

1 Corinthians

Leader Guide

(NASB and ESV)

OVERCOMING DIVISIONS
AND DIFFICULTIES IN THE
BODY OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)

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Chattanooga, Tennessee 37422

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USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out


When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis

- Overview of 1 Corinthians

To begin this first discussion, you might ask your group if they think the message or situation of 1 Corinthians is relevant for churches now.

Tell them to look at their Observation Worksheets of 1 Corinthians and their At a Glance chart from the lesson. These can be their visual aids as they discuss what they learned.

AUTHOR AND RECIPIENTS

Who wrote this letter? And who was it written to?

The Apostle Paul and Sosthenes are identified in verse 1 as the authors who wrote to the church, the saints at Corinth.

What was the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians?

Paul had preached the gospel at Corinth sometime prior to writing this letter to them. He wrote a letter to them before this one, 1 Corinthians 5:9, 11.

What are some descriptions of this church at the beginning of the letter?

They were enriched in everything, and the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them. They lacked nothing and waited for Jesus' revelation.

Why was this letter written to the church?

1:10-11 Paul had been informed that there were quarrels among them. So he wrote to exhort / appeal to them to agree and have no divisions.

He wanted them to have the same mind and judgment.

4:14 He wrote to admonish them.

7:1 They had written to him. In chapters 7–16 he responded to what they wrote.

Ask about the main segment division in 1 Corinthians.

In chapters 1–6, Paul addressed the problems he was informed about (ESV—reported).

Chapters 7–16 are his response to what they had written to him.

1 CORINTHIANS 1

At this point, you can ask what chapter 1 is about and begin a discussion of each chapter's content. Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart as a visual aid.

NOTE: Your group might not mention all of the information listed for each chapter. This is listed for your help. You only need ask about something if a main point is not discussed by your group.

The Corinthian Christians were not lacking anything in their Christianity.
They had received God's grace and been taught by wonderful godly teachers.

The problem was that they were boasting in men, and that led to quarrels which led to division in the church.

They were seeking wisdom from men. Although there was nothing wrong with the men; Paul, Apollos, Cephas or Peter, and Christ; the Corinthians were creating divisions.

How does this relate to today?

The same thing happens now. There is division and quarreling in the body of Christ.
This letter has the solution for churches or individuals who do this kind of thing.
Paul said "agree . . . be made complete / united in the same mind."

Paul, after stating the problem, told them where true wisdom comes from—the cross.
God gives wisdom to men through the Lord Jesus Christ.

What was the instruction at the end of the chapter?

Boast in the Lord—not in men.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask about a theme for this chapter.

It might be something like:

Problem—divisions; Boast in God's wisdom, not men

1 CORINTHIANS 2

What is this chapter about, and how does it relate to the first?

Paul used himself and his preaching twice as an illustration of God's wisdom.

1:17 says he did not preach in cleverness of speech / eloquent wisdom.

2:1-5 continues that thought—his preaching demonstrated the Spirit and power of God, not his own persuasive / plausible words of wisdom.

In verse 6, he mentions the “mature,” which some of the Corinthians were not.

This chapter teaches that God’s wisdom comes through His Spirit. All believers receive the Holy Spirit when saved, and through Him the mind of Christ. That is true wisdom.

You might ask your group if they want to know the deep things of God, the things He freely gives us. Encourage them to continue studying His Word.

The contrast of the world and God’s wisdom continues.

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

It might be something like:

God reveals His wisdom through His Spirit

1 CORINTHIANS 3

How is the church’s immaturity described? What is this chapter about?

Jealousy and strife caused them to live like the others around them as they said, “I am of Paul” or “I of Apollos.” They were acting like infants in Christ. Relate this to 1:10-12.

This kind of behavior is spiritual immaturity and causes quarrels and divisions.

Paul wrote this letter to exhort / appeal to them, and believers now, to grow up in Christ.

Human teachers are only God’s servants like Paul and Apollos were. Paul and Apollos both built on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 16, Paul begins the repetition of “do you not know . . .” which goes through 6:19 in this first segment of 1 Corinthians.

They were boasting, but they didn’t truly know what they should have known. They could have known because God freely gives such knowledge to all believers.

3:18 is Paul’s first warning about being deceived. Don’t boast in men. You belong to Christ to whom all things belong.

Ask what your group wrote on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme.

Infants—jealousy, strife; Build on Christ

1 CORINTHIANS 4

How does this chapter continue the flow of thought from the previous three?

Paul stated again that Apollos and he were servants of Christ, not men to boast about.

He said he was trustworthy although some were examining / judging him.

Verse 6 is a caution that they not exceed what is written to become arrogant / puffed up.

In verses 14-21, Paul wrote that he wanted to admonish them because he was their father in Christ. So he exhorted them to imitate him as a mature man in Christ.

He sent Timothy to them, evidently with this letter, to remind them of Paul's ways, the ways of Christ.

Ask your group if they observed a change in subject between chapters 4 and 5. If so, what is it?

It seems that chapters 1–4 are a segment about boasting in men and how to correct this behavior which leads to divisions in the church.

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

Don't be arrogant or boast about servants and stewards

1 CORINTHIANS 5

What is this chapter about and how does it relate to chapters 1–4?

Paul referred to either the same report as in 1:11 or a different one.
But this problem had to do with immorality being tolerated in the church.
They were arrogant about tolerating this sin instead of mourning about it.

His instruction in this chapter is clear: verses 2, 7, and 13 say to remove the wicked one from your midst. This is another warning churches now need to hear and heed.

What is a theme for this chapter?

Remove the wicked from your midst

1 CORINTHIANS 6

What is this chapter about and how does it relate to chapter 5?

Lawsuits against brothers were being judged by the unrighteous outside the church. Paul warned again about being deceived—the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom.

They were not like the unrighteous anymore; they'd been washed. Therefore, they should not look to the unrighteous as wise.

