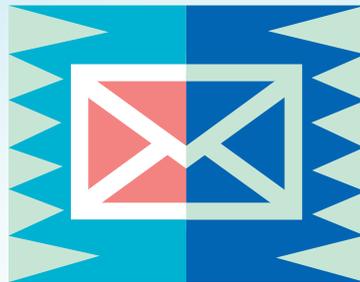


New Testament Survey

Problems of the Church

Studying 1 Corinthians



For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

3



CBLT

Contents

Problems of the church	3
I. Introduction	4
II. Problems in the Early Church	5
III. Conclusion.....	13
Appendix. Let's Look At 1 Corinthians	21

Problems Of The Church

1 Corinthians



LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
- II. Problems in the Early Church
 - A. Exploring 1 Corinthians
 - B. Establishing the Historical Perspective
 - 1. Authorship and Audience
 - 2. Geography
 - 3. Date
 - 4. General Background
 - C. Examining the Content
 - 1. Theme
 - 2. Key Verse
 - 3. Topics and teachings
 - 4. 1 Corinthians: Jesus Christ, Our Lord

III. Conclusion

Self Test

Appendix. Let's Look At 1 Corinthians

LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson you should:

1. Have a renewed appreciation for 1 Corinthians.
2. Know the author, audience, date, basic outline, key verse, and primary themes of 1 Corinthians.
3. Be able to explain the reason this book was written.
4. Be able to place Corinth on a modern day map.

5. Be able to explain God's wisdom versus the wisdom of the world.
6. Become aware of the variety of spiritual gifts that God has provided for the church.
7. Apply in your life some of what you have been learning from 1 Corinthians (see Practical Assignment 1).

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read through the entire lesson completing questions and exercises as you come to them.
2. Read through the entire book of 1 Corinthians at least once during this lesson.
3. Read the appendix, Chapter 8 of *A Look at the New Testament*.
4. Complete Practical Assignments 1 and 2.

WORD STUDY

Cosmopolitan—of, drawn from, or common to the entire world or all the peoples of the world

Isthmus—a narrow strip of land connecting two larger land masses and bordered on its long sides by water

I. Introduction

How excited I am as we come to the study of this book! First Corinthians has so many incredibly important teachings in it. While it is neither the doctrine of Romans nor the personal Christian life teaching of James, 1 Corinthians is full of teaching for the church. God, in His grand sovereignty, has placed each book in the Bible for a specific purpose and now we are going to discover the purpose for 1 Corinthians!

This lesson consist of questions, exercises and assignments that will help you to dig into this epistle, opening up your understanding to the context in which it was written, and helping you to interact with God's Word. There are answers in the workbook to help you if you get stuck. In addition there is a self test included so that you can review what you have learned.

You need to have a Bible or New Testament which you will feel free to mark up as you will be required to make many markings. When you read, always keep a pen beside you so that you can mark whenever you find something particularly important to you. You will also need a personal notebook for written assignments. In addition there is a supplement, *New Testament Geography and Chronology*, which you must have to complete some of the exercises. If you did not receive one, please ask your leader.

You can do this study on your own, but it will be much more beneficial if you meet with a group and discuss what you are learning and discovering. We are meant to help and encourage and share with each other. It gives all of us more insights and greater joy. And then there is the issue of accountability. So often we have good intentions, but... Life is full and we easily lay aside a study, and then it gets buried. We need to spur each other on! Knowing that you are going to meet with a group often provides that extra incentive to dig in and learn. And every moment spent in the Word of God will build truth into your life and faith in your heart.

It is interesting to consider what was happening in the early church. It is easy to think that the church built by Jesus Christ through His disciples in that first century should be close to perfect. But those early believers had to live in the real world, like you do, and Satan was doing all he could to blind them to truth, tempt them, and create confusion. As you study 1 Corinthians in this lesson look for the wisdom that will help you deal with problems in your church and life.

II. Problems in the Early Church

A Exploring 1 Corinthians

The following is a simple outline of 1 Corinthians. You will find it helpful to familiarize yourself with this outline before proceeding further in your studies and as you read through 1 Corinthians the first time.

OUTLINE OF 1 CORINTHIANS	
Introduction	1:1-9
I. Problem of Divisions in the church	1:10-4:21
II. Moral and Ethical Problems in the church	5:1-6:20
III. Personal Problems within the church	7:1-11:1
IV. Problem of Disorder in church services	11:2-14:40
V. Problems about the resurrection	15:1-58
Conclusion	16:1-24

You may want to look at each major section listing problems and then put sub-categories specifying specific problems and how they were addressed. Refer back to this outline as you begin to look at some of the background and later the teachings from 1 Corinthians. Use it to help you follow the flow of this book.

Take time now to sit down and read through the whole book of 1 Corinthians. Before you start read through the first exercise and follow the directions.



Exercise 1

Mark the key words. As you read through 1 Corinthians, please mark the following words in the indicated color:

- Blue -- "Lord"
- Yellow -- "Spirit", as referring to the Holy Spirit
- Brown -- "Body"
- Purple -- "Spiritual" ("spiritually")

Although we don't have time to delve into the issue here, you should have noticed that Paul sometimes uses "body" to refer to the physical body and sometimes to the Body of Christ. It is important to note these differences if you are preaching or teaching from 1 Corinthians.

