

Appendix 1. Participant Handout Guides

If you are working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" or A4 size pages, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/1corinthians/1corinthians-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll typically find 4 to 5 questions for each lesson, depending on the topics in each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

Suggestions for Classes and Groups

Individuals who are studying online can probably complete one full lesson per week, though they'll need to be diligent to do so. But some of the chapters just have too much material for a one hour class discussion. The notes for a couple of the lessons show how a class or group might divide classes into two weeks. (Sorry it couldn't be shorter, but this is a long and rich book!)

Because of the length of these handouts – and to keep down the page count so we can keep the book price lower – they are being made available at no cost online.

www.jesuswalk.com/1corinthians/1corinthians-lesson-handouts.pdf

Most definitions are taken from Walter Bauer and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Third Edition; based on a previous English edition by W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker; University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979). This is the standard NT Greek-English Lexicon.

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

The City of Corinth

The ancient city of Corinth only one and a half miles south of the Isthmus of Corinth, a narrow land bridge (only 3.9 miles or 6.3 kilometers wide), which connects the Peloponnesian peninsula to the Greek mainland. Thus Corinth became prosperous from trade – both the trade moving by sea east and west, but also north and south between Greece and the Peloponnese.

Ruins of the Temple of Apollo, dating to the sixth century BC, can still be seen. Shops and monuments lining the Agora, larger than the Forum in Rome, also persist. To the south, the Acro-Corinthian fortress at the height of 1,886 feet could control all the trade routes.

At its peak stood the Temple of Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty, where 1,000 female prostitutes served, contributing to the city's reputation for immorality. In fact, the coined Greek word "to Corinthianize" meant to practice immorality and the phrase "Corinthian girl" designated a prostitute.



Temple of Apollo and ruins in Corinth.
Source: BiblePlaces.com

The Romans conquered and destroyed Corinth in 146 BC. In 46 BC, Julius Caesar re-founded it as a Roman colony. In 27 AD, it became the seat of government for the Roman province of Achaia. As a Roman colony, its citizens were primarily Romans, perhaps freedmen from Italy, but its population also included Greeks and a considerable Jewish community. As a chief trade center, it would become a strategic base of operations for Paul, since he would meet and minister to many people travelling through, causing the gospel to spread even farther.

Founding of the Corinthian Church

Paul first visited Corinth about 50 AD, during the last phase of his second missionary journey, after starting churches in Macedonia – Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea (Acts 16-17). He came to Corinth after visiting Athens and stayed with a couple of Jewish tentmakers, Aquila and Priscilla, who had recently been forced to leave Rome due to an edict by Emperor Claudius (about 49 AD; Acts 18:2-3). Paul was joined in Corinth by Silas and Timothy. Under their ministry the church grew. Paul seems to have been in danger during this time (Acts 18:9-10).



When the Jews appealed to the Roman proconsul Gallio (in office 51 to 52 AD) to force Paul to leave, they were rebuffed (Acts 18:11-17). Paul left Corinth probably in the spring of 52 AD, giving him two years there. After leaving Corinth, Paul stopped at Ephesus and then returned to Antioch. From there he went to Jerusalem (Acts 20:18-22).

Situation at the Time of the Letter

The congregation in Corinth developed into a large church made up of house church congregations scattered across the city. We read:

“Many of the Corinthians who heard Paul became believers and were baptized. One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, ‘Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people.’” (Acts 18:8-10)

Because of the types of problems Paul writes to the church about, it appears that they were predominately Gentile, made up of a broad mix of social levels. In the intervening years, Paul was in the midst of a very successful mission in Ephesus that reached people all over the province of Asia Minor.

Now the church was troubled and at odds with its founding apostle. Ironically, the central issue was what it meant to be “spiritual.” Problems included:

1. Competing allegiances to various leaders – Apollos, Paul, and Peter – that caused disunity and divisions (1:10-17; 3:1-23; 4:1-7).
2. A pride in a Hellenistic understanding of philosophy and rhetoric, rather than in the simple gospel (1:18-2:16; 3:18-32).
3. A rejection of Paul’s apostolic authority over them (4:8-21).
4. Pride in their tolerant attitude towards sexual immorality (5:1-13).
5. Rejection of the church’s authority to settle disputes, rather taking them to public courts (6:1-8).
6. Immorality with prostitutes (6:9-20; 10:1-13).
7. Rejection of marriage and celibacy (7:1-40).
8. Idolatry and eating of food sacrificed to idols (8:1-13; 10:14-11:1).
9. Offence at Paul refusing sponsorship but rather making the gospel free of charge (9:1-27).
10. Rebellion in hair styles and coverings (11:2-16).
11. Casual disregard for the proper receiving of the Lord’s Supper (11:17-34).
12. Exaltation of tongues over other important spiritual gifts (such as prophecy), misunderstanding the nature of the church as a body (12-14).
13. Disorder in church meetings (14:26-40).
14. Disbelief in the resurrection of the dead (15:1-58)

Tone of the Letter

1 Corinthians is the strongest exhortation of any of the Pauline letters that have survived, though it is not the first he has written them. For most of our letter Paul is engaged in correction, chiding, shaming, explaining, defending, exhorting, arguing, and pleading.

Groups within the Church at Corinth

- **Rich and the poor** are visible when Paul corrects them concerning their observance of the Lord's Supper (11:18-22).
- **Carnal and the super-spiritual.** On the one hand Paul corrects people who are accustomed to going to prostitutes (chapter 6) and on the other hand he corrects people who see sex in marriage as somehow below their exalted spiritual state (chapter 7).
- **Pagans and Jews.** Though the church began with people from the synagogue – both Jews and uncircumcised worshippers who attended the services (Acts 18:4-8) – most of the growth in the congregation after that seems to have come from the pagan population (12:2).
- **Uneducated and sophisticated.** While the congregation seems to be primarily people from the lower classes (1:26), some showed considerable sophistication in arguing why they should continue in their ways (chapter 6). There certainly was a group that was impressed with classical standards of philosophy and rhetoric (chapters 2-3).
- **Slave and free.** A number in the congregation were probably freedmen, though many were slaves (7:20-22).

Date and Place of Writing

First Corinthians was probably written from Ephesus about 55 AD and carried to Corinth by Stephanas, Paul's first convert in Achaia. Second Corinthians was probably written from Macedonia a year later.

1. Healing Church Divisions (1 Corinthians 1:1-17a)

Q1. (1 Corinthians 1:2) “What does “called to be holy” or “called to be saints” mean? What is a saint according to the Bible? Why is it so comfortable for us to say, “I’m no saint”? What is expected of a person who has been set apart as the personal property of the living God? What kind of behavior does the world expect of those who claim to be followers of Christ?

Q2. (1 Corinthians 1:4-7) How often do you thank God for the blessings of those who don’t like you, or of your actual enemies? What does it say about Paul that he thanks God for the gifts of those who are at odds with him? What specifically does he thank God for about the Corinthian believers?

Paul describes four ways in which God keeps us in Christ for that Day (1:8-9)

1. **Strength.** *Bebaioō*, “to make a person firm in commitment, establish, strengthen.”
2. **Forgiveness.** *Anenklētos*, “that cannot be called to account, unreprouvable, unaccused.”
3. **Faithfulness.** *pistos*, “worthy of belief or trust, trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust/faith.” (Lam 3:22-23; 2 Tim 2:13)
4. **Fellowship.** *Koinōnia*, “close association involving mutual interests and sharing, association, communion, fellowship, close relationship.” The word is also used to describe “participation, sharing” that goes on in a partnership.

Q3. (1 Corinthians 1:8-9) What gifts does God give us to ensure that we’ll continue in faith until the end? Why does each require our active participation to receive its full benefits? Which do you need to enter into more?

Q4. (1 Corinthians 1:10-12) What kind of divisions do you see in your congregation or in the Christian community in your area? What is the cause of the divisions in Corinth? What is the cause of divisions today? How do we obey the command to “agree with one another” (1:10)?