He gave wise counsel about immorality—flee it. Immorality was first mentioned at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 5.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask about a chapter theme.

Lawsuits; Flee immorality, glorify God

What subject is in both chapters 5 and 6?

It seems that these two chapters are a segment about these two problems of tolerating immorality and lawsuits.

Ask about the other segments in the second part of the letter. What did the Corinthian church write to Paul about?

7 marriage and virgins

8–10 things sacrificed to idols / food offered to idols

11 traditions

12–14 spiritual gifts

15 gospel, resurrection

16 collection for the saints

To end the discussion, ask your group what kinds of problems the body of Christ deals with today that are the same or similar with those of the Corinthians.

Encourage them that as they study Corinthians, they can learn more about God's solutions to these problems—answers from the Lord for the Corinthians and for believers today.

**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 Corinthians 1

REVIEW

You might begin your discussion by asking your group why Paul wrote 1 Corinthians and what it's about. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart for help remembering.

He heard about divisions, quarrels, sexual immorality and lawsuits in the church. So in chapters 1–6 he exhorted and admonished them.

Chapters 7–16 are a response to what they wrote to him.

These chapters are about marriage, idols, traditions, spiritual gifts, the gospel and resurrection and the collection for other saints.

1 CORINTHIANS 1

Verses 1-9

How did Paul begin his letter?

He introduced himself by saying he was called an apostle of Jesus Christ by God's will.

Then he introduced Sosthenes, a Christian brother who was with him when he wrote this letter to the Corinthian church.

At this point, you might ask your group what "called" means.

Basically, it means "invited."¹

The same Greek root word is used in verses 1, 2, 9, 24 and 26.
Call in verse 2 is a different Greek word.

God is the one who called Paul as Jesus Christ's apostle.

Tell your group to look at their list on "The Church of God at Corinth" as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

¹ J. Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), G2822.

How did Paul describe the church at Corinth in verses 2-9?

Sanctified in Christ, saints by calling (ESV—called to be saints)

The same as all believers who call on Jesus' name
This use of "call" is a different Greek word.

Grace and peace from the Father and the Lord Jesus

Enriched in Him in all speech and knowledge

A confirmed testimony about Christ

Not lacking in any gift

Waiting for His revelation, Jesus' return

Will be confirmed / sustained to the end, blameless / guiltless in the day

Called into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son

What does "fellowship" mean?

"Fellowship" means "partnership,"² "community . . . participation,"³ "close association,"⁴
"to share in."⁵

The people of this church, individual believers, were in partnership with the Son of God Himself. They were true believers in Him.

How do those things relate to believers now?

This list is the same for all believers—all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Give time for your group to discuss how this description relates to them.

²James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996), G2842.

³Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993).

⁴Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996, c1989).

⁵Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993), G2842.

Verses 10-17

What are these verses about?

Chloe's people had informed Paul / reported that there were quarrels among the Corinthian believers.

The quarrels were caused by claiming to follow certain men.

Paul
Apollos
Cephas or Peter
Christ

NOTE: Some in your group might mention that Cephas is another name for Peter.

Paul addressed the divisions and quarrels among them.
Those who were saints in fellowship with God's Son waiting for his revelation.

How did he handle this problem?

First, he exhorted / appealed to them by the name they were in fellowship with, the Lord Jesus Christ

That they all agree

That there be no divisions among them

That they be made complete / united

In the same mind

In the same judgment

That's possible because they were all in fellowship with the Son of God.

The same is possible for all believers now.

Ask your group if the same kinds of quarrels are in churches now. Are they participating in any such thing as this?

What is Paul's reasoning in verses 13-17?

Christ is not divided.

Neither Paul, Apollos, nor Cephas was crucified for the believers at Corinth.

They had not been baptized in any man's name, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 14-17 are about Paul.

He only baptized Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas.

He wasn't sent by Christ to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

It seems that some of the believers at Corinth were saying they were of the man who had baptized them.

According to verse 17, how is the gospel not preached and why?

Not in cleverness of speech / words of eloquent wisdom

So that the cross is not void / emptied of its power

Encourage your group that they'll study more about that later.

Verses 18-25

What are these verses about?

The cross of Christ

A contrast between the world's wisdom and God's wisdom

To the lost, those who are perishing, the word of the cross is foolishness / folly.

To those being saved it is the power of God. The message of Christ's cross is what leads to salvation.

How is man's or the world's wisdom and cleverness contrasted with that of God and His message?

The world doesn't come to know God through its wisdom.

That only happens as a result of believing the gospel.

Paul and the other men named in this chapter preached the gospel so that people would be saved.

They preached the cross of Jesus Christ.

They didn't use clever speech, but the plain message.

How are the Jews and Greeks contrasted?

Jews look for signs.
The cross of Christ is a stumbling block to them.

Greeks or Gentiles search for wisdom.
The cross of Christ is foolishness / folly to them.

The world, whether Jews or Gentiles, has a problem with the message of the cross.
But it's the only message of salvation for both groups.

It's the power of God to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks.
The power of salvation for those who believe.

Verses 26-31

How did Paul exhort the Corinthian believers in these verses?

He told them to consider their calling, their condition when they were saved.

There were not many of them who were considered the wise of their age.
Most of them were not mighty / powerful or noble either.

They were not the most revered people of their society.

But yet they were the ones God called and chose to be His people in that place at that time.

It was by His doing that they were in Christ.

Christ became to them God's wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Ask your group what they learned from their study of "chosen."

eklegomai—"to pick out or choose out for one's self"⁶; "to select"⁷

God chose

- the foolish to shame the wise
- the weak to shame the strong
- the base / low
- the despised of the world

It's by God's doing that all believers are in Christ Jesus.

⁶ J. Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), G1586.

⁷ R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*, (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981), G1586.

He is every believer's wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

What was Paul's last instruction in this chapter? How does it relate to being of the same mind?

Boast in the Lord—not men. That will lead to agreement among brothers.

