

# Paul's Letters to Corinth

This study goes nearly verse-by-verse through 1 and 2 Corinthians using an expository method, meaning questions are designed to force our attention to the details of the text. We cannot appropriately *apply* the Bible to our lives without first understanding its *meaning*, so the expository method is a necessary first step. There are some questions relating to application, but most questions are designed to help us understand what the text itself is actually saying and how it relates to other parts of Scripture. These discussion questions have been mostly modified from the study by David E. Pratt, and the brief chapter summaries were written by Daniel J. Harrison. This study was originally designed for the young adult group at Fairfield CRC, but to any small group or individual who wishes to use this study, I pray it strengthens your faith in Jesus our Messiah!

## **Abbreviations:**

Vs. – Verse

Vss. – Verses

Ch. – Chapter

Cf. – Confer or See also

OT – Old Testament

HB – Hebrew Bible

LXX – Septuagint (Greek translation of OT from 3rd c. BC; the standard by 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD)

NT – New Testament

DJH – Daniel J. Harrison

## **1 Corinthians 1**

Summary: Paul, who is called an apostle (along with Sosthenes) is writing to the saints in every place in Corinth, that they may enter into the full fellowship of Christ through the proper exercise of spiritual gifts for the strengthening of fellow believers. But schisms have erupted among the Corinth Christians that they find their identity not in Christ but in certain apostles or prominent Christian figures. Paul is thankful that he did not baptize hardly any of them to feed into that. Instead, they should rely on their shared commonality of belief about Jesus the Messiah, who is the source of derision for those who are not saved, among both Jew and Greek alike.

Questions:

1. Read Acts 18:12-17. Who is Sosthenes?
2. What does the word “sanctified” or “saint” mean?
3. What did Paul thank God for? Compare this with Paul’s introductory thankfulness in his other letters.
4. According to vss. 5-7, how had God enriched his church?

5. What did the revelation of Jesus help give the Corinthians?
6. What does the word “faithful” mean and why it is important?
7. What big problem is introduced in vs. 10? (Note: ‘I appeal to you’ is the strongest level of urging in Greek; cf. Luke 15:28)
8. What are some of the unity-division expressions that are used?
9. Who reported the contentions to Paul?
10. Whose fault was it for these divisions?
11. What are the answers to the two questions in vs. 13?
12. Why was Paul glad he had only baptized a few of the Corinthians?
13. What is the ‘Word of the Cross’?
14. How can human wisdom make the Cross void?
15. How is God’s wisdom made known?
16. Why did God choose a plan so many would reject?
17. What was Paul’s conclusion in vs. 31?

## **1 Corinthians 2**

Summary: Paul tells the Corinthians that he is declaring to them the mysterious wisdom of God through Christ, that we have been made to have the mind of Christ. Paul writes that this mysterious wisdom was set before the foundation of the world and that if it had been revealed to the kings and rulers of the age, they would not have crucified Christ. As such, this crucifixion is the teaching Paul emphasized the most, with the purpose that they would emphasize it also.

### Questions:

1. Review: What (or who) is the wisdom of God and how do we learn/know that wisdom?
2. What things did Paul emphasize and what things did Paul de-emphasize? What was Paul's motivation for this distinction?
3. What kind of power did Paul emphasize? What significance is there with the word perfect or mature (telos)?
4. Who did not recognize this wisdom? (8)
5. What does the word 'mystery' mean? How is the Gospel a mystery? (cf. Chiasm below)
6. What passage is quoted in vs. 9? What are the 'these things'?
7. Who reveals these things and how does he know them?
8. What is the process of revelation from God to man? (10-13)
9. Does human wisdom reveal God's will?
10. What does 'spiritual' mean in vss. 14-15?
11. How does a spiritual man make judgments?
12. What roles do the members of the Trinity have in revealing hidden wisdom?

## **1 Corinthians 3**

Summary: Paul desires to move beyond the elemental things with the Corinthians, but they lack the maturity because they still live worldly lives, notably though identifying themselves with prominent Christians rather than Christ. Each one will be held accountable for the works we do as already-saved individuals, and it will be God who determines the goodness of those works in the fires of final judgment.

Questions:

1. What does the 'babies and milk' illustration mean? (cf. Heb. 5:11-14)
2. What proved the Corinthians were behaving worldly?
3. What has been the subject of the enemy and strife in Corinth?
4. What did Paul say he and Apollos were, and what is Paul's point?
5. To what are preachers compared? (vss. 6-7)
6. What relationship should the planter and waterer have? (vss. 8-9)
7. What is God's relationship to the church, and what is Paul's role? (vss. 9-10)
8. What foundation must we build on? (cf. Eph. 2) (vs. 11)
9. What will reveal the nature of these materials? (vss. 12-13)
10. What happens in the fire? What fire is this referring to?
11. What are some other passages that teach that believers are temples?
12. How is one guilty of destroying the temple?
13. How does someone who is wise actually become wise?
14. What belongs to the Corinthians, and what do they belong to?

## **1 Corinthians 4**

Summary: Rather than boasting about how great of Christians they are, they should follow the apostles' and Christ's humble emphases. After all, they received anything they have from the apostles, so they should not see themselves as greater than the apostles. They should prioritize the steadiness of the Scriptures and not go any further than the wisdom therein.