Key Verses

“He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:8)

“Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

2. Human vs. Spiritual Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:17b-2:16)

Paul is dealing with wisdom as understood by the various schools of Greek philosophy that captured the common mind in Corinth.

- **Epicureans** saw religion as irrelevant and saw the pursuit of pleasure as the primary good.
- **Middle Platonists** followed Plato in their belief in the immortal human soul that needed to be freed from its attachment to the body and ascend towards deity.
- **Paripatetics** followed Aristotle who rejected Plato's concept of an immortal soul.
- **Sotics** were materialists who believed even the gods had a material substance. An important question for them was, "How can the wise man live in accordance with nature?" Answer: through a virtuous life.
- **Cynics** espoused more a way of life than a philosophy, living with only the barest essentials. They were known by their ragged cloaks and begging, and often being caustic, abusive, and arrogant.

In Greek culture, oratorical performance was valued highly. Indeed, the Greeks had developed the whole science of rhetoric, the art of persuasive speech.

Focus on the Christ Crucified

- Message of the cross (1:17-18)
- Jesus Christ and him crucified (2:2)
- Christ died for our sins (15:3-4)

Q1. Name four value differences between Christian teaching and the values you see pushed to us on television. Example: Sex between consenting adults is okay, vs. sex belongs in marriage. Now name four more.

Q2. (1 Corinthians 1:21-25) In what areas do non-Christians in our culture stumble over the basic gospel of Christ? To what degree can we help bridge this gap through careful and creative presentation? To what degree might that be "watering down" the gospel? Why can't we escape the tension between culturally-relevant communication and changing the essence of the message?

1. **Wisdom** (*sophia*). Christ's values, his thoughts, his guidance are all wisdom for us.
2. **Righteousness** (*dikaioσynē*) – the state of people who are in right standing before God, without any unforgiven sins.
3. **Holiness or sanctification** (*hagiasmos*) – "personal dedication to the interests of God, holiness, consecration, sanctification,"
4. **Redemption** (*apolytrōsis*) – literally, "buying back" a slave or captive – "release from a captive condition, release, redemption, deliverance."

Q3. (1 Corinthians 1:30-31) In what way does Christ represent God's wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption? How far do these go to lay the basis of a truly Christian philosophical system?

Paul declares the things he did *not* bring to them in his preaching, that he specifically rejects.

1. **Eloquence or lofty words**, that is, a refined oratorical style (2:1).
2. **Wisdom** – at least, wisdom as would be perceived as such by the Greek philosophers (2:1).
3. **Persuasive words of wisdom**. Paul didn't present a sales pitch (2:4).

He also declares what he *did* bring them in his preaching.

1. **Testimony about God** (2:1).
2. **Focus on "Jesus Christ and him crucified"** (2:2).
3. **Weakness, fear, and trembling** (2:3).
4. **Demonstration of the Spirit's power** (2:5-6).

Q4. (1 Corinthians 2:1-6) Why didn't Paul conform to the rhetorical standards of his day in order to communicate more clearly? What is the danger of "repackaging" the message? What does it mean that Paul relied on a demonstration of the Spirit's power?

Q5. (1 Corinthians 2:9-16). Explain how we can "have the mind of Christ." How does this work, according to these verses? How does having the Holy Spirit "circulating" through our minds explain spiritual gifts working through us?

Key Verses

"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18)

"It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30)

"I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2)

"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power." (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

"... God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10)

"'For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:16)

3. Building a Healthy Church on Christ's Foundation (1 Corinthians 3)

"Spiritual" is *pneumatikos*. In classical Greek the word refers to spirit as the inner life of a human being. But in the New Testament, the word means "having to do with the Divine Spirit, caused by or filled with the Divine Spirit, pertaining to or corresponding to the Divine Spirit." Here it means something like "possessing the Spirit, the one who possesses the Spirit."

"Worldly" (NIV), "people of the flesh" (NRSV), "carnal" (KJV) is *sarkinos*, found in 3:1, 3, and 4, literally, "consisting/composed of flesh, fleshy," here, figuratively, "earthly, mediocre, merely human, worldly."

Q1. (1 Corinthians 3:1-3) In behavioral terms according to these verses, how would you classify yourself in terms of hunger for the Word? In terms of jealousy and quarreling? – infant, child, teenager, adult? What will it take for you to grow to the next stage?

Q2. (1 Corinthians 3:4-9) In what ways do denominations encourage Christian unity? In what ways do they foster disunity? Does belonging a "non-denominational" church make any difference regarding unity throughout the body? How can we tear down the barriers that divide us?

The temples built by Solomon, and later by Herod, were made of fine materials – "gold, silver, costly stones." In the temple, gold and silver plated many surfaces. The "costly stones" aren't jewelry here, but quarry-cut stones such as limestone and marble that were reserved for the finest buildings – such as the temple (Mark 3:1). Wood was expensive, since it was rare in many places. It was used for lintels or rafters. However, wood would burn, while metals and stones would not.

"Hay or straw" were legitimate components to strengthen the mud bricks that constituted most of the buildings in the Mediterranean region. Straw provided a binding substance to keep bricks and large pieces of pottery from cracking when they dried (Exodus 5:10-18). The test will be the fire of the Day of the Lord, the Day of Judgment (2 Peter 3:10).

Q3. (1 Corinthians 3:9-13) In terms of building congregations in our day, how would you assess quality vs. slipshod building materials and methods? How important is improving your ministry skills through training? Prayer? Practice? Diligence? Faithfulness? Doctrinal accuracy? Devotional life? Openness to spiritual gifts? Etc.

"Reward" is *misthos*, literally, "remuneration for work done, pay, wages," then by extension, "recognition (mostly by God) for the moral quality of an action, recompense."

"Suffer loss" (NIV) is *zēmioō*, in classical Greek, "to cause injury or inflict punishment," here "to experience the loss of something," with implication of undergoing hardship or suffering, "suffer damage/loss, forfeit, sustain injury." Perhaps the idea of "be punished" is also present.

"Saved" is *sōzō*, "to save or preserve from transcendent danger or destruction, save/preserve from eternal death." Christ's salvation sustains us, even though the image is escaping from a burning house. We escape with nothing, perhaps not even the clothes on our back.

Rewards. Ephesians 2:8-9; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27; Romans 14:10, 12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 5:12; 6:1; 10:41; 1 Corinthians 3:8, 14); 2 John 8; Revelation 11:18.

The idea of receiving rewards for our good works here on earth is embarrassing to modern-day Christians for two reasons: (1) free grace (Ephesians 2:8-9) and (2) sincere love (Matt 22:37).

“Destroy” (NIV, NRSV), “defile” (KJV) occurs twice in verse 17, in both instances using the verb *phtheirō*. Literally, the verb means, “to cause harm to in a physical manner or in outward circumstances, destroy, ruin, corrupt, spoil.” The word is used to describe ruining financially, seducing a virgin, bribing an official so as to corrupt him, tracking dirt on a carpet to ruin or spoil it, breaking the rules of a contest, etc. The second time the word is used (“God will destroy him”) it has the idea of “to inflict punishment, destroy,” in the sense “punish with eternal destruction.”

Q5. (1 Corinthians 3:17) Division and church splits injure people, especially tender new believers. Why do you think there is such a harsh punishment for those involved in hurting Christ’s church? What are better ways to deal with differences in the church?

Key Verses

“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:1)

“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.” (1 Corinthians 3:6-8)

“Each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:10b-11)

“The fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.” (1 Corinthians 3:13b-15)

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

4. The Struggles and Joys of Christian Leaders (1 Corinthians 4)

Paul uses two titles to describe his role in 4:1-2:

“**Servant**” (NIV, NRSV), “minister” (KJV) is *hypēretēs*, frequently used as technical term for a governmental or other official, “one who functions as a helper, frequently in a subordinate capacity, helper, assistant.” *Hypēretēs* suggests administering the affairs of another.