Tell your group to look at their lists about God and Jesus and ask if there is anything they have on their lists which was not yet discussed. Give time for sharing.

Ask if any of them changed their chapter theme on the At a Glance chart, and if so, what did they change it to.

To end this discussion, ask them how this first chapter relates to them personally.

Encourage them to continue in this study, so that they can learn how to know God more from His Word and not just from what others tell them.

1 CORINTHIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 3

Lesson emphasis

- 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16
- Acts 18–19:1

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you can ask your group what they remember about 1 Corinthians from the first two lessons. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart for help remembering.

The letter begins with certain truths about the Corinthian church, called by God to fellowship with His Son. They were enriched, lacking nothing, and the testimony of Jesus had been confirmed in them.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians to exhort / appeal and to admonish them to be of the same mind and have no divisions. He had heard about quarrels, immorality and lawsuits among them.

Then in chapters 7–16 he wrote as a response to what they had written to him.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:8-31

Verses 18-25

What are these verses about? Also, ask about the word study. Tell your group to look at the lists they made about wisdom as a visual aid for this part of the discussion.

Paul preached the word of the cross.

It's the power of God to those who are being saved, to those who believe it.

power, *dunamis*—"inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature"¹

But to those who are perishing, the cross is foolishness.

In verses 19-25 Paul contrasted the world's wisdom and God's wisdom regarding the message of Christ crucified. He also contrasted the reaction of Jews and Greeks or Gentiles.

Jews ask for signs, and the cross is a stumbling block to them.

Greeks search for wisdom, the world's wisdom, and the cross is foolishness to them.

¹ J. Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), G1411.

But the saved of both Jews and Greeks receive the power and wisdom of God.
Even God’s foolishness is wiser than men and His weakness stronger.

What are the points of the gospel from 1 Corinthians 15?

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Paul preached the gospel to the Corinthians.

They received it.

They stood in it.

They were saved by it, if their belief was true, not in vain.

The message was, and still is:

Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

The fact that He was buried proves His death.

He was raised on the 3rd day according to the Scriptures.

His appearances to many proved He had risen.

Lead the discussion back to 1 Corinthians 1 and ask about verses 26-31. How does Paul’s message to the called about wisdom continue?

The believers at Corinth had not been among the wise, mighty or noble when God called them to believe in Jesus. They were chosen so that none would boast.

But their problem was that they were boasting in men—Paul, Apollos and Cephas.
Jesus is the one who gives wisdom, righteous, sanctification and redemption.

You might ask your group how the truths of this chapter relate or apply to their lives.

1 CORINTHIANS 2

Verses 1-5

What are these verses about?

When Paul went to Corinth, he didn’t preach in clever or lofty speech; he simply preached the message about Jesus crucified.

Paul didn’t go to Corinth in superiority of wisdom or use persuasive / plausible words of wisdom.

He didn’t want their faith to rest on a man’s wisdom but on God’s power.

At this point you can ask what your group learned from Acts about Paul going to Corinth. Tell your group to look at their map and the chart “Sequence of Events in Paul’s Life after His Conversion.”

Acts 18:1-4

What happened in this passage?

Paul, on his second missionary journey, went from Athens to Corinth.

Claudius was ruling Rome, and Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the area in which Corinth was located.

Paul went to the synagogue in Corinth to reason the Scriptures with the Jews before he directed his focus to the Gentiles.

How does Romans 1:16 relate?

The gospel, not the messenger, is the power of God for salvation.

It's for the Jew first—Paul and others went to the synagogues first.

It's also for the Greek. Greeks are Gentiles, not Jews.

Verses 5-17

What happened in these verses? Compare with 1 Corinthians 1 and 2.

When Paul first got to Corinth, he had to work until Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia to help him. Then he devoted himself completely to the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

How does this relate to 1 Corinthians 2:1-5?

Paul determined to know nothing among them “except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

What was the response to Paul's message in Acts?

Most of them rejected the message, so Paul said he was going to the Gentiles. He went to the house next door to the synagogue.

The synagogue leader, Crispus, heard and believed along with all in his house.

1 Corinthians 1:14 says Paul baptized Crispus.

Many other Corinthians also believed and were baptized.

This compares with 1 Corinthians 4:15 and 3:10.

Paul became the Corinthian believers' father through the gospel.

What was the next event?

The Lord spoke to Paul and encouraged him to remain in Corinth. He told Paul that no one would harm him there.

The Jews brought him before the judgment seat, before Gallio who refused to hear their accusations. They then beat the synagogue leader Sosthenes in front of the judgment seat.

Compared with 1 Corinthians 1:1, it seems that he was the second synagogue leader to have been saved because Paul preached the gospel. That beating might have led to, or been a result of, his conversion.

Verses 18-23

What happened after that?

Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla left Corinth.

At the port of Cenchrea near Corinth, he cut his hair related to a vow he'd made.

They sailed across the Aegean Sea to Ephesus.
He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews.
Paul stayed there only a short time.
Aquila and Priscilla stayed much longer.

Paul sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea in Judea and then went up to Antioch. This was the church from which he was sent on all his missionary journeys. He started his 3rd journey going through Galatia and Phrygia.

26-19:1

Who is the next main character also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1–3?

Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria.

He was an eloquent man, mighty / competent in the Scriptures, but only acquainted with John's baptism—John the Baptist. Priscilla and Aquila heard his teaching and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

He went to Achaia, to Corinth, while Aquila and Priscilla stayed at Ephesus.

Apollos then was able to refute the Jews powerfully and demonstrate from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Where was Paul then?

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul went again to Ephesus.

Ask your group if what 1 Corinthians says about divisions over Paul and Apollos makes more sense after reading the account in Acts.

They had both been to Corinth teaching the gospel.

Apollos was an eloquent man, mighty /competent in the Scriptures and powerfully refuting the Jews.

Paul said that his message was in weakness, fear, and much trembling.

