

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

Author: _____ and Sosthenes (1:1)

-The background is _____ 18:1-18

-Some _____ believed (Crispus, 18:8 and Sosthenes, 18:17)

-Many Jews persecuted _____ and the believers

-Paul _____ for at least one-and-a-half years (18:11) (AD 49/50)

To: Corinth and ____?! (1:2)

But there are so many specific issues:

1. The sexually immoral man in 1 Cor. 5

2. The “weak” and the issue of _____ (1 Cor. 8-10)

3. The special offering (16:2-3)

4. _____ coverings (11)

5. Problems with the Lord’s _____

Other big issues in Corinthians: tongues, marriage, the resurrection, the gospel, slavery, Jew/gentile relations, role of women in ministry....

Greeting (1:3-9)

-Paul starts with a positive assessment of their standing in _____, even though Corinth is often regarded as the church with “problems.”

-Paul is always thankful because of the grace they have in Christ (4), that they have been “enriched in every way” (5), they “do not lack any spiritual gift” (7), they “eagerly wait” for Jesus to be revealed (7), they will be kept “firm to the end” and “blameless” (8), and they are “called into fellowship” with Jesus (9).

Purpose (10)

-Paul identifies “_____” as the main issue he will address (10)

Issue #1 Is 1 Corinthians divinely _____?

-Does Paul himself admit a _____ in the text in 1:14-16?

-Does Paul declare his words non-authoritative in 1 Cor. 7:10-12?

1 Corinthians: Introducing the Gospel (1:10-4:16)

-Paul finds unifying power only in the gospel. (1:17)

-Paul describes this “message of the cross” as foolishness (1:18)—according to the wisdom of the world (1:19). Not many were “wise” (1:26):

Epicureans: Rejected anything supernatural including divine revelation. Pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain and overindulgence should be avoided. They did not believe anything was right or wrong, only helpful or not. They taught not to fear death because you cease to be.

Stoics: People need to bring themselves into harmony with the natural order of the universe. Be free from passion and unruly emotion. They valued wisdom, courage, and justice. They prized logic and human reason. They did not believe in “death” but continuing on as “threads” in the universe.¹

Jews:

Paul says that the scribes in Jerusalem (Paul was one) and the philosophers of Athens like to think they are the center of intellectual life for the world. But they are few and lack real wisdom.²

Question: Why does Paul preach without wisdom and eloquence? (17)

-not with “eloquence or human wisdom” (2:1) or “wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power” (2:4)

1. Paul says that it is so that their faith would not rest on human wisdom (2:5)

2. Paul consistently offers Christ crucified/God’s power (2:2, 5) as the alternative

Issue #2 Does Paul mean that preaching should be unplanned and avoid rational support?

No:

- Paul himself supported his points with reason

¹ Chronicles of the Apostles, (2016), 554-556.

² Kenneth Bailey, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes*, (2011), 82.

Acts 18:4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

- Paul often uses formal arguments within the letter of 1 Cor. (15:13-15), or appeals to evidence (15:6)
- Paul writes parts of 1 Corinthians carefully following standard formatting of poetry³ (1:23: four lines, each with 7 syllables with rhyming, is at the center of a four layer chiasm)⁴
- Paul follows conventional elements of Greek funeral orations in his hymn on the cross (1:17-2:2)⁵: Pericles gave a well known speech of praise for the Athenians that Lincoln followed in the Gettysburg address. Paul seemed to follow this as well, including mysterious compression and opposing pairs (Jews demand signs/Greeks look for wisdom vs. “The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.”)

3. Paul does reverse some of the expectations of a Greek funeral oration. According to Plato, he was supposed to:

praise noble birth (But, 1:26)

praise education (But, 1:19-20)

praise noble actions worthy of their education (2:6)

“He means that the Greeks see Jesus as worthless because he was “low born.” He is despised by Jews, Greeks and Romans because he died on a cross. But God used those despised events to set loose in human history a power and a wisdom that makes Rome appear weak and Athens foolish.”

He does not come out and say, “The Greek heritage of art, architecture, philosophy and democracy is foolishness when compared to the cross.” Instead, he says, “The things that are not nullify the things that are.” (compression and opposing pairs)⁶

Paul determined not to allegorize the gospel message to make it fit the modes of gentile thinking (such as Philo).