“**Steward**” (NRSV, KJV), “one entrusted” (NIV) is *oikonomos*, “manager of a household or estate, (house) steward, manager.” Figuratively, this word refers to “one who is entrusted with management in connection with transcendent matters, administrator.” Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10.

Q1. (1 Corinthians 4:1-2) In what sense is a Christian worker a “steward”? Have you ever met a Christian worker who wasn’t faithful? What effect did this have on the church? On this person’s witness. What are the reasons we are sometimes unfaithful in our area of ministry? What can we do to remedy that?

Q2. (1 Corinthians 4:3-5) Why doesn’t Paul care how others judge him? Why doesn’t Paul judge himself? Why are our motives so important in God’s judgment process? Do you see God as a harsh judge? An easy judge? Why?

Q3. (1 Corinthians 4:9-13) Why do you think Paul lists the abuse he has to take? What effect did he want it to have on his readers? What effect does it have on you? Do you avoid ministry that comes with abuse?

Q4. (1 Corinthians 4:17) What qualities about Timothy encouraged Paul to send him on a sensitive mission to the Corinthians – that might have involved some disrespect and abuse? If God were to call you to fulfill a sensitive mission – to a neighbor or across the world – would you accept? Why or why not?

Key Verses

“It is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” (1 Corinthians 4:2, ESV)

“Judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.” (1 Corinthians 4:5)

“What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” (1 Corinthians 4:7b)

“I urge you to imitate me.” (1 Corinthians 4:16)

“The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.” (1 Corinthians 4:20)

5. Confronting Immorality in a Cleansed Church (1 Corinthians 5)

Wives must be chaste, for one thing. And for men, adultery was frowned upon with the wives of other men and with underage free-born females. Beyond that, however, a married man thought nothing of sex with prostitutes or with his slave girls. It was taken for granted. Corinth was home to the Temple of Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty, where 1,000 female prostitutes served, contributing to the city's reputation for immorality. In fact, the coined Greek word "to Corinthianize" meant to practice immorality, and the phrase "Corinthian girl" designated a prostitute.

Homosexuality seems to have been accepted in both Greek and Roman cultures. Among the upper classes at least, older men would mentor adolescent boys, as well as use them sexually – a practice known as pederasty. Homosexual relations wouldn't be looked down upon – at least for the dominant partner. An effeminate partner, however, would lose status if his role were known. There is some evidence of female homosexuality, both on the Island of Lesbos (from which we get our word "lesbian") and in Sparta, but references in ancient literature are few.

There are two problems that Paul has to deal with:

1. The member's sexual immorality.
2. The church's tolerance of this relationship.

Q1. (1 Corinthians 5:1-2a) Why do you think the Corinthians were so proud of their tolerance of immorality? What does this say about their value system?

Several elements that are found in both our passage and 1 Timothy 1:19-20:

1. **Gross, unrepented of, sin.** Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). But what we cannot tolerate is blatant, proud, sin over which people feel no sorrow or willingness to repent. This destroys the community. Matthew 18:15-17.

2. **Excommunication**, exclusion from the Christian community. The verb is *exairō*, "to exclude or remove someone from a group, remove, drive away." Excommunication may be required for several reasons: (1) to protect the body from this pernicious influence, (2) to maintain standards of Christian behavior within the congregation, and (3) to get the attention of the sinner so that he will hopefully repent.

3. **Deliverance to Satan for instruction.** The verb is *paradidōmi*, "hand over, turn over, give up a person," as a technical term of police and courts, "hand over into the custody of."

Q2. (1 Corinthians 5:2b-5) What are levels of correction and discipline short of excommunication? Who should exercise that kind of correction? What do we do when a sinning member repents? Why is excommunication sometimes necessary? Why are we so unwilling to exercise it in our day?

Q3. (1 Corinthians 5:6-7) How does the presence of openly sinning members affect others in the body? We might use the analogy of a “bad apple.” What in Paul’s background might explain his use of “getting rid of yeast”?

Sins of Unbelievers (5:10)	Sins of Believers (5:11)	Sins in 6:9-10
Sexually immoral	Sexually immoral	Sexually immoral Adulterers Male prostitutes Homosexual offenders
Greedy	Greedy	Greedy
Swindlers	Swindlers	Swindlers Thieves
Idolaters	Idolaters Slanderer Drunkard	Slanderers Drunkards

Associating with sinners. Luke 5:31-32; Matthew 7:11 John 8:7; Matthew 18:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:15; 1 Corinthians 15:33-34.

Guidelines:

1. Love and restoration. We are to love people, even lapsed Christians. We are to seek to restore Christians who have sinned or fallen away.

2. Spending time to minister. Sometimes, restoring those who have fallen away (or the lost) means spending time with them (Luke 5:29-32; 19:5-10; 11:37-50; 14:1-14).

3. Not fellowshiping. When believers are so hardened that they reject appeals to repent from both fellow Christians and from the church body, then you are not to spend time with them – except from regular business dealings that might be necessary.

Q4. (1 Corinthians 5:9-13) According to this passage, with which sinners should we be willing to associate? Why make a distinction between unbelievers and believers? What are the dangers of associating with unbelievers? What are the dangers of associating with unrepentant believers?

Key Verses

“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons— not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world.” (1 Corinthians 5:9-10)

“But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one.” (1 Corinthians 5:11)

6. An Exhortation against Sexual Sin (1 Corinthians 6)

Suits between Christians in civil court say to the world that:

1. **Love.** Christians, whose prime directive is to love one another, can't get along with each other.
2. **Ethics.** Christians cheat and do wrong to their brothers (6:8).
3. **Competence.** Christians aren't competent to settle internal disputes.

Propositions

1. The local church has both the responsibility and the authority to settle disputes between its members.
2. The church has the authority to appoint judges to consider disputes.
3. God's holy people, the saints, will be involved both in the judgment of the world at the Last Day, as well as of fallen angels.
4. Christians have higher values than mere money and property concerns.

Paul teaches that the local church is a:

1. **Field** (3:5-9).
2. **Building**, a temple of the Holy Spirit (3:9-17).
3. **Court** to Decide Disputes among Members (6:1-8).
4. **Body** of Christ, made up of multi-gifted members who serve as Christ's hands and feet (chapter 12).

Q1. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8) How does it hurt the Christian cause when Christians take each other to court? How should disputes be settled between believers? How might this be instituted in a local congregation? Among churches in a geographical region?

Q2. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) What does the scripture teach here about participating in homosexual acts? What does the scripture teach about heterosexual immorality? Why is repentance so important for a believer?

Inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50; Matt 19:28-29; 25:34, 46; Luke 18:18; Galatians 5:19-21)

Words in 6:11

- "Washed" is *apolouō*, "wash something away from oneself, wash oneself," used in imagery of purification and Christian baptism. It is used as a figure of baptism in Acts 22:16. We see the noun *loutron*, "bath, washing" at Ephesians 5:26 and Titus 3:5.
- "Sanctified" is *hagiazō*, "consecrate, dedicate, sanctify," set apart as holy (1 Cor 6:19b-20a).
- "Justified" is a legal term, *dikaioō*, "to render a favorable verdict, vindicate ... justify, treat as just." There's another connotation as well: "to cause someone to be released from personal or institutional claims that are no longer to be considered pertinent or valid, make free/pure," in the New Testament in the passive voice, "be set free, made pure."

Q3. (1 Corinthians 6:11) Why is the gospel such good news to those who have been involved in gross sin? On what basis can a person be forgiven? On what basis can a person be cleansed from sin?

Excuses for going to prostitutes

1. "Everything is permissible for me."
2. "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"

Corrections

1. Not everything is beneficial to us.
2. We should not be mastered by anything. "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34).

Paul argues:

1. Our bodies are designed to serve the Lord (6:13)
2. Our bodies will survive this life through resurrection (6:14).
3. Our bodies are "members of Christ" (6:15a).