There was a difference in the two messengers, but what about the message?

It was the same message—the gospel about Jesus Christ.

Ask your group if they have ever felt intimidated to give the gospel?

They can look to Paul as an example.
Not everyone is like Apollos, eloquent in speech.

Lead your discussion back to 1 Corinthians 2.

There is a short list about the Spirit at the end of this guide which you might use as a visual aid for the rest of this discussion.

Verses 6-16

Based on the rest of chapter 2, how did Paul further explain having God’s wisdom?

It comes from God’s Spirit.

Paul’s preaching demonstrated the Spirit within him.

The world does not accept God’s wisdom, but the mature in the faith do.

Paul spoke God’s wisdom in a mystery, a mystery to those of the world.

Ask your group if they want to know the depths of God. Do they want to be wise in God’s eyes? If so, how can they?

God’s wisdom is a mystery to the world but revealed through His Spirit to believers. He reveals the things He has prepared for those who love Him.

One way He does that is through Bible study—learning what He has said.
God’s Spirit reveals His thoughts to believers, not to the natural man.

Christians receive His Spirit to know the things He has freely given.
“We have the mind of Christ” because of having His Spirit.

Although the natural man thinks the things of the Spirit are foolishness, it’s because he can’t understand—he doesn’t have the Holy Spirit to give understanding.

Ask what they learned about the word “appraise / judge.”

The spiritual man, a believer, “appraises / discerns” everything.

anakrino—means “to investigate”²; “decide rightly”³; “to discern, judge . . . to examine”⁴

The spiritual man can appraise / discern all things because of God’s wisdom through the Spirit of God and knowing God’s thoughts from His Word.

The natural man does not “appraise / judge” the spiritual man because he doesn’t have the ability to understand the things of the Spirit.

Give your group time to discuss how this relates to their everyday lives.

² J. Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), G350.

³ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 1 Co 2:15.

⁴ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G350.

**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 Corinthians 3–4

REVIEW

Ask your group why Paul wrote this letter. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart.

The first six chapters of this letter focus on what Paul heard --that there were divisions and quarrels in the church, they were boasting in men and being arrogant about that and immorality.

Chapters 7–16 are his response to what they had written him.

Then ask about the flow of thought in chapters 1–2.

1 Corinthians 1

Paul began with thanksgiving for God's grace toward them and reminded the Corinthians of all that was true of them in Christ.

Then he addressed the problem of divisions and them boasting in men.

Next he contrasted God's wisdom of the cross with the world's wisdom.

This chapter ends with don't boast in men; boast in the Lord

1 Corinthians 2

Paul preached Christ to the Corinthians, based on God's wisdom. God's wisdom comes from His Spirit.

The Spirit gives Christ's mind.

Why did the Corinthians need to know about God's wisdom?

They were boasting in men instead of boasting in the Lord.

Paul wrote why they should not boast in him, 2:1-5, or any other man.

1 CORINTHIANS 3

Verses 1-4

How does Paul's contrast continue from 2:14?

Tell your group to look at their lists in the lesson.

He told the Corinthian believers he couldn't speak to them as to spiritual men / people, but those of flesh or infants in Christ. They hadn't matured like they should have.

They were not properly appraising / judging things.

They were not speaking the things taught by the Spirit of God.

The immature believers are the ones who cause divisions in the body by boasting in people.

As a result there was jealousy and strife among them.

Jealously, strife, divisions, quarrels, boasting in men

Those things are results of immaturity in the body of Christ, even now.

How does the cross-reference in Hebrews compare with this?

Hebrews 5:12-14

This is another reference about spiritual immaturity.

Feed on the meat of God's word and grow into mature believers.

Ask your group what they are learning about Christian maturity and how it relates to them.

Verses 5-9

What are these verses about?

Paul told the Corinthians who were boasting in Apollos and him that they were only servants.

God gave the opportunity for him to take the gospel to Corinth. God also gave the opportunity for Apollos to go to Corinth and teach them the Scriptures.

They were fellow workers in God's field. There should be no divisions because of boasting in one of them and quarreling with someone who boasted in the other one.

The other metaphor Paul used for the church in verse 9 was God's building.

Verses 10-17

How did Paul use this metaphor to teach about the “builders”?

Tell your group to look at their lists or chart in the lesson.

Like a wise master builder Paul laid a foundation in Corinth, the foundation of Jesus Christ. There is a warning for those who build on the foundation.

The contrast is between the building materials.

Gold

Silver

Precious stones

Purified when tested by fire

Wood

Hay

Straw

Burn when tested by fire

Paul and Apollos built with gold, silver and precious stones.

If one came along who wanted to build with useless materials, would the Corinthian believers be able to know that it was useless?

Ask your group if they would know. And how?

What is the question in verse 16? And the answer?

“Do you not know . . .” is repeated several times in the next chapters.

The church is God’s temple—the dwelling of His Spirit.

The temple is holy; the church is holy because of God’s Holy Spirit.

Verse 17 is a stern warning to those who don’t realize this.

Verses 18-23

What is the instruction in verse 18, and how do the rest of these verses relate to it?

Those who think they are wise are deceived unless their wisdom comes purely from God’s Spirit and His Word. Worldly wisdom is useless for God’s church.

So, don’t boast in men—Paul again mentioned Apollos, Cephas and himself.

He reminded the Corinthian believers that all things belonged to them.

They belonged to Christ, and He belongs to God. There is no need to boast in men.

How does this relate to the church today?

1 CORINTHIANS 4

Verses 1-5

How did Paul explain why the Corinthians were not to boast in men? Discuss word studies.

Apollos, Cephas, and he were to be regarded as:

Christ’s servants

servants—*huperetes*, “literally meaning ‘under rowers,’ referring to the lowest, most menial, and most despised galleys slaves, who rowed on the bottom of a ship”¹

Stewards of God’s mysteries

stewards—*oikonomos*, “administrator”²; “manager . . . overseer”³; “a person entrusted with and responsible for his master’s entire household”⁴

The only one who examines His steward is the Lord.