³ Bailey, 87.

⁴ Bailey, 85.

⁵ Bailey, 94.

⁶ Bailey, 84.

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Our “message” is true _____, one that is in opposition to worldly wisdom (6).

This wisdom was “_____” by God in eternity past and made known only since the resurrection (7).

Who are “the _____ of this age” (8)?

The gospel is not just _____ message that can help, but is the one and only truth that gives hope to all humanity.

The gospel is part of a biblical _____ that contradicts the world’s story.

Our culture’s version of “the story” is one in which the _____ is health and prosperity. But in the Bible it is loving and being loved by God.

We know about God’s Wisdom through the _____

Mind of _____ → Holy Spirit → Us (10-12)

Even the “words” are _____ taught by the Spirit. We need a new vocabulary beyond what the world offers us to understand God’s mystery.

Conclusion: Seeing ultimate truths is beyond our capabilities without God revealing it to us. He has revealed it to us through history, his Word, prophets, the cross, and the gospel message. All this comes through the Spirit.

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1 Corinthians 3

The Corinthians have _____ to spiritual wisdom (1:7) but are not making use of it. (3:1-4)

What _____ spiritual wisdom? Jealousy and quarreling (3:3)

Issue #3, What is a “Carnal Christian”:

The antidote is to reject so-called worldly ways of thinking that seeks out being better than others. (3:18)

In context, this is accomplished by _____ the world with spiritual eyes focused on the ongoing plan of God centering on the cross and resurrection.

Ministry is about what _____ is doing, not human achievement. (3:6-7)

Issue #4, Who is the one saved, “escaping through the flames.” (3:15):

Purgatory?:

The verse is talking about evaluating the quality of _____ for reward, not a judgment on evil deeds.

Ministries that boast impressive _____ may not receive high marks for their work on the day of judgment. Our goal must always focus on being biblical, not “successful.”

Paul identifies the “building” in 10-15 as God’s _____ (16-17).

Collectively, the _____ of the church are like a temple in that they God is present in their midst.

Paul warns against _____ the temple, (17) a reference to building carelessly (10, meaning unbiblically) and in a fleshly way.

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1 Corinthians 3:18-4:21 “Becoming Fools”

Paul begins this section with a command, “Do not _____ yourselves. (18) Then, building on the previous section, Paul urges the Corinthians to do this by becoming “fools” in order to be “wise.”

Paul means that we are to embrace the _____-taught view of life revealed in Scripture and the New Testament “mysteries” that are foolishness to the world. It includes the cross, resurrection, and focus on the kingdom to come.

_____ are yours! All Apostolic teaching is ours. We do not “claim” to have access to only one stream of thought. We all belong to Christ and so the whole Christian message belongs to us all. (3:21-22)

Christ is “of _____” meaning he is fully obedient to God and focused on glorifying God. (3:23)

Issue #5: Judging

Paul says to judge _____ (4:5). But later he will call for judging those inside the church (5:12).

“Judging” in chapter 4 deals with the _____ of ministry works for rewards. (see chapter 3) Only God can evaluate these things. In chapter 5, there is a matter of judgment for sinful actions on earth that impact the church on earth and require earthly consequences.

Paul responds to _____ and will return to this subject in 1 Cor. 9 (see 9:3). Paul’s unwillingness to even judge himself shows his unwavering commitment to find his value and fulfillment in serving God and not himself.

Paul uses sarcasm to call out the Corinthians for their _____. Paul uses shocking imagery of a Roman triumph in which the slaves were brought in last and were humiliated and executed. (6-13)

Paul concludes by calling on them to follow his _____ in becoming “fools.” (4:14-21)

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1 Corinthians 5-7

Applying Biblical Sexual Ethics in the Church

Intro: This section _____ in 4:17-4:21, where Paul urges the Corinthians to deal with a disciplinary issues before he comes so that he doesn't have to.

With a few references to other _____, sexual ethics come up again and again in the next three chapters.

1 Corinthians 5: Incest in the Church

The _____ of the 1 Corinthians 5 man probably died and his father remarried a much younger woman.

In 5:2, Paul is not saying the Corinthians are _____ about the sexual immorality. Instead, he is drawing attention to how wrong their general pride in their wisdom is given this situation.