Questions:

1. In what sense are preachers stewards? (vs. 1)
2. What is the requirement of stewards? (vs. 2)
3. How can stewards be unfaithful?
4. Who judges the faithfulness of stewards? (vss. 3-4)
5. "We shouldn't tell people they're wrong because we shouldn't judge." How would you respond to this claim?
6. What does 'beyond what is written' mean and how does Paul apply it? (v. 6)
7. What did the Corinthians receive? (vss. 7-8)
8. How were the apostles spectators? (vs. 9)
9. What advantages did the Corinthians have over Paul? (vss. 10-11)
10. Is the conduct contrasted in vss. 12-13 good or bad?
11. What's Paul's point in referring to himself as a father? (vs. 15)
12. Should Christians be like-Christ or like-Paul? (vs. 16)
13. Who did Paul send to the Corinthians?
14. Is it okay for different churches to teach different doctrines? (vs. 17)
15. What is Paul's point about power? (vss. 18-21)

## **1 Corinthians 5**

Summary: The Corinthians have misplaced who they ought to judge. Christians ought to judge those who call themselves Christians, disassociating with those who engage in persistent and/or unrepentant sins. The Christian community has a duty to hand over fellow believers to the earthly consequences for sin so on judgment day they may be saved. As for unbelievers, God will judge them (returning to ch. 4) when he returns because it is not the believer's duty to do so.

### Questions:

1. What sin existed in the Corinthians church? (vs. 1)
2. What is sexual-immorality? (cf. Matt. 5:27-30)
3. What attitude did the church have toward this? What attitude should they have had? (vs. 2)
4. What had Paul done, though he was not at Corinth? (vs. 3)
5. Read Matt. 18:15-17. What are the steps of discipline the church should exercise?
6. According to vss. 4-5, what step should the Corinthians be on?
7. What should be done to the specific sinner?
8. Read Job 2:1-10; 1 Tim. 1:18-20; 1 John 5:16. What does it mean to be 'handed over'?
9. What is the intended purpose of being handed over?
10. What does the leaven illustration mean and how does Paul apply it?
11. What does the Passover have to do with leaven, sexual-immorality, and church discipline?
12. Instead of leaven, what should we have?
13. What had Paul apparently written to the Corinthians previously?
14. What other sins are mentioned in vss. 10-11? Does the church treat these sins with the same level of severity?
15. What's different about what Paul's writing now?
16. Should Christians judge? If so, then who?
17. What should be done to such sinners?
18. Read Deut. 17:1-7 (vs. 13 quotes Deut. 17:7). What similarities and differences are there to 1 Cor. 5?
19. Scholars are fairly sure Paul follows up on this matter in 2 Corinthians. Read 2 Cor. 2:4-11 and 7:8-12. If these are truly following up on this matter, what was the actual result of the discipline described in 1 Cor. 5?

## **1 Corinthians 6**

Summary: Not only is there the example of egregious sexual immorality from chapter 5, but more prevalent are believers who cheat and sue one another before judges who have no jurisdiction in the church. Believers should rather be cheated or sued by unbelievers than cheat or sue a fellow believer. Why? Because if we have been raised with Christ then we are all part of the same body and should behave in sync with one another.

Questions:

1. What general problem is addressed in vss. 1-8?
2. What will Christians do according to vss. 2-3? What is Paul's point in saying this?
3. What does it mean to have 'standing'? (vs. 4)
4. What should Christians do instead of going to court?
5. Why should we be willing to be wronged or cheated?
6. What consequence(s) will unrighteous people suffer?
7. What do the words 'sanctified' and 'justified' mean? Which of these solves the problem of sin?
8. What are Paul's responses to the Corinthian mantra that all things are lawful?
9. Who controls food and the body? What is the body for?
10. What will God do to the body?
11. In what sense are our bodies members of Christ?
12. What passage does Paul quote and what is his point?
13. What price was paid for our bodies? How can we glorify God with them?

## **1 Corinthians 7**

Summary: In response to the matter the Corinthians wrote to Paul about, in regards to asceticism, Paul gave several commands to those who are married, both to the husband and the wife. He also gave several commands to those who are single, both the never-married and the divorced or widowed. Paul also gave commands that he differentiated as both from the Lord or from his own opinion, although he is confident in his opinions. All of these commands boil down to living lives of sexual holiness at all stages of life.

### Questions:

1. What does Paul quote in vs. 1? How does this relate to the quote in ch. 6?
2. Why might one choose to marry according to vs. 2?
3. What does the marital vision in vss. 3-5 communicate about gender relations?
4. Paul describes permanent celibacy as a spiritual gift. In what sense is this a spiritual gift?
5. What advice is given to unmarried people in vss. 8-9?
6. "If you want to have sex, then just get married." How would you respond to this claim?
7. What command does Paul give in vss. 10-11?
8. Is divorce by itself wrong or only divorce and remarriage?
9. What marriage situation is described in vss. 12-16?
10. Is there more than one way to salvation? (vs. 16)
11. What question concerns Paul in vss. 17-24 and how does this relate to vss. 12-16?
12. What circumstance is discussed in vss. 18-19? Why do we not need to change this circumstance?
13. How does vs. 21 illustrate the principle being taught?
14. How can someone be both free and a slave? (vs. 22)
15. What advice does Paul give in vs. 27? How does this relate to vss. 17-24?
16. Why does Paul advise them not to marry? (vs. 28)
17. How does vs. 31 explain vss. 29-30?
18. What advantage do the unmarried have? (vss. 32-34)
19. Do these verses justify the Catholic doctrine forbidding priests from marriage?
20. What explanation does Paul give in vs. 35 for his advice?
21. How long are men and women bound in marriage for? (vs. 39)



## **1 Corinthians 8**

Summary: When it comes to food, since there is one Lord who made everything, all food, even if sacrificed to idols, was made by the one Lord, so it is an honor to eat. However, some may not be at this level of maturity and it is incumbent on the stronger believer to be more mindful of how their actions may impact weaker believers. Moreover, a stronger believer's disregard for how their actions affect weaker Christians is sin (see also Rom. 14-15).