A steward most of all needs to be trustworthy.

Paul’s stewardship was bestowed on him by God for Gentile believers’ benefit.

Ask what they learned about God’s mysteries from this text and the cross-references.

Luke 8:10; Colossians 1:24-27; 2:1-3

There are mysteries which God had hidden for a time or from certain groups of people. His Spirit revealed such mysteries when appropriate for His purpose.

Paul preached about the mysteries, one—the Gentiles were part of the church.
Another—Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Jesus Christ Himself in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The mysteries mostly have to do with salvation, hidden for generations and revealed in Jesus Christ the Savior, not only of Jews but also Gentiles.

What is the progression of being entrusted with the gospel?

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (1 Cor 4:1) (Nashville, Tennessee: Word Publishing, 1997), p. 1733.

² James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), G3874.

³ J. Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), G3623.

⁴ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (1 Cor 4:1) (Nashville, Tennessee: Word Publishing, 1997), p. 1733.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

God entrusted Paul with the gospel.

1 Timothy 6:20

Paul entrusted Timothy with the gospel.

2 Timothy 2:2

He instructed Timothy to entrust it to faithful men who will be able to teach others.

Ask your group how they can be faithful stewards of the gospel.

Lead your discussion back to 1 Corinthians 4. What are verses 3-5 about?

Some of the Corinthians were examining / judging Paul.

“Examine / judge” is the same Greek word as “appraise / discern and judge” in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15.

It seems that in the boasting of men, some who might have been boasting in Apollos or Cephas were examining Paul.

But he said the one who examines / judges men is not other men, but the Lord Himself. Paul didn’t even examine / judge himself. That’s what the Lord will do when He judges men.

“Judge” is *krino*, the root word for “examine” and “appraise.”

This time of judgment seems to be the time when the quality of men’s works is judged by fire in 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. God alone can judge men’s hearts.

Verses 6-13

What are these verses about? Tell your group to look at their chart in the lesson.

Using Apollos and himself as examples, Paul taught the Corinthians not to boast in men who are mere servants and stewards of God.

He wanted them to learn not to exceed what is written about becoming arrogant in behalf of one against another. This might be a reference to 1:31, quoting the Old Testament.

But Paul wanted also to teach individuals there at Corinth that they should not become “arrogant / puffed up” with themselves.

arrogant / puffed up—“be proud”⁵

⁵James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

In verse 7 he asked who regarded them as “superior.” (ESV uses the word different.)

Then he reminded them they had they received all they had. Relate this to the opening of the letter, 1:3-9. There can be no cause for boasting if all one has is a gift. Relate this to 1:26.

In verses 8-13 he contrasted the apostles’ hardships to the arrogance of some of the Corinthians.

God exhibited the apostles—they were examples to all.

The church

The world

Angels

Verses 14-21

What role did Paul assume at this point? Why?

He was their father through the gospel.

So, he admonished them as a father would his children. Relate this to 3:2-3.

He exhorted them to imitate him as children do their fathers.

He challenged their arrogance; he wanted them to imitate his humility.

Paul knew that although he was an apostle, he was only God’s servant and steward, as all apostles. The arrogant at Corinth needed to remember that they received all they had.

Timothy was a good example for them and one of Paul’s children in the Lord. They could see how he had imitated Paul.

Ask your group who they are imitating and why.

Why did Paul tell the Corinthians to imitate him?

In 11:1 he wrote them to imitate him as he did Christ.

Philippians 3:17-20; 4:9

Paul wrote the same thing.

Follow me, my example

Follow others who walk according to the same pattern—Christ

How do verses 18-21 relate to his father role?

He admonished them to stop the arrogance before he came to them.

Arrogance speaks loudly, but he questioned its power.

The kingdom of God consists in power, not words.

The rod of correction would be used if the arrogance didn't stop.

Ask your group what power they have as children of God. How do they use it?

To end, ask how this lesson relates to their lives.

**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 5**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 Corinthians 5–6
- Immorality in the church

REVIEW

To begin your discussion, you might ask your group why Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 1–6.

He heard about problems in the Corinthian church, 1 Corinthians 1–6.

Direct your group to look at the At A Glance chart as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

What was the problem he dealt with in chapters 1–4?

The Corinthians were boasting in men, the apostles, and becoming arrogant in the process. That caused quarrels and divisions in the church.

According to 1 Corinthians 4:14-16, why did Paul write this letter?

To admonish the Corinthian saints
He was their father in the faith.

Verse 16 says he exhorted / urged them to imitate him—not boasting, arrogant.

1 CORINTHIANS 5

Verses 1-5

How does this chapter begin?

There was another issue that was reported.
There was immorality in the church.

It was of the sort that even the Gentiles / pagans condemned or didn't practice.
A man had his father's wife, probably not his mother.
Added to that sin was the fact that the Corinthian church didn't mourn over it.
They were arrogant instead.

So, here arrogance is not removing sin from the church's midst.

This chapter is part of his admonishment for them, 4:14.

They should have removed the sin from their midst, from their church.
Paul made a judgment based on what God’s Word said about immorality.

Ask what the cross-references in Leviticus say about sexual sins.

Sexual relations with a father’s wife was an abomination to God, forbidden.
And the result was death.

What had Paul decided to do about this sin?

Deliver the man to Satan; put him out of the church.

Based on the context of verse 5, what does this mean?

A judgment was made by God in the Old Testament; Paul followed that judgment regarding the man who had his father’s wife. He was to be put out of the church and given over to the world’s authority, Satan.

His flesh, his body, would eventually be destroyed, but there was still hope for his spirit to be saved.

Verses 6-8

How do these verses relate to the problem and solution in verses 1-5?

The key word, and one of the key problems, “boasting,” is used again here.

Arrogance leads to boasting.

