to verses 3-4, how did Paul offer the message he came to deliver? What did he avoid?
5. Based on Acts 22:3-5, if Paul had wanted to come with his own knowledge and wisdom, how was he prepared to do so?
6. According to verse 5, what reason does Paul give for coming humbly, as he did?
7. Who is Paul able to speak to with real wisdom, according to verse 6?
8. According to verses 7-8, what is the source of this true wisdom that the worldly do not understand?

9. If the world had understood the wisdom of God, what would they not have done?

10. We have a small glimpse of what God has prepared for those who love Him in Isaiah 65:17-25. Read this section and note your praise and thanks to God.

11. According to verses 10-12, how are we to understand the mystery and secrets of God's plan?

12. From verses 13-15, explain why some people can understand the truths of God and some cannot.

Lesson 3

1 Corinthians 3

Read 1 Corinthians 3

1. In verses 1-3a, Paul uses the analogy of feeding the Corinthians milk versus solid food. What was he communicating by this?

2. How can you relate to this analogy in your own personal experience?

3. In verse 3a, what reason does Paul give that the Corinthians were not ready for the solid food of the Word?

4. What specific examples of their behavior does Paul give in verses 3-4 as evidence for his statement?

5. What was the mistake people were making in focusing on Apollos or Paul, rather than on Christ?

6. How do you see that happening in Christianity today?

7. In verses 6-9, as Paul used an agricultural metaphor, what are the roles people play in sharing God's truth? Who is responsible for the actual growth?

8. According to verse 11, what must the foundation of any building of faith be?

9. In verses 12-15 Paul reveals that even in the church works will be subject to fire and judgment. Some will be burned up, while others will be rewarded. What do you think that means for the church today?

10. According to verse 15, what will the result be of false teachings and efforts of some people in the church?

11. How do you think we should live out being the Temple of God?

12. According to verses 18-19, how does God view the wisdom of this world?

13. How do you think we can differentiate between God's wisdom and the wisdom of this world?

Lesson 4

1 Corinthians 4

Read 1 Corinthians 4

1. In verse 1, how does Paul say that he and Apollos should be viewed?

2. Read Acts 18:24-28 to see a bit more of the background of Apollos. What characteristics do you see in this passage that may have led many to admire Apollos?

3. What is the case Paul is making in verses 2-5 about how he is judged?

4. When the Lord returns to judge, what will He bring to light and reveal about our lives?

5. In verse 6, Paul draws the attention of his readers back to the Scriptures he has quoted, noting that if they applied these things, they would not be comparing one leader against another. Review the Scriptures in Romans 1:19; 2:9; 2:16; and 3:19-20 and summarize the points made in them.

6. How do the people seem to be overvaluing themselves according to 1 Corinthians 4:8-10?

7. How does that compare to the apostles' experience as Paul describes it in verses 9-13?

8. Paul may seem harsh in his comments, but what is his purpose according to verse 14?

9. What special relationship do the Corinthians have with Paul according to verse 15?

10. What does Paul urge them to do in verse 16?

11. What is Paul sending Timothy to do according to verse 17?

12. Do you think it is helpful to have human models or examples to follow in our journey towards Christlikeness? What are the precautions we would need to be aware of in this?

13. In verses 19-20, Paul notes, just as he had in chapter 2, that mere words are not what counts. What does he say will be the determining factor of whether one is of God or not?

Lesson 5

1 Corinthians 5

Read 1 Corinthians 5

1. What is the sin that Paul has heard that the church is tolerating according to verse 1?
2. According to verse 2, what has the believers' response been and what should it have been?
3. According to verse 3, how has Paul responded to this situation?
4. What is Paul's instruction to the church in verses 4-5?
5. What is the goal of the action Paul commands?
6. As in verse 6, Scripture repeatedly equates the properties of yeast with sin. What is your understanding of how yeast works and how is that a good metaphor for sin?
7. As an example of removing yeast, what is the action Paul tells them to do?
8. Why do you think this type of church discipline is uncommon in the church today? Should it be uncommon or is it something the church is neglecting? Explain your answer.

9. What effect can neglected discipline of blatant sin in the church have on the other believers? What about non-believers who are observing?

10. Who is it that Paul tells us not to associate with according to versus 9-11? Why is one group okay and not the other?