### Questions:

1. What is the subject of Paul's third "essay" introduced in ch. 8?
2. How does the result of knowledge differ from the result of love?
3. Is knowledge bad? Can we be saved by love without knowledge?
4. Though he actually lacks wisdom, what is it that a man may think he knows?
5. In what sense is an idol nothing?
6. If an idol is nothing, why would meat offered to an idol matter?
7. In what sense are all things 'through' or 'by' Christ?
8. What does vs. 8 mean in relate to vss. 4-6?
9. What constitutes a matter of liberty?
10. How can eating meat cause others to stumble?
11. What happens to the weak brother as a result?
12. Why bring up that Christ died for him?
13. What is the consequence to the one who ate meat?
14. "What I'm doing isn't sinful. If so-and-so sins as a result, that's their problem." How would you respond to this claim?
15. Read Romans 14. What is Paul teaching about the fellowship of believers?

## **1 Corinthians 9**

Summary: The apostles have a right to earn a living and enjoy the fruit of their Gospel labors, albeit Paul refuses these benefits. The OT law was written for us, to apply it to our context. Preachers should earn a living so they may be undistracted by the matters of the world (see also celibacy in 1 Cor. 7). All Corinthian believers should intentionally pursue self-control in all things so they may strive to win the race of their sanctification.

Questions:

1. What are the qualifications to be an apostle?
2. What rights did Paul have? (vss. 4-5)
3. In light of the examples given in vs. 7, what does vs. 6 mean?
4. How does Paul's quotation of Deut. 25:4 illustrate this point?
5. What was Paul's practice regarding support? How might receiving support hinder the Gospel? (vs. 12)
6. How do these verses relate to matters of liberty?
7. Is it wrong to pay preachers?
8. What does 'free' and 'slave' mean in vs. 19? How does this relate to matters of liberty?
9. Reflect on vss. 20-23. What was Paul's goal?
10. How might we replicate this strategy? Are there limits? Some have applied this to the use of one's preferred pronouns. Is this an appropriate application?
11. What qualities do athletes need? (vss. 24-25)
12. What kind of self-control is being talked about?
13. Why did Paul treat his body like this? (vs. 27)

## **1 Corinthians 10**

Summary: The Israelites in the wilderness are an example for us to avoid idolatry and sexual immorality. We should strive to be fed by the food of the Lord, which is memorialized in the Lord's Supper. But since we have been united to Christ, we should not eat food sacrificed to idols and the Lord's Supper. The Lord and Demons cannot go together. But if we are given food without any indication that the food was sacrificed, then we shouldn't worry about the spiritual element of what we eat.

### Questions:

1. How was Israel baptized to Moses? (vss. 1-2)
2. What did they eat and drink? (vss. 3-4)
3. What happened to the Israelites (vs. 5)
4. What events are talked about in vss. 7-10? (cf. Ex. 32; Num. 25)
5. What does it mean that these were written 'for us'? (vss. 6, 11)
6. What is Paul's conclusion? (vs. 12)
7. What lessons does vs. 13 teach about temptation?
8. What are the cup of blessing and the bread? (vs. 16)
9. What is the body in vs. 17? Is this the same body as vs. 16?
10. What is the connection between meat and idols in vss. 16-18?
11. If idols are not real, then why would this make the Lord jealous? (vss. 19-22)
12. We have read vs. 23 earlier. What's different this time?
13. What is the guiding principle in vss. 24-27 pertaining to liberty?
14. What is Paul's point/conclusions in vss. 29-31?
15. What is the guiding principle in vs. 33 pertaining to liberty?

## **1 Corinthians 11**

Summary: Paul writes to the Corinthians to not abandon standard, cultural practices regarding masculinity and femininity as it pertains to one's hair. A woman's hair should be seen as glorious and a man should not have long hair. If people would judge themselves, then they would not fall under the judgment of the Lord in regards to taking the Lord's Supper under false pretense. To take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner is a sin against the body and blood of Christ. Paul will elaborate more when he visits.

### Questions:

1. What example should be imitated? (vs. 1)
2. What role should traditions hold in the Christian life?
3. The Greek word *Kephale* ("head") can mean either 'source/origin' or "authority." This concept is sharply debated by scholars. How would these different meanings lead to different interpretations of this passage?
4. Since the Greek word for wife and woman is the same, and the Greek word for husband and man is the same, the text can just as easily say "wife...husband" instead of "woman...man." Does this change the meaning of this passage?
5. Verses 4-5 presume both men and women do what in the church? What is different?
6. What does it mean to have one's head covered?
7. What does it mean that women/wives are the glory of men/husbands?
8. What is Paul alluding to in vss. 8-9?
9. What do angels have to do with anything?
10. Do vss. 11-12 contradict vss. 8-9?
11. Do vss. 13-15 clarify Paul's earlier instructions about coverings? (In other words: is the covering in vs. 15 the same as in vss. 6 and 13?)
12. What is the custom not found in other churches?
13. How did they despise the church? (vs. 22)
14. Some claim the bread and cup literally become Jesus' body and blood. How would you respond using this passage?
15. What consequences are there to partaking 'unworthily'?
16. What is the consequence of not recognizing the body?
17. What can we learn regarding proper attitudes toward others when it comes to communion?

## **1 Corinthians 12**

Summary: The Spirit has distributed to every believer certain gifts/abilities however the Spirit sees fit, for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ. Nobody has every gift, and everybody will not have the same gift. We are all parts of one body, indispensable from one another. God has done this so that those who are in less prominent/visible roles of service in the church may be honored just as much as those in more prominent/visible roles.