After speaking of his hope for salvation for the sinful man, Paul again addressed the effect this sin had on the church.

Corruption spreads—leaven spreads to whatever is around it.
Paul used this as an illustration of how sin spreads unless it’s removed.

Three times in this chapter he said to get rid of the sin—verses 2, 7, and 13.

What do the cross-references in Matthew and Luke say about leaven?

Matthew 16:6-12

Jesus warned His disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
He meant their teaching.

Luke 12:1

Jesus warned about the leaven of the Pharisees which was hypocrisy.

Tell your group to look at the chart at the end of the lesson “The Feasts of Israel.” Ask what they learned from the chart and the cross-references in Exodus and Leviticus about leaven and Passover.

Exodus 12:1-36; 13:4-10 and Leviticus 23:5-8

The Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread are closely linked.

Passover is on the 14th day of the first month and Unleavened Bread begins the next day.

Passover

Coming out of bondage to sin and the world

Being redeemed by the Lamb’s blood

Being saved from death / judgment

Cleaning the leaven out of the house and the Feast of Unleavened Bread signify that the redeemed live without sin spreading throughout their whole lives.

Jesus, our Passover Lamb, was sacrificed to redeem believers.

We are saved from bondage to sin and the consequences of its judgment.

Therefore, the church is not a place to allow the leaven of sin to spread.

The church is holy, set apart from the world.

The world is the place of sin and the spreading of sin.

When Paul said the church is to celebrate the feast, he spoke of continually, not just an annual celebration as it was for the Jews.

Verses 9-13

What are these verses about, and what is the application to life now?

Paul had written to the Corinthians before.

He had instructed them not to associate with immoral people.

So he was concerned, verse 2, that they had become arrogant and not mourned.

So they knew what he thought about this issue.

He clarified what he meant—

The church does not judge the world, the people in it.

But the church judges sin in the church.

How does Matthew 7:1-6 relate to this?

God’s Word is not contradictory. Judging sin in the church is clearly taught.

By a person’s standard of measure he will be measured.

The standard for believers is

God’s righteousness,
the truth of His Word, and
His Spirit dwelling within them.

They can and should make right judgments or decisions because of having Christ’s mind.

What are the people of the world like according to 1 Corinthians 5:10? Also, ask about word studies when relevant.

Immoral

Covetous / greedy, *pleonektes*

“one who wants more . . . a defrauder for gain”¹

“one who seeks to fulfill his insatiable desires at all cost and at the expense of others”²

Swindler, *harpax*—“extortioner, a robber”³

Idolater

Reviler, *loidoros*—“one who intentionally abuses another with speech”⁴

Drunkard

The church is not to associate with a person who commits such sins and yet claims to be a believer—“so-called brother (ESV—anyone who bears the name of brother).”

Relate this to the one in verses 1-5, a so-called brother.

What steps did Jesus say to take when a brother sins in Matthew 18:15-20?

First, go to a brother privately and confront his sin.

If he listens, then you’ve won him, and no one else knows of the sin.

If he refuses to listen,

then take two or three more with you the second time to confront his sin.

If he still refuses to listen,

then tell it to the church.

If he refuses to listen to the church,

then treat him as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

There was no association of the Jews with Gentiles and tax-gatherers.

You might ask your group how they think these instructions about sin in the church apply now.

¹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993), G4123.

² Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 357.

³ Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 357.

⁴ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), p. 248.

1 CORINTHIANS 6

Verses 1-6

How do these verses continue the flow of thought from 1 Corinthians 5?

A repeated word from 5:12 through 6:6 is “judge.”

Ask your group what they learned about judging. Direct them to the chart in the lesson, “What Believers Will Judge...” as a visual aid for this part of the discussion.

God judges those outside the church.
Believers are to judge those inside it.
The saints will judge the world and the angels.
Those who are of no account should not judge matters within the church.
Wise men inside the church should decide or judge between brothers.

What is the repeated question Paul asked?

“do you not know...” regarding things they should have known.

They should have known to remove sin from their midst.

They should have known unbelievers or unrighteous people are not fit to make judgments regarding disputes among believers.

There were two things going on in their midst—immorality and lawsuits—which they were not judging properly.

Proper judgment is using God’s wisdom. Only those with His Spirit have His wisdom. Relate this to chapter 2.

Do these two situations still go on in churches? What is the solution?

Verses 7-8

To what degree should Christians avoid taking each other to courts of the unrighteous?

Believers should be willing to be wronged and defrauded by a brother if it will keep the situation from going outside the church for the unrighteous to judge.

Verses 9-11

Why did Paul say, “Do not be deceived.” in verse 9?

The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom as the righteous will.

The world’s wisdom is not enough for knowing God and entering His kingdom.
Only God’s Spirit can do that.

Fornicators and adulterers are not fit to judge matters of immorality within the church.

Thieves, covetous, and swindlers aren't competent to judge matters among Christian brothers.

What did John write about being deceived?

1 John 3:7

The one who practices righteousness is righteous.

The one who practices sin is of the devil, not saved.

Who has the responsibility for not being deceived? How can a believer keep from being deceived? Let your group talk about the application.

How can 1 Corinthians 6:11 bring thanksgiving and/or hope to hearts and why?

Even if some of the unrighteous deeds listed here describe one's previous lifestyle, that one is completely cleansed when he is saved.

Ask what your group learned from the word studies and the cross-reference in Titus.

“sanctified”—*hagiazō*, “to make holy . . . set apart”⁵

“justified”—*dikaioō*, “declare righteous”⁶

Titus 3:4-7

Washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit

It's the same thing Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

Verses 12-20

What are these verses about? How does the flow of thought continue?

If one says certain things are not against the law, the question then is how profitable that thing is.

A wise believer will choose the things which are profitable for his spiritual life and the spiritual lives of others.

He will not allow himself to be mastered again by unprofitable habits.

How does Romans 6:12-18 help to understand this principle?