Q4. (1 Corinthians 6:13b-15) What does it mean that "your bodies are members of Christ himself"? What are the implications of that with regard to sexual sin? What are the implications of that with regard to your ministry?

Three points:

1. Sexual sin involves your core person (6:18b) in a different way than other sins.
2. The Holy Spirit lives within you (6:19a).
3. You belong to God, not yourself (6:19b-20a; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Q5. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) What are the implications of the truth that you don't belong to yourself, but to God? What category does it put us in if we resist that truth?

Key Verses

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

"And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:11)

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

7. Marriage and Divorce at the End of the Age (1 Corinthians 7)

“Not to marry” (NIV), “not to touch” (NRSV, KJV) is the negative particle and the verb *haptō*, “touch,” here, “to touch intimately, have sexual contact,” of intercourse with a woman.

“Deprive” (NIV, NRSV) or “defraud” (KJV) is *apostereō*, “rob.” Here it has the connotation “to prevent someone from having the benefit of something, deprive.” What is each spouse entitled to?

1. **The pleasure of sex and intimacy.** Ephesians 5:25, 28.
2. **The opportunity to beget or conceive progeny.**

Q1. (1 Corinthians 7:1-6) Why does Paul concede that “it is good for a man not to touch a woman”? What does he teach about sexual intercourse within marriage? How does he teach mutual rights within marriage, not just a man’s right? What does this passage teach about using sex as a bargaining chip within marriage?

Q2. (1 Corinthians 7: 9 and 37) What do verses 9 and 37 teach about sex between couples who are engaged but not married? What counsel does Paul give to engaged couples who do not control themselves sexually?

1. Believers should not separate from their believing spouses.
2. If there is a separation of believing spouses, the believers should
 - a. EITHER remain unmarried.
 - b. OR seek to reconcile their marriage.

According to prevailing law in Corinth, there was nothing the believing spouse could do to prevent a divorce if the unbelieving spouse insisted on ending the marriage. But Paul does command a believing spouse not to initiate “divorce by separation.”

“Sanctified” (NIV, KJV), “made holy” (NRSV) is *hagiazō*, “make holy,” here, “consecrate, sanctify” by contact with what is holy. The believer is not *defiled* by such a marriage, rather, the unbeliever is in a sense *sanctified* by the relationship, and the children will be profoundly influenced towards Christ by living in a household with a Christian parent (Malachi 2:15).

“Bound” (NIV, NRSV), “under bondage” (KJV) is *douloō*, “to make someone a slave,” here figuratively, “to make one subservient to one’s interests, cause to be like a slave.” Here, passively, “to be bound (as a slave).” In what sense is the believing spouse free? Three interpretations:

1. Free to separate or remain separate (that is, not be required to seek reconciliation).
2. Free to divorce. In the Greco-Roman world, to separate was to divorce.
3. Free to remarry.

Based on a great deal of research about marriage and divorce and the teaching of Jewish rabbis, David Instone-Brewer¹ sees the instance in 7:15 as a parallel to Exodus 21:10-11 cited by Rabbis as a basis for divorce. The husband cannot deprive his wife “of her food, clothing and marital rights.”

Note: Sincere Christians disagree about allowable grounds for divorce. In your discussion, be sure to show love even when you might disagree.

Q3. (1 Corinthians 7:10-16) What do these verses teach about divorce for married believers? What about divorce where one spouse isn't a believer? What about remarriage?

Instructions Regarding Virgins (7:25-28a). Historically, this passage has been taken three ways by the church.

1. Whether a father should give his virgin daughter in marriage.
2. Whether men and women are living in a “spiritual marriage” without sexual relations.
3. Whether men and women who are engaged are being pressured by the ascetic “spiritual” elite of the church to refrain from getting married

“Present crisis”

1. Disruption due to sickness and death, experienced because of misuse of the Lord's Supper (11:30), or
2. General troubles and persecutions the church is going through, in the sense that Paul had written to the Thessalonian church:

Q4. (1 Corinthians 7:25-35) The *disadvantages* of remaining unmarried include being deprived of sexual relations. What are the advantages of *celibacy* that Paul discusses in these verses? How can married believers maximize “full devotion” to the Lord?

Key Verses

“The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:3-4)

“Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” (1 Corinthians 7:8-9)

“The unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.” (1 Corinthians 7:14)

“I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 7:35)

¹ See David Instone-Brewer, “What God Has Joined,” *Christianity Today*, October 2007, pp. 26-29; *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church: Biblical Solutions for Pastoral Realities* (InterVarsity Press, 2006); *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Eerdmans, 2002).

8. The Case for Spiritual Purity (chapters 8 and 10)

The Corinthian believers had grown up going to family parties, state feasts, and community celebrations that were held in the precincts of one of the various pagan temples in the city. There were no restaurants, so larger celebrations were held in the temple.

PART A (chapter 8)

New Christians could be offended by seeing believers eating in pagan temples.

1. Faith is shattered. The Greek word translated “destroyed” (NIV, NRSV), “perish” (KJV) is *apollymi*, “perish, be ruined.”
2. Consciences are wounded. Their consciences suffer a beating. “Wound” is *typtō*, literally, “to inflict a blow, strike, beat, wound,” here figuratively, “strike, assault” someone’s conscience.
3. Fall back into paganism. Some of these new believers are giving up and falling back into their old pagan ways.

Q1. (1 Corinthians 8:1-8) The “liberal” Corinthians had ready excuses for why it was okay to eat with their friends in feasts held in pagan temples. What were their excuses that Paul combats in verse 1-6? Sometimes we excuse our own questionable behaviors. How can we assess the validity of our excuses? What effect would observing *your* behavior have on new Christians?

PART B (1 Corinthians 10)

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 teaches us several things:

1. Everyone is tempted, even spiritual people. It is not a sin to be tempted. Martin Luther: “You can’t stop birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from making a nest in your hair.”
2. Temptation can seem overwhelming.
3. Your temptations are not unique to you.
4. God is with you in your temptations.
5. God won’t let you be tempted beyond your ability to resist. God will provide a way out so you can endure the temptation without falling. “Way out” (NIV, NRSV), “way to escape” (KJV) is the noun *ekbasis*, “way out of some difficulty, a way out, end.” Vincent says, “The word means ‘an egress, a way out.’ In classical Greek, especially, it refers to of a way out of the sea. Hence, in later Greek it is used of ‘a landing-place.’”

Q2. (1 Corinthians 10:12-13) What about our human make-up causes us to face temptation? What does this passage teach about our temptations? What does it teach us about God’s help in temptation?

“Flee” (NIV) is *pheugō*, “to seek safety in flight, flee,” figuratively, “to keep from doing something by avoiding it because of its potential damage, flee from, avoid, shun” (see 6:18).

“Participation” (NIV), also translated as “communion” (KJV) or “sharing” (NRSV) is *koinōnia*, sharing something in common with others. The root *koinē* means common in contrast to private –

common ground, common pastureland, communal property, a couple's community property. When it refers to people, it means "participants, fellows." The idea is that which is shared in common with others.

Q3. (1 Corinthians 10:16-18) What does *koinōnia* mean? What does it mean to "participate" or "share" in the blood of Christ? Or in the body of Christ?

Q4. (1 Corinthians 10:18) In what way did the priests participate in the altar by eating of the Old Testament sacrifices? How does Paul connect this observation with our participation with

Q5. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21) The beings behind idols are not real gods, according to 1 Corinthians 8:4. What kind of beings does this passage say they are? What then is the spiritual danger to us of participating in idol worship (or the occult, for that matter)?

Key Verses

"We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one." (8:4b)

"Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak." (8:9)

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." (10:13)

"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?" (10:16)

"Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf." (10:17)

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." (10:31)

9. Understanding a Leader's Passion (1 Corinthians 9)

Paul argues that they should view him as an apostle.