### Questions:

1. What is Paul's concern? (vs. 1)
2. How does vs. 2 explain many problems we have studied?
3. What does vs. 3 mean and what does this teach about free will?
4. What does Paul mean by 'different' or 'diversity'? (vss. 4-6)
5. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? (vs. 7)
6. Is this different from the modern Pentecostal movement?
7. What spiritual gifts are mentioned? Are any not mentioned? (vss. 8-10)
8. What significance is there to the first gift mentioned?
9. Who gives and decides what gifts believers receive? (vs. 11)
10. What implication does this have on 'status' in the church?
11. What is the Body of Christ?
12. What are the implications of vs. 14 on Christian unity?
13. What do the theoretical examples in vss. 15-17 have to do with spiritual gifts?
14. What point does Paul repeat in vs. 18?
15. What do these verses teach us about Christian community?
16. Compare and contrast the examples of vss. 23-24 with vss. 15-17?
17. What are some examples of vs. 26 from our churches?
18. What is the implied answer to the questions in vss. 29-30?
19. How can Paul call the Corinthians to unity with emphasizing their differences?
20. Close by reading the below excerpt from Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove: IV Press, 2012), pgs. 103-104.

“The Triune God's delight in family still stands. And so the Father sends the Son, not only to reconcile us to himself, but to reconcile us to each other in order that the world might be a place of harmony, reflecting their harmony... The Spirit wins male and female, black and white, Jew and gentile all to the same uniting love of God which spills over into a heartfelt love of one another.

He unites us to the Son so that together we cry 'Abba' and begin to know each other truly as brothers and sisters. For the new humanity is a new family; it is the spreading family of the Father.

“At the heart of Jesus' high priestly prayer to his Father for believers is the request 'that they may be one as we are one' (Jn 17:22). That is not the sort of request one could put to a single-person God. Such a God would, of course, like oneness—after all, he is One—but it would be a very different sort of oneness from what Jesus has in mind.

“Oneness for the single-person God would mean *sameness*. Alone for eternity without any beside him, why would he value others and their differences? Think how it works out for Allah: under his influence, the once-diverse cultures of Nigeria, Persia and Indonesia are made, deliberately and increasingly, *the same*. Islam presents a complete way of life for individuals, nations and cultures, binding them into one way of praying, one way of marrying, buying, fighting, relating—even, some would say, one way of eating and dressing.

“Oneness for the triune God means *unity*. As the Father is absolutely one with his Son, and yet is not his Son, so Jesus prays that believers might be one, but not that they might all be the same. Created male *and* female, in the image of this God, and with many other good differences between us, we come together valuing the way the triune God has made us each unique...

“So it is not just that the Father, Son and Spirit call us into fellowship with themselves; they share their heavenly harmony that there might be harmony on earth, that people of different genders, languages, hobbies and gifts might be one in peace and love; and that one day, with one heart and one voice, we might cry: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb' (Rev 7:10). And this is what the family of God—by its very existence—makes known to the world: that the God of harmony is *the* hope for world peace; that he can and will unite enemies, rivals and strangers into one loving family under his fatherly care.”

## **1 Corinthians 13**

Summary: While the Spirit distributes these gifts however he pleases for the purpose of building up the common community of believers, we must use the gifts given to us from a posture of love above all other motivations. If we do not prioritize love over other motivators, then our use of our spiritual gifts is a waste of time. Why? Because all of these gifts will come to an end, but love will remain.

Questions:

1. Chapter 12 ends by calling us to a more excellent way. What is it?
2. Three of the Greek words for love include: *agape* (sacrifice for others), *eros* (erotic), and *phileo* (brotherly affection). From the context of vss. 1-3, which of these words do you suspect Paul is using? (Note: the definitions in parentheses above are overly simplified)
3. What are the results of using spiritual gifts without love?
4. Think of a real-life example of the Fruits of the Spirit:
  - a. How love is patient?
  - b. How love is kind?
  - c. How love avoids envy?
  - d. How love avoids boastfulness?
  - e. How love avoids arrogance?
  - f. How love avoids rudeness?
  - g. How love avoids selfishness?
  - h. How love avoids irritability?
5. If we don't keep a record of wrongs or follow vs. 7, aren't we opening ourselves up to being taken advantage of?
6. Verse 6 says that love results in a lack of joy sometimes. How could a lack of joy be a more excellent way?
7. In vss. 8-10, why is love the more excellent way?
8. Vss. 9-10 teach that some spiritual gifts cease. When did or will these cease?
9. How does the illustration in vs. 11 help explain Paul's point?
10. How does the now-future element in vs. 12 illustrate Paul's point on gifts ceasing?
11. Other than love, what else will never end?

## **1 Corinthians 14**

Summary: Speaking in tongues is not a haphazard, spontaneous thing. It is intended to be purposeful as actual languages able to be understood by others. The exception is an angelic prayer language, which does not actually build ourselves up for we don't know what we are saying. The speaker of tongues should pray that there is an interpreter so believers could be built up and so unbelievers could say amen. All use of the spiritual gifts, but especially tongues and prophecy, should be done in good order.

### Questions:

1. What gift is most profitable and why? (vss. 1-5)
2. What had to happen for speech to benefit people? (vs. 6)
3. What do the various musical instruments illustrate? (vss. 7-8)
4. What is Paul's point by these illustrations? (vss. 9-11)
5. What does the word 'edify' mean?
6. What was apparently wrong with how the Corinthians prayed in tongues? (vss. 13-14)
7. What must characterize our praying and singing? (vss. 14-15)
8. How does improper use of tongues affect outsiders? (vss. 16-17)
9. What point does Paul make again about what makes tongues important? (vss. 18-19)
10. What does it mean to be infants of evil? (vs. 20)
11. How are tongues a sign? (vs. 22)
12. What effect would uninterpreted tongues or prophecy have on a visitor? (vss. 23-25)
13. What are the churches doing when they gather and why? (vs. 26)
14. Under what conditions were tongues forbidden in the church? (vs. 28)
15. What restriction is placed on prophets? (vs. 29)
16. What does 'in turn' (vs. 27) and 'one-by-one' (vs. 31) mean?
17. What does Paul base his teaching on? (vs. 33)
18. What instructions are given about wives? (vss. 34-35)
19. How does the thrice repeated phrase 'in the church' guide our interpretation?
20. What claim did Paul make for the authority of Scripture? (vss. 36-37)
21. What are Paul's grand conclusions? (vss. 39-40)