B. Establishing the Historical Perspective

By studying the background of a book we often come across new pieces of information which help us to understand the book better. This is true with secular literature, and it is true of the Bible as well. Nevertheless, it is *always* more important to study the text than it is to study the background of the text. We have provided some background studies for each book in this course, but as you pass this information along through teaching and preaching, remember not to let the background information supersede the text from which you are speaking.

1. Authorship and Audience

Every book has an author and an audience, 1 Corinthians is no different.



Question 1 Who was the author of 1 Corinthians? How do you know?

We have learned about Paul from our study of some of his other letters. In the last lesson we saw that while he was at Corinth he wrote the Thessalonian letters. Not only was Paul planting this church and nurturing it, during his time in Corinth he was also tending the other flocks that the Lord had given to him.



Question 2 What is the reference from which we know that this letter was indeed written to the Corinthians?



Question 3 Where was Paul when he wrote this letter? 1 Cor. 16:8



Question 4 What missionary journey was he on when he founded the church in Corinth?



Question 5 What missionary journey was he on when he wrote 1 Corinthians?

As we look at the next section on the geography of the books of Corinthians we will learn a little bit more about the people that Paul was writing to and some of the struggles and advantages of their city.

2. Geography

In Lesson 2 you traced part of Paul's second missionary journey on Map 3 in the supplement *New Testament Geography and Chronology*. Take time to refresh yourself on the location of Corinth now; then read the information below.

Ancient Corinth was very similar to today's large cities of the world. It was a busy, cosmopolitan, commercial center known by all. The first Christian church of Corinth had an equally strong likeness to many urban churches of today. ... Observe...the strategic location of Corinth on the four-mile-wide isthmus between the Ionian and Aegean seas. Shippers moving cargo between Italy and Asia Minor via Corinth avoided the dangerous voyage around the southern tip of Greece. Small ships were moved across the isthmus by tramway, or cargo of the larger ships was transferred to transports waiting at the eastern port.¹

We will continue our study of Corinthian culture in the next lesson when we study 2 Corinthians.



Question 6 How would Corinth's strategic location affected the spread of the Gospel?



Question 7 Do you think that Corinth's location may have been one of the reasons that Paul chose to start a church there? Why or why not?

¹ Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*. — Chicago: Moody Press, 1981. — P. 265.

3. Date



Question 8 Based on what we studied in the previous lesson, after what date would 1 Corinthians have been written?

Most authorities accept 55 A.D. as a probable date for the writing of this letter. They determine this by various historical events that have established dates, and then follow through with how Biblical events relate to those. That is why there is always some leeway in exact dates.

4. General Background

We know that Paul was in Corinth when he wrote the letters to the Thessalonians. To keep the sequence of events clear in our minds, let's review what Paul did when he left Thessalonica.



Question 9 Where did Paul go when he was fleeing persecution in Thessalonica? (Acts 17:13-15)

In Acts 18 we see that Paul then proceeded to the city of Corinth. Read Acts 18:1-18.



Question 10 Who were Paul's coworkers in Corinth?



Question 11 How long did Paul stay in Corinth?

If time were the only factor involved in church planting then we would expect greater results from the Corinthian church. However the Thessalonians appear to us to be much stronger than the Corinthian church, simply because we saw how impressed Paul was with the Thessalonians' faith and ability to stand in persecution. Whereas here we have a letter to the Corinthian church that is dealing with a lot of sin and problems. All we can conclude is that we do not have the whole picture of either of these churches. But we do know that Paul went to great sacrifice to give himself for these people and never seemed to be deterred by the persecution he himself suffered for the cause of building God's Kingdom.

There were many letters being sent during the first century from the apostles to the churches, and the churches to the apostles. However, only those that we have recorded in the Bible are inspired by the Holy Spirit as Scripture, even though those other letters may have been very good. Paul even makes reference to another letter he had written to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 5:9. God preserved specifically for us what He desired.

C. Examining the Content

1. Theme

Most books and even college papers are built around a thesis or purpose statement. Correspondence as a general rule does not follow this pattern. However, in the New Testament letters we can often find an underlying purpose or theme for the letter. Keep in mind that most people could not write and items like paper and ink were not as commonplace as they are today. Most likely the writers of the New Testament did some serious thinking before they penned their books. In ma-

ny cases we know that they were answering a specific question or situation that had arisen in the churches. With this in mind it is safe to say that Paul had a reason for writing 1 Corinthians, even if he did not write out a specific purpose statement before composing this letter.

It is not an easy task to come up with an overall theme for a book that is dealing with so many topics. On the other hand it is not difficult to see that Paul's purpose in writing this letter was to deal with questions they had asked, as well as problems he had heard about the church. We can see from our brief outline that he covered a lot of different problems or questions. Some of these chapters cover important teaching that every believer should become familiar with. We in our day and age are actually blessed that the church in Corinth had so many problems. Because of them Paul was forced to deal with it in writing—and we get the benefit!

The critical issue is that Corinth was a very pagan city, and that paganism is where these dear believers had come from. You could say that they still had one foot in the world. Paul talks about them being worldly Christians rather than spiritual. So we will state as the theme:

God's principles must define Christian conduct.

Where do we find God's wisdom? We have both God's Word and the Holy Spirit to give us direction. Every church down through the ages has struggled with submitting to God's principles and not letting themselves be swayed by the world around them.