1. **Paul has seen Jesus**, 15:8; Acts 9:3; 17). Note that this is somewhat different from the qualification to fulfill the place of Judas as one of the Twelve (Acts 1:21-22).
2. **Paul founded the church at Corinth.**

Support for Christian workers (Malachi 3:7-12; Numbers 18:21-28; Leviticus 27:30-32; Matthew 10:9-10; Luke 10:7.

Q1. (1 Corinthians 9:4-12) Why does Paul argue for the right of apostles and other Christian workers to be supported, if he has decided not to exercise this right himself? Why would it hinder missionary work for a missionary to expect his new converts to support him?

Q2. (1 Corinthians 9:13-14) Why did Jesus command his disciples to receive support on their journeys? What scriptural obligation do Christian congregations have to do their best to support their pastor – and, if possible, other workers? What accountability will church board members experience when they pay their pastor less than they should?

Q3. (1 Corinthians 9:15-18) Why doesn't Paul have a personal choice about preaching? Will volunteer and bi-vocational Christian workers receive a greater reward in heaven than those who are paid here on earth? If so, why? If not, why not?

“Win” (NIV, NRSV), “gain” (KJV), in verses 19-21, is a commercial term, *kerdainō*, “to acquire by effort or investment, to gain.” (Matthew 25:16; Mark 8:36; Matthew 18:15; 1 Peter 3:1).

Q4. (1 Corinthians 9:15-22) Why did Paul “become all things to all men”? What was his purpose? Was he able to be authentic in doing so? What is the difference between Paul's chameleon ministry and mere role-playing? What are you willing to give up so that you can reach the people God has called you to minister to?

Isthmian Games. Corinth was home to the important Isthmian Games, held since the sixth century BC, and second in importance only to the Olympic Games on Mt. Olympus. The Isthmian Games were held every two years – the year before and the year after the Olympic Games. They were extravagant festivals of religion, athletics, and the arts, attracting thousands of contestants and visitors from across the empire. Winners were awarded with a wreath, originally made of celery, later woven of pine needles. Paul would have witnessed these games during his stay in Corinth in the Spring of 51 AD. Six core events made up the games – racing, wrestling, jumping, boxing, hurling the javelin, and throwing the discus. Other competitions included chariot races, and musical and poetical contests. Of these, Paul selects two in his exhortation to the Corinthian believers – running and boxing.

Q5. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27) What point is Paul trying to make by using athletic analogies? What place does self-discipline have in our effectiveness as Christian workers? What place does self-discipline have in keeping us from falling into gross sin, such as idolatry? How might lack of self-discipline disqualify us for all God has for us?

Key Verses

“If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? (1 Corinthians 9:11)

“... We put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 9:12b)

“When I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16)

“I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:22b)

“I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” (1 Corinthians 9:26-27)

10. Worship and Communion in the Early Church (1 Corinthians 11)

The problem seems to be that the “spiritual women” in the congregation were exercising their new Christian “freedom” in ways that were bringing division within the church, and threatened to scandalize the church in the community at large. These women had thrown off their traditional head coverings worn during worship, and were worshipping bare-headed – just like men!

1. The argument from headship (11:3-6)
2. The argument from order of creation (11:7-12)
3. The argument from nature (11:13-15)
4. The argument from established practice (11:16)

“Because of the angels” (11:10) probably refers to Paul’s belief that angels, as witnesses to the order of creation, attend worship services, and are “concerned that the ordering of things established at the creation is maintained,” thus supporting Paul’s argument from creation in verses 7-12. Two Qumran parallels seem to support this view.

One important question is what it means for the woman to “have authority” on her head. The words “sign of” (NIV) or “symbol of” (NRSV) do not appear in the text and are an interpretation, not a translation. The noun is *exousia*, “authority,” probably referring to “a state of control over something, freedom of choice, right (e.g., the ‘right’ to act).” Several interpretations:

1. Man’s authority over the woman.
2. Sign or means of exercising authority to pray and prophesy.
3. Authority over her head to do as she wishes.

Ultimately, what Paul meant here is rather obscure, which is problematic when people attempt to build doctrine on the basis of this verse.

The so-called “Covering Doctrine,” uses the word “covering” to refer to which authority a person is submitted to. It contends that all people in the church need to be properly “covered” by God’s “delegated authority” in the church. As you can see, it is a big stretch to use verse 10 to support anything like this doctrine.

Problems with practice of the Lord’s Supper:

1. **Individuality not commonality.** They didn’t eat together, but each family went ahead and ate on its own, without regard to the others.
2. **Division of the rich and poor.** The rich who could afford to bring food, weren’t sharing with the poor, who sometimes could bring nothing.
3. **Excess.** Some people brought and consumed so much wine at the meeting that they were getting drunk.

Anamnēsis, means “remembrance, reminder, recollection.” This isn’t just a passive memory, but an active “reliving of vanished impressions by a definite act of will.”

Note: Believers differ on some of these topics. Be loving in your responses, even though you might disagree.

Q1. (1 Corinthians 11:23-25) Why is it so important that we continually remember Christ’s

broken body and shed blood? In what sense do you believe that the bread is his body? That the wine is his blood?

The New Covenant in My Blood (11:25b). (Exodus 24:7-8; Jeremiah 31:31-32, 34; Luke 22:20; Matthew 26:27-28; Hebrews 13:20-21)

Q2. (1 Corinthians 11:25) What does the phrase mean: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood”? What is the old covenant? What are the provisions of the New Covenant?

“Proclaim” (NIV, NRSV) or “shew” (KJV) is *katangellō*, “to make known in public, with implication of broad dissemination.” The word is frequently used in the literature of public decrees.

Q3. (1 Corinthians 11:26) In what way is the Lord’s Supper a proclamation? To whom is the proclamation made? Why is this important? What happens to the church when its proclamation shifts to a different central theme?

Examining Our Hearts (11:28). “Discerning” (KJV, NRSV) or “recognizing” (NIV, NJB) is *dokimazō*, “to make a critical examination of something to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine,” often used of assaying the genuineness of metal, “to discern, distinguish as distinct and different.” To partake of the Lord’s Supper without any self-examination, without any reflection, is to consider that Christ’s death has no particular meaning for me. (Matthew 5:23-24; Mark 11:25; *Didache* 14.2)

12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous includes these steps:

4. “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

Q4. (1 Corinthians 11:28) What kind of self-examination at the Lord’s Table is appropriate? How do confession and repentance fit with self-examination? How do confession and repentance serve to bring spiritual health and character change?

To understand verses 29-30 we need to understand what “the body [of the Lord]” refers to. There are two possibilities:

1. **“Body” refers to the Eucharistic elements**, that is, the bread and wine which represent Christ’s body and blood. The meaning is thus that the communicants – that is, those taking communion – are judged for not recognizing that they are partaking of a sacred meal, and must act accordingly towards one another, caring for the needs of the poor and those who come in late.

2. **“Body” refers to the church, the “Body of Christ.”** The meaning is thus that communicants are judged for not discerning needs of other members of the Body of Christ, that is, the congregation.

“Judge” is *diakrinō*, here, “to evaluate by paying careful attention to, evaluate, judge.”

“Disciplined” (NIV, NRSV), “chastened” (KJV) is *paideuō*, from the realm of child rearing (from *pais*, “child”). It means, “to assist in the development of a person’s ability to make appropriate choices, practice discipline,” here, “to discipline with punishment” (Hebrews 12:5-6).

Key Verses

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1)

“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:26)

“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” (1 Corinthians 11:27-28)

“If we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.” (1 Corinthians 11:31)

11. Diverse and Unifying Gifts in the Church (12:1-31)

“Gifts” is *charisma*, plural, *charismata* (from which we get our word “charismatic,” gifted). *Charisma* means, “that which is freely and graciously given, favor bestowed, gift,” from *charis*, “grace, unmerited favor.”

“Service/s” (NIV, NRSV), “administrations” (KJV) is *diakonia*, “service,” here, “functioning in the interest of a larger public, service, office,” of the prophets and apostles.