## **1 Corinthians 15**

Summary: When it comes to laboring in our spiritual gifts, we must do so remembering the fundamental principles of the Gospel: that Jesus the Messiah died according to the Scriptures, was buried to prove he died; was raised according to the Scriptures, and appeared to prove he rose. If he has been raised then that changes everything about how we live; if it was a hoax, then that too changes everything about how we live. All of life hinges on the resurrection of Jesus. Since, however, he has been raised from the dead, so also will the globally and historically faithful be changed into the splendor of the heavenly bodies without our earthly defects, and this final transformation will take place suddenly.

*Due to the length of this chapter, take vss. 1-28 the first week and vss. 29-58 the second week.*

Questions:

1. What does the word 'Gospel' mean?
2. What is the content of the Gospel?
3. How does Paul's summary compare with his summary in Rom. 1:1-6?
4. Why does the inclusion of witnesses matter? What affect would these witnesses have had?
5. In what sense was Paul the least of the apostles? (vs. 9)
6. How does Paul's work compare with the other apostles? (vss. 10-11)
7. What belief had corrupted some of the Corinthians? (vs. 12)
8. Where could they have learned this?
9. What impact does the resurrection from the dead have on:
  - a. Jesus' resurrection?
  - b. Preaching?
  - c. Faith?
  - d. Forgiveness?
  - e. The fate of dead Christians?
10. What does 'first fruits' mean and how does it relate to the resurrection?
11. Is Paul teaching universalism in vss. 21-22? (cf. Rom. 5:12-14)
12. When will the dead be raised? (vs. 23)
13. What will happen after the dead are raised? (vs. 24)
14. What is the connection between Jesus' reign and resurrection? (vss. 25-26)
15. What do these verses imply about Jesus right now?

16. What does it mean that death is the *last* enemy?
  17. What two psalms are referred to? (vs. 27)
  18. Who is the exception? (vs. 27)
  19. What will result from Jesus' coming return? (vs. 28)
- 
20. Should we get baptized on behalf of others? (vs. 29)
  21. How do vss. 30-31 relate to the resurrection?
  22. If there is no resurrection from the dead, how should we live now?
  23. Who is Paul referring to as 'bad company'? (vs. 33)
  24. What question frames the next section? (vs. 35)
  25. How does the seed illustration begin to answer this question?
  26. What are the different fleshes in vss. 39-41?
  27. How are the terms sown and raised used in vss. 42-44?
  28. How do vss. 42-44 relate to vss. 39-41?
  29. Who are the first and last Adam? (vss. 45-46)
  30. What natures do we receive from these two? (vss. 47-49)
  31. How does vs. 50 answer the question from vs. 35?
  32. When will the dead be raised? (vss. 51-52; cf. cs. 23)
  33. Read Isa. 25:1 – 26:6. What does Isaiah prophesy will take place?
  34. Quoting from this, when does Paul say this all will happen?
  35. What is the sting and what is the victory?
  36. After all this Paul gives a one-sentence command. How/why does the resurrection prompt us to do these things? (vs. 58)

## **1 Corinthians 16**

Summary: Paul exhorts the Corinthians to devote to financial generosity so the spreading of the Gospel can occur. Paul hopes to spend some time with the Corinthians, if the Lord wills; albeit Apollos was unwilling. Paul also encourages them to receive Timothy and to send Timothy, who is himself a faithful servant. Paul is accompanied by a great host of leaders in sending this letter to the Corinthians.

Questions:

1. Read Acts 11:27-30 and 2 Cor. 8:2-5. The event described in vss. 1-4 are told about in these two other passages. What lessons are there about church finances?
2. Who would benefit from these funds?
3. When were the Corinthian Christians meeting?
4. How should someone decide how much to give?
5. How would these funds get to the destination?
6. What were Paul's plans regarding a visit?
7. Where was Paul when he wrote 1 Corinthians?
8. What was the open door?
9. What treatment should the Corinthians give to Timothy?
10. Think back to early in 1 Corinthians. Are Paul and Apollos rivals?
11. What do the expressions in vss. 13-14 mean? Why are these necessary?
12. What did Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus do for Paul?
13. Who are Aquila and Priscilla?
14. What contrast is made in vs. 22? What is the distinction between anathema and maranatha?
15. When is grace needed?

## **2 Corinthians 1**

Summary: Paul and Timothy together sent this second letter to the Corinthians. They have suffered immensely, but God was with them through it. They loathed life itself, but they remained steadfast in their hope that God would raise them from the dead, even from the death of despair. They are thankful for the Corinthians' prayers for them and desire to see them, but Paul's desired visit was delayed. Thankfully, while Paul's promises may not come to pass, all the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ.

### Questions:

1. To whom is 2 Corinthians addressed? (vs. 1)
2. How does this introduction compare to the introduction of 1 Corinthians?
3. How does Paul characterize his call as an apostle?
4. What does God do for our afflictions? (vss. 3-4)
5. How do our afflictions qualify us to comfort others? (vss. 6-7)
6. According to this passage, why do people suffer?
7. "If God is merciful, he would not allow suffering." How would you respond to this claim?
8. What problems had Paul encountered (vss. 8-9)
9. How does this compare to Paul's 'hope' in 1 Cor. 16?
10. What confidence had Paul gained for the future?
11. How could the Corinthians help Paul? (vs. 11)
12. How did Paul describe his conduct? (vs. 12)
13. How did Paul want them and him to view each other? (vss. 13-14)
14. How do Paul's travel plans compare to 1 Cor. 16? (vss. 15-17)
15. A claim was apparently made against Paul. How did Paul respond? (vss. 18-19)
16. What is Paul affirming about God's promises? (vss. 18-20)
17. What do vss. 21-24 teach us about God and ourselves?