11. In verse 12, who are believers told it is their responsibility to judge?

12. Who judges those outside the church according to verse 13?

13. How do you see the church and believers today handling this clear direction from Paul?

Lesson 6

1 Corinthians 6

Read 1 Corinthians 6

1. What is Paul chastising believers for in verse 1?
2. According to verses 2-3, what will believers ultimately do that qualifies them to judge worldly matters?
3. Why do you think Paul is saying that those outside the church are not as appropriate to judge believers as fellow believers in the church are? What could the effect be of believers fighting other believers in court? How could the courts view of things not be consistent with godly principles?
4. According to verse 7, what is Paul saying would be better for believers to do than taking each other to court?
5. What does Paul list in verses 9-10 as some of the unrighteous acts that will prevent people from inheriting the Kingdom of God?
6. Paul says that some of his readers were guilty of the unrighteous acts Paul mentions. What made them different according to verse 11?
7. While believers have much freedom in Christ, what is to be our primary concern, according to verses 13-14?
8. According to verses 15 and 19, what makes our bodies sacred and motivates us to flee from immorality?
9. In verses 19b and 20a, what does Paul remind us that God has done for us?
10. In verse 20b, what should be our priority?

Lesson 7

1 Corinthians 7

Read 1 Corinthians 7

1. In verse 1a, what is the basis for Paul addressing the issues in chapter 7?
2. From Paul's response in verse 1b, what was the question the Corinthians had for him?
3. According to verse 2, what is the reason that Paul supports men and women to be married?
4. According to verse 5, what is the acceptable reason for a husband and wife to abstain from a physical relationship for a time?
5. As Paul gives his own marriage status as a contrast to being married, what do we understand it to be? In verse 7 what is his wish?
6. What does 7b reveal about the source of the gift of singleness? Also see Matthew 19:10-11.
7. Even though Paul believes it is good to remain unmarried, what does marriage prevent, according to verse 9b?
8. According to verses 10-11, what advice is given about a wife or husband leaving their spouse?
9. What advice does Paul give to those whose spouse is not a believer, according to verses 12-16?

10. What is Paul's advice regarding life changes after becoming a believer, according to verses 17-24?

11. According to verse 35, what should the priority of each believer's life be?

12. According to the previous verses how does marriage sometimes distract from that priority?

13. What can husbands and wives do to be sure the right priority in serving the Lord is the focus of their lives?

14. In verse 39, Paul gives a restriction to widows who decide to remarry. What is it?

Lesson 8

1 Corinthians 8

Read 1 Corinthians 8

1. What is the concern of the believers that Paul is beginning to respond to in verse 1?
2. What does Exodus 34:15-16 warn the Israelites against? What is the heart of the concern, in other words, what does eating the meat draw them into? (Note: It is important to understand that the church consisted of Jews and Gentiles who have differing perspectives on this issue.)
3. According to 1 Corinthians 8:1b-3, what preliminary thing does Paul want them to consider before he begins his direct answer in verse 4?
4. Despite previous advice on this topic (see Acts 15:19-20), Paul gives clarification. What does he conclude in verse 8?
5. What is the rationale given to support this in verses 4-6?
6. According to verse 7, what actually causes the conscience of some to be defiled or violated?
7. What must believers be careful to avoid when exercising their freedoms, according to verse 9?
8. How does that happen, according to verse 10?

9. What additional information does Romans 14:15, 20 give us on this matter?
10. Paul says it is a sin to cause a believer with a weaker conscience to go against their conscience before God. Who is the ultimate person our sinfulness is against, according to 1 Corinthians 8:12?
11. What is Paul's personal conclusion in verse 13? How can you apply that to your own life?

Lesson 9

1 Corinthians 9

Read 1 Corinthians 9

1. From verse 3, what is Paul responding to in this chapter?
2. In verses 1-2, what is the special relationship Paul is claiming with the Corinthians and Christ Himself?
3. From verses 4-5, what practices does Paul refer to that appear to be common among the other apostles?
4. What is Paul's point from verses 6-7 and how does it relate to Paul and Barnabus?
5. How does the Law of Moses support this practice (of compensation for work), according to verses 8-10?
6. What had Paul done for the Corinthians that he had the right to share in their material goods? See verses 11 and 14.
7. How do you think this concept applies to the church today?
8. According to verses 15-18, what is Paul's actual practice in regards to receiving compensation for declaring the gospel?