“Working” (NIV), “activities” (NRSV, ESV), “operations” (KJV) is *energēma* (from a root which underlies our word “energy”), “activity as expression of capability, activity.”

“For the common good” (NIV, NRSV), “to profit withal” (KJV). The verb is *sympherō*, with the sense, “to be advantageous, help, confer a benefit, be profitable/useful.”

Q1. (1 Corinthians 12:7) What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? What happens when people don’t employ spiritual gifts for their intended purpose? What happens when a whole church full of people start using their diverse spiritual gifts?

In English we differentiate between these by saying that knowledge is related to knowing facts or having understanding, while wisdom is knowing what to do. Greek seems to be similar. “Knowledge” is *gnosis*, “comprehension or intellectual grasp of something,” while “wisdom is “the capacity to understand and function accordingly.”

1. The **word of knowledge** is a supernatural ability to know something that helps you minister to a person. (Acts 10:38; Luke 4:14; John 5:19; 14:12; 16:7; John 4:17-18)
2. The **word of wisdom** (Matthew 22:18-22; John 8:1-11). The supernatural ability to know what action to take, in a particular circumstance.

Q2. Is it legitimate to use Jesus as our example in the use of spiritual gifts? Or was he so different than we are that we can’t pattern our ministry after his example?

3. The **gift of faith** is not your garden-variety saving faith that has been apportioned to all (Romans 12:3), but enormous faith beyond anyone’s expectation. This kind of faith often results in great works. Example: George Müller (1805-1898), director of the Ashley Down orphanage in Bristol, England, that cared for more than 10,000 orphans during his lifetime. He made it a practice never to tell people of the financial needs, but to bring them to God in prayer.
4. **Gifts of healing** are well-documented in Jesus’ life. But they also were a mark of the early church’s ministry. (Mark 16:17-18; Acts). This is the gift of often seeing people healed through your prayer and ministry.
5. **The gift of “working of miracles”** (NRSV, KJV), “miraculous powers” (NIV), is two words: *energēma*, “activity as expression of capability,” and *dynamis* (from which we get our words “dynamic” and “dynamite”). It means, “power, might, force,” here, “a deed that exhibits ability to function powerfully, deed of power, miracle, wonder.”

6. **Prophecy** is a gift whereby God brings a message to an individual or a congregation through a person. Those who are used often in this gift could be termed “prophets.” We see prophets referred to in the early church (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 13:1; 11:27-28; 21:10-11).
7. **Tongues** (singular *glōssa*, plural *glōssalalia*) is the supernatural ability to speak in another language. It was used evangelistically on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4) and was common in the early church (Mark 16:17).
8. **Interpretation of Tongues** is the ability to interpret speaking in tongues, so that the whole congregation might understand what is being said.
9. **Discernment of spirits** is the special ability to be able to discern the spirits that motivate or oppress a person.

Note: This is not the time to criticize others’ use of spiritual gifts, but to look for positive examples of the use of spiritual gifts.

Q3. (1 Corinthians 12:8-10) Has God used you in one of these nine spiritual gifts – or someone you know? How has this gift help build up and strengthen your congregation or community?

Verse 11 teaches that:

1. The Holy Spirit empowers the gifts. The word is *energeō* (which we saw in verse 6), “to bring something about through use of capability, work, produce, effect.”
2. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts. Gives” (NIV), “allots” (NRSV), “dividing” (KJV) is *diaireō*, “distribute, divide, apportion.”
3. The Holy Spirit gives at least one gift to every person. The distributive pronoun is *hekastos*, “each, every.”
4. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts individually. The NRSV translates well the phrase, “to each one individually.” The pronoun is *idios*, “one’s own,” here, “pertaining to a particular individual, by oneself, privately.”
5. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts according to his own will and plan.

Q4. (1 Corinthians 12:11) What are several lessons that we learn from verse 11? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in spiritual gifts?

Q5. (1 Corinthians 12:27) How are you hurt by the people who don’t use their spiritual gifts for one reason or another? How much richer would your congregation be if you – and everyone else – were to use their spiritual gifts? What might happen in people’s lives? What might be the community impact of your congregation?

“**Apostles**” (*apostolos*). The noun is derived from *apostellō*, “to dispatch someone for the achievement of some objective, send away/out.” The noun was used in Greek of an ordinary “delegate, envoy, messenger,” and in the New Testament especially of God’s “messenger, envoy.” Besides the Twelve, other apostles are mentioned in the New Testament – Barnabas (Acts 14:14;

15:14), Andronicus and Junia (Romans 15:7), James, the Lord's brother (Galatians 1:19; 1 Corinthians 15:7), and perhaps Silas (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:2, 6).

"Teachers" (*didaskalos*).

"Helps" (KJV), "helping" (ESV), "those able to help others" (NIV), "forms of assistance" (NRSV) is the noun *antilēmpsis*, "helpful deeds." The main idea is that of "taking up" or "grasping," or perhaps our idiom, "giving a hand" (Luke 19:17).

"Gifts of administration" (NIV), "forms of leadership" (NRSV), "governments" (KJV) is *kybernēsis*, "administration." It derives from the verb *kybernāō*, which means "to steer," then "to rule." The *kybernētēs* is the "helmsman," then the "statesman."

Key Verses

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

"To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:8-10)

"All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines." (1 Corinthians 12:11)

"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." (1 Corinthians 12:13)

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 11:27)

"And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:28)

"Eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way." (1 Corinthians 12:31)

12. Love – A More Excellent Way (13:1-13)

Q1. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) What is the result of the greatest imaginable manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit done without love? Is it possible to operate a gift of the Spirit from a selfish or wrong motivation. Which make us more spiritual – Gifts of the Spirit or Fruit of the Spirit?

Agape Love

“Love” (NIV, NRSV), “charity” (KJV) is *agapē*, “the quality of warm regard for and interest in another, esteem, affection, regard, love.” The noun *agapē* wasn’t very common in classical or *koinē* Greek. The Greeks had several words for love.

1. *Erōs*, or erotic love, is the wonderful, sensual love between a man and a woman.
2. *Philos*, friendship, family love, is mainly concerned with those closest to us.
3. *Stergō* love (which does not appear in the New Testament) is often used in classical Greek for the love and affection between parents and children.
4. *Agapē*, a rare word in secular Greek. But in the New Testament, *agapē* is used to designate a love that is unselfish, caring about the concerns of another person. Agape love is what Jesus exhibited when, “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Unselfish love is rare unless God enables a person. “We love because God first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

“Patient” (NIV, NRSV), “suffereth long” (KJV) is *makrothymēō*, “to bear up under provocation without complaint, be patient, forbearing.”

“Kind,” *chrēsteuomai*, “be kind, loving, merciful.”

“Envy” is a strong, passionate emotion, but it is primarily characterized by love for oneself rather than love for others. “Envy” is *zēloō*, “desire, strive,” but here it is used negatively: “to have intense negative feelings over another’s achievements or success, be filled with jealousy, envy toward someone.”

“Boasting” is closely related to defending and propagating our own self-image. “Boast” (NIV, NRSV), “vaunteth” (KJV) is *perpereuomai*, “to heap praise on oneself,” behave as a *perperos* (“braggart, windbag”), “to boast, brag.”

“Proud” (NIV), “arrogant” (NRSV), “puffed up” (KJV) is *physioō*, “to cause to have an exaggerated self-conception, puff up, make proud someone.”

“Rudeness” is another non-love trait. “Rude” (NIV, NRSV), “behave itself unseemly” (KJV) is *aschēmoneō*, “to behave disgracefully, dishonorably, indecently.” A rude person thinks only of himself. If he takes someone else’s turn, it doesn’t matter. This isn’t about their needs but mine! But love isn’t rude or disgraceful.

“Self-seeking” is the very epitome of selfishness. “Seek” is the common verb *zēteō*, here “strive for, aim (at), try to obtain, desire, wish (for)” or even, “ask for, request, demand something.”