2. Key Verse

There are many verses in 1 Corinthians that are outstanding in and of themselves and it is difficult to choose one verse that sums up the entire book. A few that stand out are:

- ❖ 1:23-24, "But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."
- ❖ 6:12, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything."
- ❖ 8:9, "But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak."
- ❖ 10:23, "All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify."
- ❖ 14:26, "What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble each on has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."
- ❖ 15:57, "But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Based on the theme stated above 1 Corinthians 10:23 is a good summary verse for the book and so it will be stated our key verse.



Question 12 Write the key verse to 1 Corinthians on the lines below.

You will want to be familiar with this verse and its context for your continued study of 1 Corinthians, but you may also want to read the verses listed above in their context so that you have a deeper grasp of the content of 1 Corinthians.

3. Topics and teachings

First Corinthians is the heart of a pastor going out to his sheep. Eugene Peterson puts it this way:

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is a classic of pastoral response: affectionate, firm, clear, and unswerving in the conviction that God among them, revealed in Jesus and present in his Holy Spirit, continued to be the central issue in their lives, regardless of how much of a mess they had made of things. Paul doesn't disown them as brother and sister Christians, doesn't throw them out because of their bad behavior, and doesn't fly into a tirade over their irresponsible ways. He takes it all more or less in stride, but also takes them by the hand and goes over all the old ground again, directing them in how to work all the glorious details of God's saving love into their love for one another.²

How different the church would be if we adopted Paul's attitude toward our Christian brothers and sisters!

As you read through 1 Corinthians you may have noticed all the teaching on the life and practices of the body of Christ, the church. Although the teaching is not comprehensive Paul does cover some very important areas. The key areas are:

Wisdom

This topic is closely related to our main theme for 1 Corinthians. There are two kinds of wisdom, and they are at odds with each other. We are going to let you examine what the Scripture says about this.



Exercise 2

Finding God's wisdom. In 1 Corinthians 1:18—3:20 mark the following words:

wisdom, wise — green

fool, foolish, foolishness — orange

After you have done this, examine those verses that address this issue of wisdom and foolishness. How does the wisdom of God compare to the wisdom of the world? What is foolish to the world? What is foolish to God? What does God do with what the world thinks is foolish? What does the world do with what is wise before God? Write out your thoughts on this. You may even want to make a chart to compare these things. Be prepared to discuss it at your group meeting.

Christian Liberty

There is a lot of confusion about Christian liberty. God has set certain limitations on our liberty. Nevertheless, we walk in freedom in Christ and our main limitation is not being a stumbling block to those who are weak in their faith. When you have time you will want to examine 1 Corinthians 6, 8 and 10 more closely.

Sexual Conduct/Marriage

First Corinthians 7 gives us a lot of food for thought about the responsibilities in marriage as well as advice on whether to marry or not.

The Lord's Supper

In the famous passage in 1 Corinthians 11:20-34 Paul was specifically addressing abuse of the Lord's Supper. Obviously in the Corinthian church it had become a free-for-all, done in a worldly way without thought to the spiritual significance.

² Peterson E. *The Message // Remix: The Bible in Contemporary Language*. — Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002. — P. 2064.

Spiritual Gifts

First Corinthians holds one of the key passages in the New Testament about the gifts which the Holy Spirit gives to believers.



Practical Assignment 1: Study the Word

Read 1 Corinthians 12-14 now. Jot down the main teaching(s) of these chapters. You may wish to do this by outlining the chapters or by simply writing down key phrases that you feel summarize the teaching(s). Keep in mind that when Paul wrote this epistle he did not write in verses or chapters. Do not spend more than 20 minutes on this reading.

You will have noticed that 1 Corinthians 13, that famous chapter on love, is in the middle of two chapters about spiritual gifts. In paragraph form summarize and compare each chapter and explain the connections between them. Why would Paul write a chapter on love in the middle of his teaching on spiritual gifts? What is the difference between the first chapter on gifts and the last chapter? Again, do not spend more than 20 minutes on this activity.

Now that you have seen some of Paul's teachings on gifts in some of their greater context take time to look at the gifts individually. Make a list of each gift that Paul mentions in this passage and if possible write a short definition with it. Based on what you have learned through this brief study of these passages what do you believe was Paul's *primary* purpose in including the teaching on love in this section?

What practical applications can you draw from what you have learned? Write these down in your notebook. You should be able to easily come up with four or five applications. Keep the applications practical and personal; make sure that you can put them into practice in your own life.

Now choose one or two of these practical applications and write them down as goals for you to work toward in your life. Write down *specific* ways that you can put these applications into practice starting immediately.

Unity

Paul addressed the issue of unity very early in this letter and then returns to it later. In 1:10-13 he talks about the divisions and how wrong they are. Then in chapter 12 we get a fuller treatment of how we are one body under Christ and must function as one. It is interesting to note that the next chapter is on love. Definitely that will be a necessary ingredient in finding unity in the church.

Love

Just about anyone can name the beautiful chapter through which we can always measure our level of love against God's standard: 1 Corinthians 13. We mention it separately even though it was covered above in some form because it is worthwhile meditating on it regularly when you are evaluating your relationship with those who are close to you.

When you have time to study 1 Corinthians in-depth in the future, you can work through the various teachings in their context, outlining each passage and separating out key verses on various subjects.

It is always important to take teaching in its given context. Not only that but most teaching (especially in the New Testament) can be taken at face value and the simplest interpretation of a passage should be accepted.

4. 1 Corinthians: Jesus Christ, Our Lord

Read the appendix now as you answer these questions.