## **2 Corinthians 2**

Summary: The reason Paul is writing the letter is so if there are hard feelings about his delay, they would be resolved before he arrives, at risk of reducing the amount of joy he will receive from them. If anyone has sinned against the group, let their shame before the group be punishment enough; welcome them back and comfort them in their repentant grief. Believers are an aroma for God to the world; either an aroma of death to the perishing or an aroma of life to those being saved.

### Questions:

1. How did Paul describe the kind of relationship he did and did not want with the Corinthians? (vss. 1-2; cf. 1:23-24)
2. What advantage did a letter have over a visit? (vss. 2-3)
3. For what reason did Paul not return to Corinth?
4. Likely referring to the matter from 1 Cor. 5, how had this individual affected Paul and the Corinthians? (vs. 6)
5. What was the result of this discipline and what was Paul's instruction now? (vss. 7-8)
6. What harm might come if they fail to forgive the sinner?
7. Why did Paul write to them? (vs. 9)
8. What would Paul also do to the individual? (vs. 10)
9. How would failure to forgive give Satan an advantage? (vs. 11)
10. Despite challenges, what does God do for his people? (vs. 14)
11. What two groups smell the aroma? (vss. 15-16)
12. How did Paul handle God's Word? (vs. 17)

## **2 Corinthians 3**

Summary: Paul does not need apostolic letters because the Corinthians themselves are his apostolic letters, proving to be written by God himself through the transformation of their hearts. While the mission of Moses was eclipsed by the greater mission of Jesus, there was nonetheless glory in Moses; therefore, there will be more glory in Christ who gives freedom to all who call on his name.

Questions:

1. Contrary to those opposed to him, what letter of commendation did Paul have and who read it? (vs. 2)
2. Where and how was this letter written (vs. 3)
3. In what area had Paul been made sufficient? (vss. 4-6)
4. What does Paul call a ministry of death? (vss. 7-9)
5. What does Paul call a ministry of righteousness?
6. Which of these ministries had the greater glory? (vss. 7-11)
7. What was passing away and what remains? (vs. 11)
8. How did this contrast affect Paul's preaching?
9. Describe the event spoken of in vs. 13.
10. How did Paul use this event? (vss. 14-15)
11. How and when is the problem solved? (vs. 16)
12. Can Christians now do whatever we want? (vs. 17)
13. Instead of a veil, what do we have? (vs. 18)

## **2 Corinthians 4**

Summary: We must bear the death of Christ in our bodies daily so that we also may bear the life of Christ in our bodies, for we have been joined to him, his death and his resurrection. This is foolishness to those who are perishing, but is the means of transforming God's people into the true image of God, which is Christ himself. We do this by recognizing our contemporary afflictions as merely momentary in light of eternity.

Questions:

1. In light of ch. 3, why would Paul need to tell them not to lose heart?
2. What does Paul expect to be renounced?
3. To whom is the Gospel veiled and what does this mean?
4. Who is the god of this world (age) and what does he do? (vs. 4)
5. How did Paul summarize his teaching? (vs. 5)
6. How should preachers view themselves?
7. How does the light of knowledge shine into our hearts?
8. What do the clay jars represent? (vs. 7)
9. How do the disadvantages in vss. 8-9 relate to the clay jars metaphor?
10. How is the death of Jesus manifested in Paul's life? (vss. 10-12)
11. What was Paul looking forward to? (vss. 13-14)
12. What helped Paul avoid losing heart? (vss. 15-16)
13. What's the difference between the inner and outer man?
14. What's the relationship between affliction and glory?
15. How do the things seen and unseen relate to affliction and glory?

## **2 Corinthians 5**

Summary: We can endure these momentary afflictions because the earth and our bodies are not going to last forever. While we will have new bodies on the new earth, our present bodies and the present earth is imperfect and should therefore not cause us angst as we live in it. We ought, therefore, to strive (in the midst of affliction) to carry ourselves as new creations, righteous and not sinful, who have been made alive through our union with Christ's death and resurrection.

### Questions:

1. Describe the two dwellings in vss. 1-4. How does this relate to ch. 4?
2. Which dwelling do we live in now?
3. Which dwelling did Paul prefer?
4. Read 1 Cor. 15:50-55. Has Paul changed his mind or is he saying the same thing?
5. How is mortality swallowed up by life?
6. What is it that God prepares? (vs. 5)
7. Why would this give Paul courage?
8. Which home do we now have? Is this the one Paul wanted? (vss. 6-8)
9. What is the chief end of man? (vs. 9)
10. What are at least four things vs. 10 teaches us about judgment? (cf. 1 Cor. 8:10-15)
11. How does Paul describe his work? (vs. 11)
12. If the Corinthians already knew about Paul's work, then why describe his work?
13. What motivated Paul's work? (vs. 14)
14. For whom did Christ die? (vs. 15)
15. What is our condition in Christ?
16. How does vs. 17 explain vs. 16?
17. What does the word 'reconciliation' mean?
18. Who needs to be reconciled?
19. What is our role in reconciliation?
20. As ambassadors, what message do we carry?
21. Explain each element of vs. 21.



## **2 Corinthians 6**

Summary: Paul appeals to the Corinthians to find commendation in any and every circumstance, whether seemingly good or seemingly bad. The Corinthians ought (and are not) being affectionate toward Paul with hearts wide open as he is to them. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to join themselves only with believers because they are temples of the Holy Spirit, and temples of the Holy Spirit have no business associating with idolatry.