“Irritability.” “Easily angered” (NIV), “irritable” (NRSV), “easily provoked” (KJV) is *paroxynō* (from which we get our word, “paroxysm”). The verb means “to cause a state of inward arousal,

urge on, stimulate," especially, "provoke to wrath, irritate." Here it is used in the passive, "become irritated, angry."

"Keeping score" in relationships is a red flag of an unloving attitude. "Keeps no record of wrongs" (NIV, rather literally), "resentful" (NRSV), "thinketh no evil" (KJV) is several words in Greek. *Logizomai* is "to determine by mathematical process, reckon, calculate," here, as it might be used in a context of financial accounting, "count, take into account something." *Kakos* generally pertains to "not meeting accepted standards of behavior, bad, worthless, inferior," here, "evil, wrong."

"Delighting in evil," being glad or rejoicing when something bad happens to a person we don't like.

"Rejoicing in truth," join with others in rejoicing that justice is done, that the hidden truth of a situation comes to light, but not personalize it by gloating over the suffering of a person whom God loves.

Q2. (1 Corinthians 13:4-6) Which one or two of these tests of agape love do you have the most trouble with? How might prayer help you grow? How will walking with the Spirit help you deal with these flaws?

Love always protects. In our passage *stegō* could have two meanings: "to keep confidential, cover, pass over in silence" (NIV) or "to bear up against difficulties, bear, stand, endure" (NRSV, KJV) – either is possible here and both senses are true of genuine love.

Love always believes. "Trusts" (NIV), "believes" (NRSV, KJV) is the common verb *pisteuō*, "to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust, believe ... be convinced of something." Love is essentially optimistic and looks for the best.

Love always hopes. "Hopes" is *elpizō*, "to look forward to something, with implication of confidence about something coming to pass, hope, hope for."

Love always perseveres. "Perseveres" (NIV), "endures" (NRSV, KJV) is *hypomenō*, "to maintain a belief or course of action in the face of opposition, stand one's ground, hold out, endure."

Love never fails. "Fails" (NIV, KJV), "ends" (NRSV) is *ekpiptō*, basically, "fall off or fall from," here, figuratively, "become inadequate for some function, fail, weaken."

When "perfection" comes, then there will be no more need for the true but incomplete forms of prophecy, knowledge, and other gifts. "Perfection" (NIV), "the complete" (NRSV), "that which is perfect" (KJV) is the adjective *teleios*, generally, "attaining an end or purpose, complete," here, "pertaining to meeting the highest standard, perfect," as the acme of goodness.

Ancient mirrors weren't the silvered-glass. Polished copper or bronze mirrors dating back to 3,000 BC were owned by the wealthy. If you were poor, you could see your reflection in the water of a vessel or in a pool.

"Face to face" (Numbers 12:8a; also Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 34:10; Revelation 22:4).

The meaning of "that which is perfect." There are three main interpretations.

1. Canon is complete, or
2. The Church is mature, or

3. Christ has come.

See Ralph F. Wilson, "Excursus on the Meaning of 'That Which Is Perfect (1 Cor 13:10)'"

www.jesuswalk.com/1corinthians/12_excursus-meaning-of-perfect-1cor13_10.htm

Good Christians sometimes disagree about this question. Remember to be loving in your answer.

Q3. (1 Corinthians 13:10) When do you think the "perfect" comes? How do you support your interpretation?

Q4. (1 Corinthians 13:8b-13) Why is it important to Paul's argument to contend that even the greatest spiritual gifts will become obsolete? Why does he stress the permanence of love?

Key Verses

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails.

But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

13. Prophecy and Ministry by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:1-39)

1 Corinthians 14:1-4 teach us that.

1. Speaking in tongues is directed to God, while prophecy is directed toward men and women.
2. Speaking in tongues can be a type of prayer. Later in this chapter Paul links it with praise (14:15-16). Here Paul says that a person is “speaking mysteries (*mystērion*, “secret truths”) to God.”
3. The purpose of congregational prophecy is three-fold – strengthening, encouragement, and comfort.
4. The tongues speaker builds up himself, while prophecy builds up the church.

“Edifies” (NIV, KJV), “build up” (NRSV) is a word from the construction industry, *oikodomeō*, “to construct a building, build,” here used figuratively, “to help improve ability to function in living responsibly and effectively, strengthen, build up, make more able.”

Three roles of NT prophecy:

1. “**Strengthening**” (NIV), “upbuilding” (NRSV), “edification” (KJV) is the noun form (*oikodomē*) of *oikodomeō*. It refers here to spiritual strengthening and building up.
2. “**Encouragement**” (NIV, NRSV), “exhortation” (KJV) is *paraklēsis*, “act of emboldening another in belief or course of action, encouragement, exhortation.”
3. “**Comfort**” (NIV, KJV), “consolation” (NRSV) is *paramythia*, “that which serves as encouragement to one who is depressed or in grief, encouragement, comfort, consolation.”

Note. Good Christians disagree about some of these matters. Please be loving, even if you disagree with someone.

Q1. (1 Corinthians 14:1-4) What is the value of prophecy over tongues, according to verse 4? What does prophecy typically do to benefit the church, according to verse 3?

On 14:17, “Well enough” (NIV, NRSV), “well” (KJV) is *kalōs*, “pertaining to meeting relatively high standards of excellence or expectation, fitly, appropriately, in the right way, splendidly.” The NIV and NRSV translation “well enough” goes beyond the text and sounds as kind of a back-hand slap at praise in tongues.

Q2. (1 Corinthians 14:5-25) Paul does value speaking in tongues. What does its value seem to be according to verses 2, 4, 17, and (perhaps) Romans 8:26-27? How are the Corinthians abusing speaking in tongues?

Guidelines for speaking in tongues:

1. Two or three speaking in tongues is plenty.
2. People should speak in tongues one at a time.
3. Speaking in tongues is not allowed if there is no one with a gift of interpretation present.

How can everyone prophecy, even though everyone doesn't have a ministry as a prophet?

1. When we receive the Holy Spirit as believers, the Holy Spirit indwells us. (Romans 8:9). To explore further the term "baptism of the Holy Spirit," see "Spirit Baptism, the New Birth, and Speaking in Tongues." www.joyfulheart.com/scholar/spirit-baptism.htm
2. The Holy Spirit connects our spirits to the deep things of God, to the mind of Christ (2:10-16) as the conduit of God's wisdom, knowledge, and power in and through us.
3. Thus, any Spirit-indwelt believer can – at any time – be used by God in any of the multitude of spiritual gifts.

Guidelines for prophecy in a meeting:

1. A few people should speak in prophecy.
2. The other members should weigh carefully what is said. "Weigh carefully" (NIV), "weigh" (NRSV), "judge" (KJV) is diakrinō, "separate, differentiate," here, "to evaluate by paying careful attention to, evaluate, judge." (a) Was this a true word from God? And (b) if so, how is God speaking to me personally and how should this affect my life? Testing prophecy is biblical (1 Thessalonians 5:21), not a sign of unbelief.
3. Those bringing prophecy should speak one after another and not interrupt each other.
4. Prophecy should not be viewed as ecstatic and uncontrollable.
5. Worship of God is orderly, reflecting his own character.

Q3. (1 Corinthians 14:26-33) How are Paul's instructions to those who speak in tongues in verses 27-28 similar to his instructions to those who prophecy in verses 29-32? How do they differ? How might we hold meetings today that allow for the Spirit to inspire spontaneous contributions to the gathered people?

Calvin concludes: "The discerning reader should come to the decision, that the things that Paul is dealing with here, are indifferent, neither good nor bad; and that they are forbidden only because they work against seemliness and edification."²

Q4. (1 Corinthians 14:39-40) In your particular congregation, which parts of verses 39-40 are most needed in order to bring your congregation into a biblical balance?