Christians have been freed from sin. Sin is no longer master.

⁵ W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996), G1344..

⁶ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981), G1344.

Therefore, believers have the power not to let sin reign in their physical bodies. Christians are slaves to righteousness.

What other objection might have been made to Paul's statement that immorality should be put out of the church?

Another argument which Paul aimed at is that sex, like food, is an appetite of the normal physical body. And if so, then how can it be wrong?

What is the clear teaching in verses 13-20 on this subject?

The body
for the Lord
members of Christ
temple of the Holy Spirit
bought with a price

Therefore, glorify God in your body.

Immorality
Flee
It's sin against one's own body

Relate this to the previous chapters in 1 Corinthians.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3 that the church body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 6, the individual believers are addressed as being the temple of the Holy Spirit.

He addressed immorality in 1 Corinthians 5 and brings this to an end in chapter 6. Get rid of immorality in the church body. Flee immorality individually.

To end this discussion, ask what your group has learned from this study course which will encourage them to glorify the Lord more.

**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 6**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 Corinthians 7
- Marriage, divorce, remarriage

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you might ask your group why Paul wrote this letter.

1–6 He heard that there were divisions because the Corinthians were boasting in men and they were not judging immorality in the church.

4:14 Paul wrote to admonish the Corinthians as his children.

7–16 He responded to some things about which the Corinthian saints wrote to him.

1 CORINTHIANS 7

How does this chapter continue to deal with immorality?

It is good for a man not to touch (ESV—have sexual relations with) a woman.

But because of immoralities...

A solution for those who are not married and tempted to be immoral is to get married.

Verse 9 says it's better to marry than to burn with passion—be tempted to commit immorality.

Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson as a visual aid for this discussion.

Verses 1-7

What do these verses teach about marriage?

The husband and the wife have control over their mate's body.

The context is sexual relations in marriage.

The command is to stop depriving one another sexually, so the mate is not tempted to commit adultery.

The only exception, concession not command, is a period of time for prayer.

Then Paul said he'd like for all to be as he was—not married at that time.

NOTE: Your group might read in commentaries that some think Paul had been married, but not when he wrote this.

But all are not in the same condition: all have their gift from God, either single or married.

You might ask your group if they're practicing the instructions in these verses? Why?

Verses 8-9

Who is addressed in these verses, and what are they told?

Unmarried and widows

The "unmarried" is probably referring to the divorced because virgins are addressed separately in verse 25.

It's good for them to remain single, as Paul.

But if they don't have self-control regarding immorality, then they should marry.

To summarize these verses, ask your group what is one reason to marry?

Verses 10-11

Who do these verses address? What are they told?

This is to the married.

In this context, it seems to be addressing the married believers.

Paul said the Lord gave instructions about this.

NOTE: Jesus taught about this same subject in Matthew 19.

The wife should not leave her husband.

But if she does, then she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.

The husband should not divorce his wife.

After each paragraph or main point, you can ask how the points relate to your group. Help them understand how these truths apply to them and others now.

Verses 12-16

Who are these verses addressing?

"to the rest"

A brother, believer, married to an unbelieving wife

A sister, believer, married to an unbelieving husband

NOTE: Not all marriages of this sort are a result of sin—a believer marrying an unbeliever. Many times it is the result of one spouse being saved after marriage.

Compare verses 10 and 12.

Verse 10 is the Lord's instruction. Jesus gave instruction about this.

Verse 12 is instruction from Paul.

Jesus didn't mention this situation, but Paul gave the instruction here.

What are the instructions?

If an unbeliever consents to live with the believing spouse, then the believer is not to divorce, send away, the unbelieving husband or wife.

Why, according to verse 14?

If an unbeliever is content to stay married to a believer, then that unbeliever is very close to a "saint," 1 Corinthians 1:2.

He or she is exposed to the things of God, shown what is a holy life, what is right and evil. The unbeliever is in constant relationship with one who is sacred to God, set apart to Him.

Their children are also exposed to holiness by the "saint" in the marriage.

What is the instruction if the unbeliever leaves?

The believer is not under bondage in such cases. The believer is free. Let the unbeliever leave in peace, not conflict.

What question is presented to the believer in verse 16?

How do you know whether you'll lead your unbelieving spouse to be saved or not?

The answer is that the believer doesn't. Only the Lord knows the answer.

You might ask if any in your group are in this kind of a situation and how these verses can help them.

Verses 17-24

What is the main point of these verses?

Both verses 20 and 24 say to remain in the condition in which one was called. The context is primarily married or divorced.

Each person is to walk / live as the Lord has assigned to him or her, married or not. Believers need to learn how to live godly in whatever circumstances they are.

How do these truths relate to believers now?

Verses 25-35

What changes in these verses?

“Now concerning virgins / the betrothed...”

It’s good to remain unmarried.

Why did he say this?

Present distress

To be free from concern / anxiety

Concern / anxiety about how to please the Lord, not a spouse

Concern / anxiety about how to be holy

To promote what is appropriate, undistracted / undivided devotion to the Lord

Paul didn’t write this to put a restraint on believers, but to show them that unmarried believers are more able to have undistracted devotion to the Lord than those who are married.

According to verse 28, if a virgin married, he or she has not sinned.

They will have trouble, and Paul was trying to spare them that by telling them to remain unmarried. He describes such in verses 29-35.

Who else is addressed in verses 27-28, and what does the text say to them?

Bound to a wife, married

Don’t seek to be released from that obligation of marriage.

Released from a wife, divorced or widowed

Don’t seek a wife.

Don’t look to be married again.

But if that one marries, he or she has not sinned.

Verses 36-38

Who and what are these verses about?

The NASB translates this difficult Greek passage as a man and his virgin daughter.

In the culture of that time, the father was responsible for his daughter's marriage.
If her father lets her marry, he does not sin, and he does well.
But, if he decides to allow his daughter to remain single, he does better.

This is the same principle as verses 17-35.