The church is probably _____ about what to do.

1. The people " _____ " (1) to Paul don't seem to approve.
2. Certainly the _____ does not approve!
3. Paul says that even the pagans don't _____ this kind of behavior. So certainly the Corinthians are not okay with it.
4. The issue may have something to do with the " _____ " (6:1) leading to legal action in 1 Corinthians 6.

Conclusion: The church probably largely _____ of the behavior but aren't sure how to respond.

"Hand this man over to _____!"? (5:5)

- _____? But how would that lead to restoration? (2 Cor. 2:5-7)?

-Paul uses the phrase parallel to "expel the _____ person" (13).

-It may be based on Deut 7:26: "Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Regard it as vile and utterly detest it, for it is set apart for destruction."

-The person is removed from the protective sphere of the _____, the "batch of dough" (5:6). The idea may be that the person is outside the house where the door posts are marked with blood. (5:6-8)

Col 1:13 "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son."

-The "destruction of the flesh" may refer to the destruction of impurity *within* the Corinthian church. It is thus about enhancing the building materials in the Corinthian church to withstand judgment on the Day of the Lord.

Paul is applying Old Testament sexual ethics, laid out in _____ 18 (see esp. 18:7). These Levitical laws apply to gentiles as determined by the Acts council in Acts 15:20.

Special Issue: The context and content of church discipline.

There was _____ repentance. (That was the goal of discipline)

This was _____ sin. (everyone knew about it)

We must assume earlier steps of discipline were taken (see Matt. 18:15-17).

The _____ church was to support the discipline (4). This speaks to congregational rule.

Discipline does not apply to _____ (10).

They were not to fellowship or _____ with them (11), and _____ them.

1 Corinthians 6:1-11: Lawsuits Among Believers

Special Issue: Can Christians _____ one another in court today?

Different Contexts:

Pagan courts were notoriously _____ and hostile to Jews and Christians. The American court system has developed out of a biblical worldview. (Remember Acts 18:14-17)

Today, Christians approach the court as fellow _____, not outsiders seeking help.

Today, Christians can come from very different faith communities where it would be difficult for churches to agree on a church authority to rule on an issue.

Nevertheless, the principle holds that believers should seek to settle disputes within the church and not in the secular courts whenever possible.

Special Issue: Does Paul say homosexuals cannot enter the kingdom of heaven? (6:9-10)

Many are claiming that “homosexual” is a _____ in 1 Cor. 6:9 because it did not appear in any Bible translation until 1946.

Leviticus 18:22: “arsenos ou koimeitheisei koitain” (i.e. “arseno...koitai”)
1 Cor. 6:9: “arsenokoitai” = “man bedder”

The translation is not incorrect. But “men who have sex with men” is preferred. Biblical teaching on homosexuality do not depend on this verse anyway.

Remember, whatever the text says about “homosexuals” it _____ says about “the greedy” and “slanderers.”

The issue is _____ sin.

Believers are no longer these things (6:11), and we shouldn’t make them part of our identity. (i.e. “gay Christian”)

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Sexual Immorality

What does Paul mean by “I have the _____ to do anything.” (6:12)

1. He does not mean that that we can do _____ we want- he warns repeatedly against sexual immorality- even in this chapter.

2. He does not mean that everything is _____ just not helpful, because he calls sexual immorality sin in 6:18.

3. He may be _____ arguments used by Corinthians (“you say” is not actually in the text in 6:12/13). But, where does that quote end? “Not everything is beneficial” could be part of the quote as well. Or, these may be common statements of some unbelieving group that Paul responds to in 13b. “The body, however...” (6:13a “Food for the stomach...” is referring to “Sex is for fulfilling the body and the body exists for sex.” Paul immediately corrects this false statement in the second part of the verse).

4. Paul certainly does not support the idea that sexual immorality (along with many other sins) fall into the category of “Christian liberty.”

Paul links Christian sexual morality to _____ and assumes that sexual conduct creates a mystical union between two people (6:16).

In addition, Paul speaks of the importance of the _____ on account of the resurrection, a topic he will return to in 1 Cor. 15.

Finally, Paul adds that we cannot “do anything” because we “were bought at a price.” (6:20)

1 Corinthians 7:1-16 To the Married and Unmarried

Paul now turns to matters the Corinthians _____ about, suggesting that what they thought was most important was not.