9. Rather than embracing all the freedom he has, what does Paul do and why, according to verses 19-23?

10. As Paul compares his walk and ministry with an athletic contest in verses 24-27, what are some things he does to “run the race” well?

11. According to verse 25, what is the difference between the prize we seek and that of an athletic contest?

12. In what ways do you need to “condition” yourself to better “run the race”, and what does a well-run race look like for us?

Lesson 10

1 Corinthians 10

Read 1 Corinthians 10

1. Paul begins by reminding those of Jewish ancestry of some of their history. Read Psalm 78:17-41. How did the people rebel against God in verses 17, 20, 22, 32, and 36? In mercy, how did God respond according to verses 23-29, and 38?
2. According to 1 Corinthians 10:6 and 11, why were these things allowed to happen?
3. What is the warning Paul gives in verse 12? What examples of this principle have you experienced personally, or witnessed in someone else's life?
4. From verse 13, what do we know about the temptations, trials, and adversities that come into our lives?
5. Review verses 14-22 and answer the following questions:
 - a. What significance of communion does Paul mention in verse 16?
 - b. What implication does that have for those who practice offering sacrifices to idols and eating those sacrifices? (See verses 19-20)
 - c. What does Paul make clear in verse 21?
6. Give an example of what Paul is saying in verse 23.

7. How does verse 24 inform and direct the advice in verse 23?

8. Paul addresses a common issue that early Christians faced (eating food sacrificed to idols) but has little direct application for believers today. What is an example of how the principle Paul gives (in verse 24) can be used today in the life of a believer?

9. What is the guiding principle in verse 31 for all we do in life? How have you endeavored to be true to that principle?

10. Who can we feel safe to imitate, according to 11:1 (which is often included as the last verse of chapter 10)?

Lesson 11

1 Corinthians 11

Read 1 Corinthians 11

1. What are the two things Paul expresses thanks or praise to the Corinthians for in verse 2?
2. What are the three headships mentioned in verse 3?
3. According to verses 4-5, what are the differences Paul mentions between the head covering of men versus women, when prophesying or praying?
4. According to verse 7, what is the reason given that a man should not cover his head?
5. From verse 7, who is the “glory of man” (in the same way man is the glory of God)?
6. Read Genesis 2:18-23. What are the conditions/circumstances under which the first woman was created?
7. According to 1 Corinthians 11:11-12, what is the qualification or clarification Paul gives regarding what he has just said about authority over women? Also see Galatians 3:28.
8. What does Paul admonish the Corinthians for in verses 17-22?
9. According to verses 23-25, what was the instruction Paul received from the Lord?
10. From verse 26, what is the result of communion?

11. According to verses 27-28, why are we to examine ourselves before partaking in communion?

12. What does it mean to examine ourselves?

13. According to verse 29-30, what is the consequence of taking the bread and the cup in communion without examining ourselves?

14. What do these consequences tell you about the significance and reverence that the practice of communion is to have for each one participating?

Lesson 12

1 Corinthians 12

Read 1 Corinthians 12

1. From verse 1, what is Paul's purpose in writing this next segment of his letter?
2. In verse 2, what does Paul remind his readers about their past?
3. According to verses 4-6, in what areas are diversities or differences found, and what is in common among them?
4. According to verse 7, what is the purpose of each believer being given a gift from the Holy Spirit?
5. How does the analogy of the body in verses 12-19 relate to gifts of the Spirit?
6. From verses 20-24, how does Paul use body parts to demonstrate the importance and necessity of each member of the body of Christ?
7. According to verses 25-26, what effect should these truth about the body have on the members?
8. What are some of the gifts God has appointed in the church according to verses 27-28?
9. What is the answer to Paul's rhetorical questions in verses 29-30?
10. According to verse 31, what is Paul's advice regarding the "greater" gifts and what does he propose to identify as his letter continues?