Question 13 How many times is the title, Lord Jesus Christ given in 1 Cor. 1:1-10?



Question 14 What is the significance of Jesus being our Lord?



Question 15 What was the boast of Corinth during the first century?



Question 16 How does Corinth compare with modern cities?

Corrections in Christian Conduct



Question 17 What is the greatest danger of the church as stated by Mears?



Question 18 Name the “parties” that were dividing the church in Corinth.

Food for Thought

The “party” attitude can take many different forms. Are there certain doctrines or traditions that are held strongly by some and opposed by others? Is there a well-known Christian leader who is held up by some as being the main source of truth? If you are a pastor or leader, are you promoting a “party” spirit by holding yourself up as the one to be followed? Maybe in true dictator-style you or another leader are looking to “squash” any opposition.



Question 19 Who is supposed to be the one leader of every church?

Are you part of a “party”, a specific group, in your church? What about those who are? How do you look at them? Are they your adversaries? Or do you promote love and unity with all members of your church? How do you (or should you) do this?

The Cross



Question 20 Why is the cross a stumbling block to some?



Question 21 Why is the message of the cross foolishness to some?



Question 22 What choice faces every person when they come to the cross?

Dr. Mears writes, “Christianity is Christ—not creeds.” Think about other religions that you have heard of. Or what about some churches that claim to be Christian, but actually trust in a set of rules to get them to heaven, not in Jesus Christ? All that is required in Christianity is to be in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Many of the problems in our churches today are caused by Christians who are looking to see how close to the edge of sin they can walk and still be a Christian. These are worldly Christians, as opposed to spiritual Christians. They are immature, and unfortunately often are not seeking maturity—they just want more milk.

What is the Gospel according to you? How close to the edge are you walking? The Bible says, “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Can others tell from your lifestyle that you are a Christian or would they never know?



Question 23 Who is responsible for your walk with Jesus?

We cannot blame our failure to walk uprightly on the church, our family, or friends. If I am not walking with Jesus Christ, then I am to blame.

Know Ye?



Exercise 3

List some of Paul's questions. Follow Dr. Mears' suggestion and underline the phrase “do you not know” each time it appears in 1 Corinthians 6. What are we supposed to know? How should each of these pieces of knowledge affect your life? Write your answers in your notebook and be prepared to share at your next group meeting.



Question 24 To whom does your body belong?



Question 25 What price was paid for you?



Question 26 Whose sanctuary is your body?

Liberty not Recklessness



Question 27 What right does Christian liberty give us?



Question 28 How far should our liberty go?



Question 29 What two questions should we ask in relation to our actions?

Instructions in Christian Conduct



Question 30 Who is supposed to be guiding the life of the church?



Question 31 What is the result when he does?

The Pillars of Paul's Gospel



Question 32 Why is the resurrection important to Christianity?

As you finish reading this chapter, go back to the initial thoughts about Christ's lordship in our lives. There are a wide variety of topics covered: some of them you may feel don't apply to you; some of them you may feel you have no problems with; some of them you may struggle with. But keep returning to the question of who rules in your life. Is it the world? Is it yourself? Or is it truly Jesus Christ? What about those you disciple? Have you helped them to deal with this issue?

III. Conclusion

First Corinthians is a beautiful epistle packed full of practical teachings for the individual and corporate Christian walk. What a difference it would make if we began to put *all* of these teachings into practice! So many of us pick and choose what we will practice in our pursuit of holiness, but we do not recognize that we need it all.

Paul's benediction in 1 Corinthians 16:23 is exactly what we need as we seek to put these teachings into practice in our own lives, "*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.*"



Practical Assignment 2: Preaching on Wisdom

Using your study on wisdom from Exercise 2, prepare a sermon or lesson. Prepare an outline to be submitted to your course coach, as well as preaching on it. If there is more than one leader in the same church taking this course, your leader may assign you a different topic from 1 Corinthians to preach on.

If you have enjoyed this lesson please note that it is one in a series of 12 lessons which cover the epistles of the New Testament and the Revelation. These lessons do not necessarily need to be done in order but we would encourage you to pursue your study of the scriptures both for your personal spiritual growth and so that you will be prepared to help others.

Other lessons are:

Lesson 1—James and Galatians—*The Truth about Faith*

Lesson 2—1 and 2 Thessalonians — *Standing Firm in Persecution*

Lesson 4—2 Corinthians — *Ministry Defended*

- Lesson 5— Romans — *Righteousness by Faith*
- Lesson 6— Colossians and Ephesians — *Christ and His Church*
- Lesson 7— Philemon and Philippians — *Joy and Forgiveness*
- Lesson 8—1 Timothy and Titus — *Church Leadership*
- Lesson 9—1 Peter, 2 Timothy & 2 Peter — *Encouragement and Warnings*
- Lesson 10— Hebrews — *The New Covenant*
- Lesson 11—Jude, 1, 2 & 3 John — *Love in Action*
- Lesson 12—The Revelation — *Climax of the Ages*

Self Test

Score: ___/101

True and False (5 points each answer, ___/80)

Mark the following statements either True or False.