Questions:

1. What plea did Paul make? (vs. 1)
2. How does this plea relate to 5:20-21?
3. Paul quotes Isa. 49:8. How does this relate to Paul's appeal in vs. 1?
4. Why should people believe now instead of later?
5. What did Paul do for his ministry? (vs. 3)
6. What are some ways Christians can cause unbelievers to stumble?
7. Verses 4-5 list a variety of problems. Why would Paul suffer through these things?
8. Paul also commends his work positively. How are these 'weapons of righteousness'?
9. In vss. 8-10, what is Paul's point in these rhetorical contrasts?
10. Whose affections were restricted? (vss. 11-12)
11. What did Paul tell the Corinthians to do in response? (vs. 13)
12. Verses 14-16 use these five words: partnership, fellowship, accord, portion, and agreement. What connection do these words share?
13. How does this shed light on the command not to be unequally yoked? Is this about marriage?
14. What are we required to do according to? (vs. 17?)
15. What blessing is promised for those who do so? (vs. 18)

## **2 Corinthians 7**

Summary: In light of all this, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to be devoted to pursuing holiness. Paul does not regret his letter, but even if he did, he is confident God used it to produce a special repentance that leads to salvation in them. Moreover, Paul is not angry with them because they are in his heart, and they have given comfort to him mediated by Titus who has personally been of ministry service to Paul.

### Questions:

1. From what should we cleanse ourselves? (vs. 1)
2. Why should the Corinthians have received Paul or opened their hearts to him? (vs. 2)
3. How does Paul describe his devotion to the Corinthians' well-being? (vs. 3)
4. Despite his rebuke of the Corinthians, what response did Paul have when he received news about them? (vs. 4)
5. How had Paul felt when he went to Macedonia? (vs. 5)
6. What gave him comfort or reassurance? (vss. 6-7)
7. What did Titus report to Paul?
8. Re-read 2:1-9. Explain Paul's back and forth on regret as it pertains to this disciplinary matter? (vss. 8-9)
9. What does the word 'repentance' mean?
10. What's the difference between godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world?
11. What comforted Paul? (vs. 13)
12. In what way did Paul believe he had not been made ashamed? (vs. 14)
13. What increased Titus' affection? (vs. 15)
14. There is a mood/tone shift in this chapter. What changed?

## **2 Corinthians 8**

Summary: Paul wants the Corinthians to know of the radical generosity from the Macedonians who gave abundantly out of their poverty. In doing this, they lived like Christ who also became poor, despite being rich, for the sake of others. Paul exhorts, but does not command, the Corinthians to do likewise. Paul encourages them to welcome Titus who has proven himself a faithful worker of the Gospel. Paul also let the Corinthians know that the large sum of money they were handling was being stewarded wisely and subject to the Lord's judgment.

Questions:

1. Read Acts 11:27-30 and 1 Cor. 16:1-3. What was the purpose(s) of the collection?
2. What are some of the ways the generosity of the Macedonians is described? (vss. 1-5)
3. What evidence is given that the Macedonians gave willingly? (vss. 1-5)
4. What motivated this generosity? (vs. 5)
5. What work did Paul ask Titus to do? (vs. 6)
6. What was Paul's ultimate goal for the Corinthians? (vs. 7)
7. Why would Paul tell the Corinthians about the Macedonians' giving? (vs. 8)
8. Jesus was born into poverty, so what does Paul mean that Jesus was rich? (vs. 9)
9. What does the death of Jesus have to do with giving?
10. When did the Corinthians begin taking up collections? (vss. 10-11)
11. Is giving about attitude or ability? (vs. 12)
12. Paul had a positive and negative intent in giving these instructions. What were they? (vss. 13-14)
13. Paul quotes Ex. 16:18 in vs. 15. Read Ex. 16:13-21. What is Paul's point in 'randomly' quoting from this passage?
14. How did Titus feel regarding the Corinthians and how did he show it? (vss. 16-17)
15. In vss. 18-19 and 22-23, how did Paul describe Titus and the two unnamed brothers?
16. What problem was Paul trying to avoid by telling them this? (vs. 20)
17. What was his intention? (vs. 21)
18. What, therefore, did Paul expect the Corinthians to do? (vs. 24)

## **2 Corinthians 9**

Summary: Paul is writing about money because they had, a year prior, placed it on their heart to give abundantly. Paul is pushing them along to finish what they started so that it may be given cheerfully, and not out of compulsion. The harvest that is reaped from generosity is the joy of being sharers in the ministry done by the apostles, etc.

Questions:

1. To whom was this contribution sent? (vs. 1)
2. In ch. 8, Paul used the Macedonians as an example. Whose example does Paul bring up in vs. 2?
3. Why had Paul sent Titus and others to Corinth? (vss. 3-4)
4. In vs. 5, what does the word 'exaction' (or 'bounty') mean?
5. What is the point of Paul's gardening illustration? (vs. 6)
6. How much should Christians give? (vs. 7)
7. What can God's grace provide for us? And what can we do as a result? (vs. 8)
8. Read Ps. 112. Paul quotes Ps. 112:9 in vs. 9. What is Paul's point with this quotation?
9. What does God promise in exchange for generosity? (vs. 10)
10. What two good results would result from the Corinthians' gift? (vss. 11-12)
11. Why would the gift result in glory to God? (vs. 13)
12. What is the inexpressible gift? (vss. 14-15; cf. 8:9)

## **2 Corinthians 10**

Summary: Paul writes all of this as an apostle who wishes to boast in nothing other than Christ and the ministry Christ gave to him, namely the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles. His authority is for edifying the Body of Christ, not tearing it down; so if his letters sound harsh, it may be the Holy Spirit's conviction pulsating through his words.