The beginning of the chapter _____ from a permissive attitude about sexual immorality to the opposite extreme—asceticism.

7:1 Does Paul say it is preferable to abstain from marriage or _____, or is he quoting the Corinthians?

Clearly, some of the married Corinthians think they _____ abstain from sex in marriage. (7:2-5)

Paul does not _____, but allows them to have brief periods of abstinence under certain conditions (7:6). His “concession” is not that they can have sex, but that they can practice abstinence.

Special Issue: Celibacy and Ministry (7:1-9)

“I wish that all of you were as I am.” Probably means that Paul was married but his wife died and he will not remarry. (7:8) “Unmarried” probably means men whose wives had died.

Paul says that they are _____ all as he is (7:7), meaning that he has a special gift to be content without a wife.

Paul teaches that singleness is not a special _____ spiritual level to obtain or a choice the individual makes. Instead, it is a gift from God.

Paul seems to say that for those who are widowers or widows, it is preferable to not remarry *if* they have the gift of singleness. Paul elsewhere recommends all women under sixty to remain open to remarrying (1 Tim 5:9-11).

Paul does not say “burning with passion” is *the* reason to get married. Only that it would be absurd to refrain from marriage while burning with passion. (7:9)

Therefore, the idea that all men in ministry must be celibate (such as Catholic priests) is a misinterpretation of the text.

Divorce (7:10-16)

Paul allows for _____ in some circumstances (“But if she does”), but not divorce (in which remarriage is strongly implied).

This is based on the same principle that Jesus teaches, “What God has joined together...”

This does not mean that Paul would _____ allow for divorce. Only that there is no such thing as “no fault” divorce.

What if one spouse becomes a _____ and not the other? Paul teaches not to be “yoked together with unbelievers.” (2 Cor. 6:14)

Paul has _____ against a believer marrying an unbeliever. But what if they are already married? The Corinthians asked this question in their writing.

Paul upholds that marriage, even among _____ is sacred and that God joins two people together (7:12-16).

How is the unbelieving husband “sanctified” through his _____?

- Sanctified cannot mean “_____.”
- Paul seems to link it with the potential for salvation (16)
- It could refer to a sort of privileged position in comparison to the rest of the world in terms of access to the Scriptures, sound teaching, and freedom from the darkness of the unbelieving world.
- Thus, the children are “_____” in the sense of being set apart for a special purpose. They are not saved, but they should naturally progress toward salvation because they are in a “Christian home” even though only one parent is a Christian.
- The unbelieving spouse and their children are in some sense a part of the church family even if they aren’t personally saved.

However, if the unbeliever leaves, the spouse is not “_____” which means they can remarry. (7:15)

Remaining as You Were Called (7:17-24)

The immediate application is to not seek _____ simply because you are now a believer and your spouse is not.

This applies to your status as a _____ or gentile also (7:18-19)

The commands one is supposed to keep _____ on whether or not one is “circumcised” or not.

Paul and Slavery

The slave of a _____ master may feel that he is forced into divided loyalty between his master and Christ. Paul writes to relieve him of this concern.

Paul permits the slave to seek _____, but reassures him that he is not unqualified or less capable of serving Christ as a slave.

It seems that it is preferable to be _____, just as it is preferable to be single-so long as God has given you that gift.

Paul adds that if we are in Christ, we have a _____ obligation to not become slaves because we were “bought at a price.”

Paul is not endorsing the institution of slavery. He is asserting that Christian ministry can take place in a variety of earthly situations.

Paul’s teachings will necessarily undermine slavery as Christianity grows and becomes a dominant force in the culture.

Paul doesn’t even have in mind our concept of racially based slavery or the slave trade, which the OT prohibited.

In a Southern antebellum context, Paul’s teaching here would support work toward ending slavery, but would not directly support a radical abolitionist position.

For Paul, Christianity naturally changes how we should look at all institutions, but institutional change is not the goal, Christ is. At the same time, all of the Bible calls on his people to support justice.

Concerning Virgins? (7:25-40)

What is “this present _____” (7:26), and why is “the time short” (7:29).

Answer: “This world in its present form is passing away.” (7:31)