1. ___ First Corinthians was written by Paul.
2. ___ One of the key topics in 1 Corinthians is “Wisdom”.
3. ___ Another key topic is “Spiritual Gifts”.
4. ___ The key verse of 1 Corinthians chosen in this lesson is 10:26.
5. ___ The key verse states, “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.”
6. ___ One key teaching was about the pastor’s role.
7. ___ Mears gives Jesus the title “Our King” for 1 Corinthians.
8. ___ Corinth was a strategically located city.
9. ___ The Thessalonian letters were written from Corinth.
10. ___ Barnabas was one of Paul’s co-workers in Corinth.
11. ___ Timothy also worked with Paul there.
12. ___ Paul stayed in Corinth for three years.
13. ___ “Holiness can only be attained by adhering to God’s principles, not the world’s” is the theme of 1 Corinthians.
14. ___ The Corinthians were exceptionally godly people.
15. ___ Paul was in Thessalonica when he wrote 1 Corinthians.
16. ___ “Body” and “Jesus” are two of the key words of 1 Corinthians.

Fill in the Blank (3 points each answer, ___/21)

Fill in the outline with the missing information.

(1)_____	1:1–9
I. Problem of Divisions in the church	1:10–(2)_____
II. Moral and Ethical (3)_____ in the church	5:1–6:20
III. Personal Problems within the (4)_____	7:1–11:1
IV. (5)_____ of Disorder in church services	11:2–14:40
V. Problems about the resurrection	(6)_____
(7)_____	16:1–24

Answers to Questions



Question 1

Paul. 1 Corinthians 1:1, 16:21.

Question 2

1 Corinthians 1:2.

Question 3

Ephesus.

Question 4

Paul's second missionary journey.

Question 5

Paul's third missionary journey.

Question 6

Very likely the location and shipping traffic of Corinth encouraged the spread of the gospel throughout the Mediterranean world.

Question 7

Your answer. From our previous studies of Paul's journeys it is obvious that he often chose major commercial cities to plant churches in; he may have done the same with Corinth.

Question 8

A.D. 53 or later. Based on the information in Lesson 2 we can see that Paul was probably in Corinth during A.D. 51-52, so the Corinthian epistles would have to have been written after this time.

Question 9

Athens, Greece.

Question 10

Aquila, Priscilla, Silas and Timothy.

Question 11

A year and a half.

Question 12

See 1 Corinthians 10:23 in your Bible.

Question 13

Five times.

Question 14

For Jesus to be our Lord means that He is the One who rules over us. We are His servants.

Question 15

You could not walk along the street without meeting a wise man.

Question 16

Your answer.

It seems that many modern cities are similar to Corinth.

Question 17

The greatest danger of the church comes from Satan, Public Enemy #1, lurking within its walls.

Question 18

Paul, Apollos, Peter, Christ.

Question 19

The Lord Jesus Christ.

Question 20

Some people stumble over the cross because to them it is a sign of weakness. They do not understand how a world Savior could die on a cross.

Question 21

There are people who consider the message of the cross foolishness because of its simplicity. They want a complex, difficult religion, not one that only requires humility.

Question 22

Every person must choose to either accept or reject the cross.

Question 23

Each one of us is responsible for his own walk with Jesus.

Question 24

My body belongs to Jesus Christ.

Question 25

Jesus' blood was paid for me.

Question 26

My body is God's sanctuary.

Question 27

Christian liberty gives us the right to do as we ought to.

Question 28

Our liberty should not harm another Christian. As a matter of fact, we should not even walk close to the edge of bringing harm to others with our liberty.

Question 29

Does my action harm weaker Christians?

Do my actions glorify God?

Question 30

The Holy Spirit

Question 31

Harmony

Question 32

Without the resurrection we would be worshipping a dead Christ, which means that we would have no proof that God did accept Jesus' atonement for our sins.

Answers to Exercises



Exercise 1

“Lord” occurs 68 times in 1 Corinthians.

“Spirit”, as referring to the Holy Spirit occurs 22 times.

“Body” occurs 46 times.

“Spiritual(ly)” occurs 17 times.

Exercise 2

Forms of “wisdom” and “wise” occur 26 times in these chapters.

Forms of “fool” and “foolishness” occur 9 times.

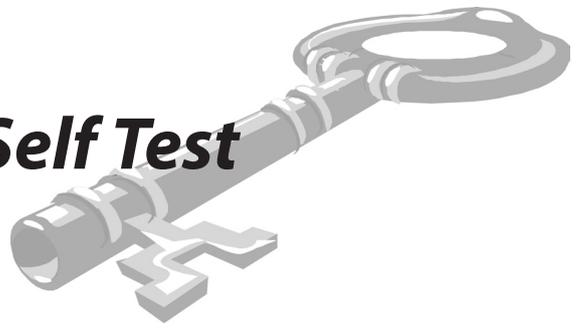
Your answer. Remember that you need to be prepared to share at your group meeting.

Exercise 3

1 Corinthians 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, and 19 all contain the phrase “do you not know.” From these verses we know that we shall judge the world and angels, the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom, our bodies are members of Christ, he who sleeps with a harlot becomes one with her, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Your answer.

Answers to Self Test



True and False

1. T
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. T
6. F
7. F
8. T
9. T
10. F
11. T
12. F
13. T
14. F
15. F
16. F

Fill in the Blanks

1. Introduction
2. 4:21
3. Problems
4. Church
5. Problem
6. 15 or 15:1-58
7. Conclusion

Let's Look At 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians Portrays Jesus Christ, Our Lord

Chapter 8 from *A Look at the New Testament* by Henrietta Mears³

Discover how many times the title, Lord Jesus Christ, is given in the first ten verses.