Questions:

1. On what basis was Paul humble? (vs. 1)
2. In vss. 2-3, what is the difference between walking *according to* the flesh and *in* the flesh?
3. How does this relate to waging war? (vs. 3)
4. What are our weapons of warfare? (vss. 4-6; cf. Eph. 6:10-18)
5. To whom did Paul belong? (vs. 7)
6. When did Paul get authority?
7. What was the purpose of Paul's authority? (vs. 8)
8. What was the accusation against Paul and what was Paul's rebuttal? (vss. 9-11)
9. What role should comparison play in ministry assessment? (vs. 12)
10. What limits did Paul recognize regarding his own boasting? (vss. 13-16)
11. In whom should we boast? (vs. 17)
12. Whose commendation matters and whose does not? (vs. 18)

## **2 Corinthians 11**

Summary: Paul admonishes the Corinthians for not being willing to put up with his teachings about the true Gospel, to present them as pure to Christ, yet they go off with any new gospel presenting a different Jesus as soon as they hear it. Paul has endured great persecution to bring the gospel to them, and taken money from other churches to bring it to the Corinthians, yet they disregard him.

### Questions:

1. How does Paul illustrate his jealousy for the Corinthians? In what sense was this foolishness? (vss. 1-2)
2. What example demonstrates the dangers of temptation? (vs. 3)
3. What is Paul concerned the Corinthians are putting up with? (vss. 4-5)
4. Read Gal. 1:6-10. How are these passages similar?
5. With what group of people did Paul compare himself? (vs. 5)
6. What criticism was apparently raised against Paul and how did he respond? (vs. 6)
7. What had Paul done to 'contribute' to this criticism of favoritism? (vss. 7-9)
8. In what does Paul boast? (vs. 10); cf. ch. 10)
9. What was the motive for his boasting? (vss. 11-12)
10. What does Paul teach us about Satan? (vss. 13-15)
11. From vss. 3-4a and 13-15, what connection is Paul making between Satan and these individuals?
12. In what sense is Paul being foolish and boasting? (vss. 16-18)
13. What kind of people had the Corinthians endured? (vss. 19-20)
14. What characteristics did Paul have according to vss. 21-22?
15. In vs. 23a, how did Paul describe his labors as a minister?
16. What problems did Paul face in vss. 23b-28 (and 32-33)?
17. How does the problem of vs. 29 relate to the paragraph of Paul's labors?
18. Read 1 Cor. 1:17-19 and 2:1-5. Why in vs. 30 does Paul boast in his weakness?
19. Who knew Paul was telling the truth? (vs. 31)

## **2 Corinthians 12**

Summary: Paul witnessed heaven but was prevented from speaking about what he witnessed up there. Paul is not quite sure what to make of that experience, other than that he believes it happened. Paul was given a thorn in the flesh to torment him and prevent him from exalting himself, and God told him it was to teach him that his grace was sufficient. Paul is preparing for a third visit and loathes the strong likelihood that Corinthians who sinned previously have not yet repented and will make Paul out to be a fool.

### Questions:

1. Verse 1 says Paul must go on boasting. What had he boasted of in chapter 11?
2. One of the critiques against Paul by the Super-Apostles was a lack of signs and wonders (Corinth is one of the only places in Acts where Paul doesn't perform a miracle). What two words related to signs and wonders did Paul need to address?
3. Paul is speaking of himself in the third person for rhetorical purposes. What is the 'third heaven'?
4. What revelation had Paul received 14 years prior?
5. What differentiation does Paul make between his early-self and his then-self? (vss. 5-6)
6. What problem did Paul have and what was done about the problem? (Note: The Greek word for 'thorn' means 'stake' or 'spike.' This is interesting because the Greek word for 'caught up' refers to an elevated-like 'out of body' experience of elation. Paul is, in a sense, pinned to the earth by this thorn.)
7. Who caused this problem?
8. Mirroring Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, how many times did Paul pray for the thorn to be removed?
9. What was God's answer to those prayers?
10. Paul defends his apostleship by giving a revelation, but it's not from the surpassingly great vision from 14 years prior. What is the revelation he gives? (vs. 9)
11. Why would Paul find pleasure in his problems? (vs. 10)
12. What compelled Paul to boast? (vss. 11-12)
13. What was the only 'disadvantage' Corinth had? (vs. 13)
14. What reason does vs. 14 give for Paul's financial support?
15. What motivated Paul to make sacrifices? (vs. 15)
16. How did the conduct of Titus and the unnamed companion compare with Paul's?
17. 2 Corinthians has been a defensive letter. What was the purpose for the defensiveness?
18. What did Paul fear he might find when he arrived at Corinth? (vss. 20-21)

## **2 Corinthians 13**

Summary: Paul has written harshly so that the Corinthians would check themselves before they wreck themselves. Paul much more prefers to build them up when he visits for the third time, not to deal with discipline. But he is willing to discipline in accordance with OT law that truth/guilt is established on the testimony of two or three witnesses; his three visits being seen as qualifying as those two or three testimonies.

Questions:

1. What would Paul do if he found the sins described in vss. 20-21 on his return? (vss. 1-2)
2. Read Deut. 19:15-21. What is the purpose of the principle of two or three witnesses? How does this relate to church discipline?
3. What did Paul intend to prove when he arrived? (vs. 3)
4. Explain the weak-strength language in vss. 3-4?
5. How does the 'examine yourselves' language relate to church discipline? (vs. 5)
6. What was Paul's goal? (vss. 6-9)
7. What did Paul hope to avoid? (vs. 10)
8. What did Paul hope the Corinthians would aim for? What do each of these terms/phrases mean and how do they relate to church discipline?
9. Verse 14 is one of the clearest articulations of the Trinity in the Bible. What does this verse teach about our experience with each member of the Trinity? (Note: Notice the order).