Key Verses

"Everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church." (1 Corinthians 14:3-4)

"I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified." (1 Corinthians 14:5)

² John Calvin, *Commentary on Corinthians*, on 14:35. The translation I have cited comes from Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, p. 333.

“Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.” (1 Corinthians 14:12)

“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.” (1 Corinthians 14:14-15)

“What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.” (1 Corinthians 14:26)

“The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:32-33a)

“Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.” (1 Corinthians 14:39)

“But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” (1 Corinthians 14:40)

14. Resurrection and the Coming of Christ (15:1-58)

The Corinthian church has another problem. They don't believe in the resurrection of the dead. Yes, they believe that Christ was raised from the dead, but they don't believe that this extends to the bodies of Christian believers – a logical inconsistency. It probably came from a typical Greek dualism between spirit (good) and body (bad) (Acts 17:31b-32). Paul approaches his argument:

1. Reestablishes the commonly-held belief that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:1-11).
2. Shows the absurdity of their contradictory beliefs that Jesus was raised, but believers will not be (15:12-34).
3. Explains the form in which the dead will be raised – bodily (15:35-58).

“Hold firmly” (NIV, NRSV), “keep in memory” (KJV) is *katechō*, “to adhere firmly to traditions, convictions, or beliefs, hold to, hold fast.” The doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints is, in part: “The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God’s power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives...” (See Colossians 1:23; Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:3; Hebrews 3:6; 10:39; Luke 8:15)

Q1. (1 Corinthians 15:1-2) In what sense is our salvation dependent upon us continuing in faith? Why is the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints important for us to understand?

The basic gospel that Paul taught was

1. That Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.
2. That Christ died for our sins – in fulfillment of Scripture, especially, Isaiah 53.
3. That Christ was buried – that is, he actually died, not just appeared to die.
4. That Christ was raised from the dead on the third day – in fulfillment of Scripture, especially Psalms 16:10-11, Isaiah 53:10-12; and Hosea 6:2 (see Luke 24:27, 46).

Q2. (1 Corinthians 15:3-7) What is the core of the gospel according to this verse? Paraphrase it in your own words based on this passage.

Here's Paul's argument.

1. You preach Christ is raised from the dead
AND that there is no resurrection of the dead.
That is a logical contradiction.
2. If Christ has not been raised from the dead
 - i. Our preaching is useless
 - ii. Your faith is empty.
 - iii. Paul is a false witness.
 - iv. You are still in your sins.
 - v. Those Christians who have died are lost.
 - vi. You are to be pitied, since you have no eternal hope.

The doctrine of the Trinity declares that the Father and Son and Holy Spirit are equal in Person, but the Son and Holy Spirit are subordinate in role, apparent in the very words “Father” and “Son.”

Q3. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) What does this passage teach us about the subordination of the Son to the Father? How can that be consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity?

Paul's argument: If there is no resurrection, then some things we do make no sense.

1. Baptism (15:29, see below), and
2. Putting lives at risk for the gospel (15:30-32; Luke 9:23).

Three approaches to interpreting 15:29 --

1. **Vicarious baptism** interpretation is that Paul's words reflect a Corinthian practice of baptizing catechumens who died before being baptized. It seems that Paul would condemn a practice that went against his teaching of salvation by grace through faith. To baptize vicariously implies a kind of magical view of baptism.
2. **Metaphorical baptism**, that "baptism" is a metaphor for Paul's sufferings or for martyrdom, entering the place of the dead. Remember, Jesus had used baptism as metaphor of suffering (Mark 10:38).
3. **Christian Baptism**, that Paul is speaking in a curious way of normal Christian baptism. He might mean, (1) because new believers are baptized to replace believers who had died, (2) baptism in order to be reunited with loved ones at the resurrection, or (3) new believers are baptized because of the influence of deceased Christians.

Paul makes four comparisons to help us conceive of the resurrection body.

Human body	Resurrection body
"perishable"	"imperishable"
"dishonor"	"glory"
"weakness"	"power"
"natural body"	"spiritual body"

Contrasts that Paul makes:

First Adam	Second Adam
"living being"	"live-giving spirit"
"natural"	"spiritual"
"of the dust of the earth"	"from heaven"
"earthly man"	"the man from heaven"

"Changed" is *allassō*, "to make something other or different, change, alter," derived from the adjective *allos*, "other."

At the Last Trumpet (15:52)

1. The resurrection will happen instantaneously (Luke 17:24; cf. Matthew 24:27).
2. The resurrection will come according to God's own schedule. Trumpet call announces Christ's coming when God gives the word (Joel 2:1; Zephaniah 1:14a, 16; Isaiah 27:13; Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 11:15; 1 Cor 15:51b-52a).

Q4. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) What does this passage teach us about Christ's coming? In what ways does it encourage us?

Q5. (1 Corinthians 15:58) Why do we sometimes get discouraged serving the Lord? What does this exhortation contain to encourage and motivate us?

Key Verses

"By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:2)

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect." (1 Corinthians 15:10a)

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." (1 Corinthians 15:17)

"The last enemy to be destroyed is death." (1 Corinthians 15:26)

"Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'" (1 Corinthians 15:33)

"The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;
it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory;
it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;
it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15:42b-44a)

"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

15. Giving and Personal Matters (16:1-24)

Bruce suggests that the offering for the poor in Jerusalem was:

1. An acknowledgement by the Gentile churches of the spiritual debt they owed to the mother church in Jerusalem (Romans 15:27),
2. A practical token to the Jerusalem church of the genuineness of the Gentiles' faith, and
3. A means of binding Jewish and Gentile Christians more closely together.

"In keeping with his income" (NIV) or "as God hath prospered him" (KJV). The verb is *euodoō*, originally "to lead along a good road" (from *hodos*, "road"), but here, in the sense, "have things turn out well, prosper, succeed." See Acts 11:29)

Q1. (1 Corinthians 16:2) What does this teach us about regular giving? About proportional giving? About planned giving, rather than last minute giving?

If the Lord permits.... (See 1 Cor 15:4, 8; 4:19; Romans 1:10; 15:32; Acts 18:21; Hebrews 6:3; James 4:13-15).

Q2. (1 Corinthians 16:4-7) What does Paul's wording, "if the Lord permits" teach us about making plans? Why is planning without this mindset actually arrogant?

Q3. (1 Corinthians 16:8-9) What does it take to continue to minister in the face of opposition? Why does opposition nearly always accompany success? In what way does this require spiritual warfare?



Exhortation (16:13-14)

1. Be alert. "Be on your guard" (NIV), "keep alert" (NRSV), "watch" (KJV) is *grēgoreō*, basically, "to stay awake," here, by extension, "to be in constant readiness, be on the alert."
2. Be steadfast. "Stand firm" (NIV, NRSV), "stand fast" (KJV) is *stēkō*, "stand," here, by extension, "to be firmly committed in conviction or belief, stand firm, be steadfast."
3. Be courageous. "Be men of courage" (NIV), "be courageous" (NRSV), "quit you like men" (KJV) is *andrizomai*, literally, "be a man, a male," figuratively, "conduct oneself in a courageous way."
4. Be strong. The verb is *krataioō*, "become strong."
5. Be loving. "Do everything in love" (16:14).

Closing (16:22). "Curse" is the Greek noun *anathema* (See 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; John 14:15). In the Greek text we read here a kind of intentional tongue-twister: *Anathema marana tha*. The Greek

marana tha is a transliteration of the Aramaic words meaning "Our Lord, come!" (Revelation 22:20-21)

Q4. (1 Corinthians 16:22) Whom does Paul curse in this verse? Whom does he invite to come quickly? Why, do you think, Paul looks forward so much to Christ's coming?

Key Verses

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." (1 Corinthians 16:2)

"A great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me." (1 Corinthians 16:9)

"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. ¹⁴ Do everything in love." (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)

"If anyone does not love the Lord – a curse be on him. Come, O Lord!" (1 Corinthians 16:22)