The name “Lord” is very prominent in this book (1 Cor. 1:31; 2:8,16; 3:20; 4:4; 5:4; 6:13, etc.). This is full of meaning, because all the trouble that had crept into the church at Corinth had come because they failed to recognize Jesus Christ as Lord. Crown Christ Lord of your life. He will bring order out of disorder.

The archeologist's spade is making Corinth live again! Corinth was the most important city of all Greece in Paul's day. Its wealth was fabulous. Men spent their days in tournaments and speeches. Luxury, dissipation and public immorality were rampant among this great industrial and seafaring population. Corinth attracted great crowds of foreigners from the East and West. Their gods were gods of pleasure and lust. There was, besides, much culture and art. The city abounded in studios of language and schools of philosophy. The boast of the day was that no one could walk along the streets without meeting a wise man.

As in most cities, there was a large colony of Jews who had kept a strong moral standard and held to their religious beliefs. But the city itself was the center of a debased form of the worship of Venus. The temple of this goddess was a monument of the vices of the city. Wandering preachers found an audience anywhere.

If we read Acts 18, we find how the Gospel reached this wicked city. The apostle Paul, then a man about fifty years of age, in the garb of a working man, entered the busy metropolis and went through its streets in search of a workshop where he might earn his own living. There were no billboards advertising the coming of a world-renowned evangelist. There were no headlines in the newspapers, reporting his meetings. Rather, this tradesman came into town and began his tent-making. This was a leading industry in that day, like building is today. He went into business with the well-to-do tentmakers, Aquila and Priscilla. He was always able to support himself, making

³ Used by permission.

enough to carry on his missionary work. A wonderful work was done in Corinth during the year and a half that Paul was there. He began by speaking in the synagogues to mixed congregations of Jews and Greeks. He found hatred among the Jews and scorn among the Greeks.

1 Corinthians is a difficult book to outline, but it takes up many wonderful subjects. It deals with Christian conduct. It is important how a Christian acts. Paul wrote his first letter to Corinth, to correct them about certain matters which had been reported to him as having crept into this church.

Corrections In Christian Conduct

(Read 1 Corinthians 1-11)

The wonderful church at Corinth, the brilliant jewel in the crown of Paul's labor, was failing. It all was because the worldliness (carnality) of the city had gotten within its walls. It was all right for the church to be in Corinth, but it was fatal when Corinth got into the church. It is a glorious sight to see a ship launched into the sea, but it is a tragic sight when the sea gets into the ship. The church of Christ should be set as a light in a dark place, but woe unto the church when the wickedness of the world invades it.

Practices common to this wicked city soon crept into the church. There were divisions among them; Christians going to law with Christians before heathen judges; behavior at the communion table was disgraceful; the women of the church no longer observed standards of modesty; the church membership was arguing over marriage and even spiritual gifts. Finally the church wrote Paul about these things, and asked his advice on the matter. These two books of Corinthians were written in answer to their requests.

The greatest danger of the Corinthian church was from within. This is always true. It is true of a nation. We must search for Satan lurking within the walls. He is Public Enemy No. 1.

Party Spirit

Paul speaks first of the divisions and cliques about which he had learned from friends and travelers. Nothing eats out the heart and life of the church like party politics. Christianity is LOVE. We have to be careful as Christians, because envy and strife in a church often go under the mask of zeal.

The Greek spirit of party politics had entered into the church, dividing it into parties, each trying to get the mastery. Their names are given in 1 Cor. 1:12. Paul, Apollos and Peter (Cephas) were parties named for their favorite teachers, and the Christ Party who held to that Name as if it did not belong to everyone in the church.

This dissension about religious leaders meant that the Christians at Corinth had slipped off center. There is only one Leader in every church. That Leader and center is Christ. If the church gets off center here, it goes off all down the line. A great fly-wheel on center moves quietly; off center it shakes the building to pieces. Christianity must be Christ-centered. If it is Christ-centered it is powerful. Christ Himself is the "good news." He did not only bring God's message; He was God's message. Paul, Peter, Apollos were all good men, but not God-men. How many are following religious leaders today rather than Christ Himself!

Jesus Christ is the only cure for division. (1 Cor. 1:13) Every eye, every heart, every spirit must be turned to one object—Jesus Christ, our personal Saviour. Paul said, in effect, "Your party spirit is a sin. Can you follow a mere man, hoping that he can give you life? Was that man crucified for you? Trusting in what man has to say is foolish. Men see nothing in the cross of Christ. Christ alone has all the power and wisdom of God."

Youth and old age follow Christ to the cross and then stumble at the “blood” of the sacrifice. This is what the Jews and Greeks of Paul’s day did. Shall we remove the cross from the Gospel because people do not like it? If we do, we remove the world’s only way of salvation. We must preach “Christ crucified.” It is not the teachings of Jesus that save men. His death alone can do that. The cross is the actual point at which God meets man.

The Cross

Unto the Jews a stumbling block—something they could not get over. (1 Cor. 1:23) They could not understand how such a display of weakness as the cross could be a source of power. A man dying on a cross did not look much like a world Saviour to them. The scribes and Pharisees turned from the cross, and hatred filled their hearts. It meant failure to them. The Jews needed signs of power. They demanded something they could see and grasp. The Messiah must be a world Prince, a miracle worker. A multitude of Christians are like this today. They worship success as much as did the Jews. They despise weakness, and admire force. These people tell us that men of science are apt to stumble at the cross because they cannot explain how the blood of one Man could wash away the stain of sin.