Lesson 13

1 Corinthians 13

Read 1 Corinthians 13

1. According to verse 1, what makes speaking worthwhile, whether in the languages of men or angels?
2. According to verses 2-3, what makes the gifts of prophecy, knowledge or faith valuable?
3. Give an example of each of the following characteristics of real love that Paul lists in verses 4-6:
 - a. Love that suffers long (is patient) and is kind
 - b. Love that does not envy
 - c. Love that does not boast; is not puffed up
 - d. Love that does not behave rudely; seek its own way; provoke or think evil
 - e. Love that does not rejoice in iniquity or unrighteousness, but in truth
4. According to verse 7, what does love always do?
5. According to verse 8, how does love fare versus gifts of prophecies, tongues, or knowledge?

6. From verses 9-10, how complete was Paul's knowledge and prophecy and how long will it last?

7. According to verse 12, how clear is our vision and understanding today?

8. In verse 13, Paul lists three key qualities for believers. What are they?

9. What place do these have in your life?

10. What do you think we can do to insure that the kind of love Paul describes takes preeminence in our lives?

Lesson 14

1 Corinthians 14

Read 1 Corinthians 14

1. According to verse 1, Paul reiterates the importance of love. What is to be our attitude in relation to spiritual gifts?
2. According to verse 2, when speaking in tongues, who is addressed?
3. What is the goal or importance of prophecy according to verse 3?
4. If we do not understand a language, how do we relate to the one speaking it, according to verse 11?
5. What does Paul reiterate is the purpose of spiritual gifts according to verse 12, and what disadvantage would an unknown language have in achieving that?
6. What does Paul indicate about his own understanding when he prays in an unknown tongue, according to verse 14?
7. What is Paul's conclusion in verses 15-17 about praying and singing in the spirit versus praying and singing with words he and others can understand?
8. According to verses 22-25, speaking in tongues is a sign or testimony to whom and prophesying is for whom?

9. What is the purpose of all that is done when a church body comes together, according to verse 26b?

10. According to verse 33, what attribute is from God and what is not?

11. How does what Paul says in verses 34-35 fit with God's design for women? Also see Genesis 2:18; Genesis 3:16; and Ephesians 5:22-24.

12. What exception is implied from 1 Corinthians 11:5?

13. How do you think 1 Corinthians 13 might be appropriately applied as both men and women adhere to these instructions?

Lesson 15

1 Corinthians 15

Read 1 Corinthians 15

1. What is it Paul sets out to remind the Corinthians of in verse 1?
2. What is the result of belief in this, according to verse 2?
3. How does Paul summarize the Good News or gospel, in verses 3-4?
4. What evidence does Paul give in verses 5-8 to support the truth of Christ's resurrection?
5. What had some Corinthians been saying according to verse 12?
6. If there is no resurrection from the dead, what are the consequences Paul gives in verses 13-18?
7. If there is only this life we live, and no hope of resurrection, what does Paul say in verse 19 would be true of believers?
8. In verses 21-23, what is the contrast Paul gives between our inheritance from Adam versus our inheritance from Christ, and what is the result of belonging to Christ?
9. According to verse 32b, what would be an appropriate attitude if there were no resurrection? How do you see this attitude in the unbeliever today?

10. How does Paul contrast the earthly body that is buried versus the spiritual body that will be raised, according to verses 42-44?

11. According to verses 52-55, when the last trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ are raised, what transformation occurs and what is the result?

12. In verse 58a, what concluding advice does Paul give? In verse 58b, what are we to do as we wait and what encouragement does Paul give?

Lesson 16

1 Corinthians 16

Read 1 Corinthians 16

1. What issue does Paul raise in verse 1, and to whom had he previously given instructions that the Corinthians were also to follow?
2. From the wording Paul uses, how does his instruction appear to be more than a suggestion or recommendation?
3. What others are mentioned as also having given to the poor in Jerusalem, in Acts 11:29 and Romans 15:26?
4. What is Paul's instruction to the Corinthian believers in verse 2?
5. What advantage do you think there would be in putting aside funds weekly, rather than collecting it all at once when Paul arrived?
6. Paul outlines his future plans for visiting in verses 5-8. What is the caveat he mentions in verse 7b and what do you think he means?
7. How does Paul's practice of planning, and looking for God to confirm or change his plan, apply to you?

8. Paul summarizes his advice in verses 13-14. Personalize his advice and put it in your own words.

9. What can we learn and apply from verses 10-11 and 15-18, regarding those who spend their lives serving God's people?

10. In the final verses (19-24), what sense do you get of the cohesiveness and relationship of the believers? What do you think we can learn from that today?