Unto the Greeks foolishness. The Greeks regarded with contempt the unscientific religion first taught in an unschooled corner of the world like Nazareth, by the son of a carpenter who never studied at Athens or Rome. The Greeks idolized “brains.” But God has never despised the humble things. He used David’s slingshot to overcome Israel’s worst enemy, the giant Goliath. He used the little boy’s lunch to feed the multitude.

Either the cross is the “power of God” or it is “foolishness.” If “foolishness,” then you think it is unfit to do any good in your life. But listen! That condemns you, not the cross. If a boy is gazing at the sun at high noon, and says, “It is not bright,” your answer could only be, “Friend, you had better see an oculist.” You would know he was going blind. And if the cross seems “foolishness” to us, it is because we are already perishing, and our ability to understand the wisdom of God has gone.

No man ever leaves the cross in exactly the same condition as he came to it. He must receive it or reject it. If he receives it he becomes a son of God (John 1:12).

Paul did not preach Christ the conqueror, or Christ the philosopher, but Christ crucified, Christ the humble. Read his words in 1 Cor. 2:2. We live in a world which is like a puzzle. We do not need to know the plan of the whole maze, but we need merely to pass a line through our hands which will guide us to the secret of life. Christ crucified is that thread. He leads us to God.

Christianity is Christ—not creeds

The fragile filament of an electric light will break at a touch, but will cooperate with the tremendous energy of electricity and produce a dazzling light. So we may be weak, frail, thin filaments, but in league with the Almighty God we become radiant lights to show forth His glory! This is what God wants of His ministers. Carey the cobbler, without God, was just a filament. With God, he became a great missionary light in India. Moody, without God, was just a pebble of humanity. With God, he became a rock of strength.

Paul says, *I judge not mine own self* (1 Cor. 4:3). Beware when you stand at the bar of your own conscience. When your conscience says to you, “You may do it,” it is always well to go to Jesus Christ and say, “May I?” It is hard to be fair with ourselves. No man, no matter how honest he is, is permitted to judge his own cause.

Do not depend on man’s judgment. The world judges our character upon a single act. Beware of your friend’s judgment because he may be too favorable in his opinion of you. We like to believe all the good things said about us and resent any unfavorable criticism.

Paul says there is one judgment to which he will submit—one that is always right. *He that judgeth me is the Lord* (1 Cor. 4:4). I am Christ's steward and to Him I am ultimately responsible. From His judgment there is no escape. His calm eyes are upon me.

A young violinist stood before a vast audience who was applauding his rendition with thunderous praise. He seemed to be deaf to it all. His eyes were on one who sat in the midst of the crowd. This was his teacher, one who was a past master in the art in which he was a beginner. Every change in his master's face meant more to him than the plaudits of the crowd. Not until the great master's head nodded approval did he accept his great ovation.

Little will it count for a man standing before the great white throne to say, "I held a very high place in the estimation of my neighbors. The newspapers blew my trumpet lustily. My name was carved on a marble statue which my fellow-citizens set up in my honor."

Seek praise from Him which is praise indeed. If He says, "Well done, good and faithful servant," what else matters!

Vice In The Church

We, as Christians, must act out in our lives what we believe in our hearts. It is a serious thing to profess to live the life of a Christian. If we lower the standard Christ has set, we give the wrong testimony to the world. You are an epistle open and read of all men. What kind of a Gospel is "The Gospel According to You"?

An old story is told of a man who wished to hire a coachman to drive his six-horse carriage to his home over a mountainous road. He called in several men. To the first one he said, "How near to the edge of a cliff can you drive without going over?" "Oh, I think I could go within a foot and not go over." He called the next one and asked him the same question. "Oh, I am an expert. I can drive to the very edge and not go over."

Then he called the third. When he questioned this man, he answered, "Oh, if you want me to drive near the edge, I can't. I'd stay as far from it as I could." "You're the man I want. I'll take you."

Young people, don't let your life be so near the edge of questionable things that some day you will slide off. If you fall, others will fall with you. Watch your testimony.

Righteousness comes from God, but it must be shown in our daily walk. The Corinthians, living in the Hollywood of their day, needed admonition just as we do. Righteousness is from Christ, and for Christ. "What would Jesus do?" should be the test in every questionable thing of life. Christ in you is the secret and the way of life. This is the guiding principle for every life.

Dr. Ironside spoke to some Hopi Indians about the responsibility of living for Christ. At the conclusion, an Indian said, "Man with the iron voice, you have made the way very hard today. I thought when I was saved by grace, that was all, but now it looks as though I have to walk to heaven on the edge of a razor." God has saved us by His grace, but He has called us into a holy walk with Him.

Know Ye?

This is one of Paul's expressions. His faith was built on facts. He wanted to know things. Underline the "know ye's" in chapter 6. What are we supposed to know?

Christ has paid a great price to purchase us, and it is His purpose to make us like Himself.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:19,20)

If our bodies have been redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ, then they no longer belong to us but to the One who purchased us with His precious blood. *Ye are bought with a price.*

A lad was sailing the little boat he had spent weeks in making. Suddenly a gust of wind snapped the string that held the small craft. It floated out and he could not reach it. His young heart was heavy. The thing which he had made was snatched from him. One day, some weeks later, he spied his boat in the window of a shop, with the price of \$1.00 marked upon it. He went in to claim it as his own, but the shopman refused to give it to him, saying he would have to pay the price. The lad ran home and emptied his bank, and after he had paid the price the shopman demanded, he took the boat in his arms and said, "Little boat, you are twice mine. I made you and I bought you." This is exactly what our Lord Jesus Christ did. He created us, then He bought us. We are twice His! Yonder at Calvary was the market-place where the Saviour bought us with His blood, but "He never got His money's worth," an old Puritan writer said.

God used to have a temple for His people; now He has a people for a temple. When a man steps into the church, off comes his hat, for he realizes he has stepped into the sanctuary. But has he forgotten that the real sanctuary in which Christ dwells is his body? We are taught as boys and girls not to be noisy or boisterous in the church, for it is the house in which we meet God. How much more important that we remember that our body is His dwelling place and that we should do nothing to grieve Him.

Liberty Not Recklessness

The Scripture does not lay down little rules for our conduct and tell us just the things we ought to do or not do, but rather states principles which should guide the Christian's actions. Someone has well said that Christian liberty does not mean the right to do as we like, but rather the right to do as we ought. Paul puts it, *All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.* (1 Cor. 6:12)

A man was walking down the street swinging his arms out from his chest and by mistake, struck a passer-by in the face. The man struck was furious and started to strike back. "Hey, isn't this a free country? Can't a fellow do his exercises on the street if he wishes?" "Yes," was the answer, "but remember where my nose begins, your liberty ends."

Let this be in your mind constantly as far as your conduct is concerned. If your liberty harms another, then your liberty has gone too far.

Yes, I can do anything I want to, but I must be sure my desires are to please Christ. What I do is an example to others, and may harm or bless them. I should not only answer the question, "Does my action harm weaker Christians?" but "Does it glorify God?"

Marriage

God states the principles of marriage very plainly. When people are married they take each other for life. Read what Jesus said, on divorce. Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:3-11; Mark 10:2-12. These are plain words.

Mark 1 Cor. 7:9,13 in your Bible. Think over these verses. They will tell us much of our Christian responsibility to those who are not Christians.

The Lord's Supper

Paul gives a careful account of the beginning of the Lord's Supper and then tells of its value.

Established on the night of betrayal.

Celebrated in remembrance of Him.

Symbol of His body broken.

A new covenant in His blood.

A pledge of His coming again.

Not to eat or drink unworthily.

As oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (See 11:25.) Christ wants us to remember Him! Think on Christ when you go to His table. He longs for your love!

Instructions In Christian Conduct

(Read 1 Corinthians 12-16)

In 1 Corinthians 12, we see the gifts that the Spirit gives to believers. In verses 1-3, he tells of the change that had come into the lives of these Corinthian Christians when they turned from worshipping dead idols to the living Christ. In order that they might develop in their Christian life, Christ gave them the gifts of the Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:4-11) One cannot teach the Scriptures unless the Spirit gives him wisdom. One must pray “in the Spirit” and to sing acceptably to God it must be “in the Spirit.” Sometimes we say when we look at a successful Christian, “My, he is a man of natural abilities,” when really he has received many gifts from the Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit guides the life of the church, there will be harmony. It is like the boats of Ancient Greece. The oarsmen were separated from one another by partitions over which they could not see. As many as 200 men were used to man these great three-decked vessels, and no one could see his fellow oarsmen. But their strokes were in perfect time and in such harmony that in time of battle they often drove the nose of the vessel into an approaching enemy ship with such speed as to send it crashing through its timbers, cutting it in two and driving it to the bottom of the sea. How was this perfect unity accomplished? By the director who stood at the rear of the vessel, baton in hand, and every oarsman answered to the time as he beat it. Being in unison with the director, every stroke came together and this cooperation made them invincible. This is what Christ wants in His Church. He wants all of us under the direction of the Spirit driving ahead against the enemy and winning victories over sin.

God’s Love Chapter

The way to use these gifts that the Spirit gives is beautifully told in 1 Corinthians 13. This chapter is called the Hymn of Love. Gifts without love are but poor things. People talk of love but they do not live the way they speak. Until the love of Christ is in a heart it is impossible for men to love one another really. Men seem to worship force. But history shows us that the victories of force do not last. Napoleon discovered this. He said, “Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne and myself all founded kingdoms upon force, but they have all crumbled to dust. Jesus Christ founded His Kingdom upon love, and today millions would die for Him.”

The Pillars Of Paul’s Gospel

No doubt there was a group in the Corinthian church who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Paul in answering this starts out by giving a wonderful statement of what the Gospel is in 1 Cor. 15:1-11. Paul did not give a new Gospel. It was the old Gospel, given in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus.

1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. (15:3)
2. He was buried. (15:4)
3. He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (15:4)
4. He was seen of many witnesses. (15:5,6)

If we deny the resurrection, we deny one of the greatest of all truths of the Gospel. But more than all that, no resurrection would mean no Gospel at all, for we would be worshipping a dead Christ. There would be no “good news,” for there would be no proof that God had accepted Christ’s

death as an atonement for our sins. If a sailor on jumping overboard to rescue a drowning man were drowned himself, then we would know that he did not save the man after whom he went. If Christ did not come out from the grave, then He could not bring anyone with Him from the grave. Christ's body died and it was His body that was raised again. His soul was committed into the hands of the Father.

Because Christ lives, we shall live also. *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