The ESV translates the Greek as a man and his betrothed.

If he married her or didn't marry her, it was acceptable.
He needed to be firmly established in his own heart.

The key in both interpretations is the freedom in Christ to decide, and devotion to Christ in whatever decision is made.

Verses 39-40

Who and what is the subject of these verses?

A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives.
If he dies, she is free to remarry "in the Lord," marry a believer.

However, she would be happier, in Paul's opinion, if she stayed single.

Again, Paul's opinion is that marriage divides the interest, and singleness allows for undistracted devotion to the Lord, because the time is short.

Paul's opinions are based on the Holy Spirit within him, giving advice to believers.

Based on this study, is divorce and remarriage ever allowed?

A believer is not to divorce a believing spouse.
If the believer does, then he or she is to remain unmarried or be reconciled.

If an unbeliever—leaves—divorces a believing spouse, the believer is not under bondage.
It seems that in this context it means he or she can remarry.

If one was saved after a divorce and then remarries, that one has not sinned. This compares with verses 8 and 9.

If a mate dies, then the spouse is free to marry again.

You might end your discussion with the questions in Day Five and the cross-reference in Hebrews.

- How does this teaching fit into your society's thinking today?
- What about sex outside marriage? How does that fit with God's Word?

Hebrews 13:4

Many people today do not hold their marriage vows in honor. They defile their marriage bed by committing fornication and/or adultery, not only taking part in these things, but also giving approval of others who do.

**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 7**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 Corinthians 8–9
- Christian liberty

REVIEW

To begin your discussion, tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart. Ask about the main segments in 1 Corinthians. Why did Paul write the last main segment of 1 Corinthians 7–16?

This part of his letter begins with, “Now concerning the things about which you wrote...”

The first thing he addressed is marriage, divorce, and remarriage in chapter 7.

Then in chapters 8–10, “Now concerning things sacrificed (ESV—food offered) to idols...”

1 CORINTHIANS 8

How did Paul begin this segment? What words are repeated in verses 1-3?

Know or knowledge and love

All have knowledge, but that only makes one arrogant / puffs up.

Love edifies / builds up Christian brothers.

Knowledge, knowing God and living the Christian life, is to be based on love.

Verses 4-6

What did Paul say about idols?

There is no such thing as an idol. (ESV—has no real existence)

There is no God but one. But there might be “so-called gods.”

This is contrasted with the one God by whom and from whom all things exist.

That’s the knowledge all believers need to have.

Give time for your group to share if they really know the one God and one Lord as described in verse 6.

As a visual aid for this discussion, you might use the lists at the end of this guide.

Verses 7-13

Did all the believers at Corinth have the same knowledge about idols as Paul did?

No, the weak ones didn't. Corinth was an idolatrous society.
When people were saved, they didn't all immediately understand that idols had no power.

How does eating affect one's relationship to God?

In this context, it doesn't commend one to Him.
People are no better or worse for what they eat.

How does Acts 15:22-29 relate to this?

The elders of the church wrote a letter to the newly saved Gentile churches saying that they should abstain from eating things sacrificed to idols.

Who did Paul address in 1 Corinthians 9-13, and what did he want them to consider?

Those who had this knowledge

They needed to consider their weak brother, who might think that there is something wrong with eating food which had been sacrificed to an idol.

Don't let knowledge or liberty be a stumbling block to a weak brother.

The knowledgeable brother is to act in love toward the one who has a conscience that might be weak and become defiled.

Believers can't let knowledge ruin a weak brother's conscience.

That kind of arrogant knowledge leads to sin.

What was Paul's conclusion?

He would never eat meat again if it caused his brother to stumble.

Meat was offered to the idols at Corinth.
Since they didn't eat it, it was sold in the market as food for people to buy.

Sometimes they didn't know if it had been sacrificed to an idol or not.

Ask what your group learned from the cross-references in Romans and Philippians.

Romans 14:1–15:6

Paul addressed not offending the weak brothers in this letter, also. Here it has to do with eating meat, regarding one day—probably a reference to the Sabbath—above another, and drinking wine. The principles are the same as 1 Corinthians—don't please yourself and offend a brother.

Philippians 2:1-4

With humility consider other believers as more important than self. Look out for their interests.

Ask your group how the principles in this chapter about knowledge, love, and Christian liberty relate to modern believers.

1 CORINTHIANS 9

What is this chapter about?

Paul's defense about his apostleship

Some in the Corinthian church were examining / judging him, verse 3 and 4:1-5.

He presented himself as an example of exercising love over knowledge as he didn't use the rights he had.

Verses 1-7

What is Paul's reasoning in these verses?

He spoke of himself in 8:13 and continued into this chapter.

He was free, an apostle, and saw Jesus.

The Corinthians were his work in the Lord, the seal of his apostleship.

His defense to those who examined him was that he had "rights," but didn't use them.

NOTE: "Rights" is the same Greek word as "liberty" in 8:9, NASB.

He had the right to

eat and drink

take along a believing wife

refrain from working

He illustrated these rights with a soldier, one who plants a vineyard, and a shepherd.

Verses 8-14

What is the main point in these verses?

Even the Old Testament Law gave rights to oxen to eat while threshing.

It's not wrong for material things to be given to those who share spiritual things.

Those who proclaim the gospel are to get their living from doing that, be supported by those they minister to spiritually.

Why didn't Paul take advantage of his rights?

To cause no hindrance to the gospel

Ask your group how this relates to them. How do they view their Christian rights or liberties?
What is their responsibility to those who proclaim the gospel to them and others?

Verses 15-23

What is Paul's example in these verses?

He again wrote that he used none of his rights.
His desire in writing was not to impose his rights on the Corinthians.

The thrust of His life was to preach the gospel so that he might win some.

It was his stewardship from God, as written in 4:1-2.
His goal was to win people for salvation through the gospel.

So he preached it without charge and became all things to all men to win some.

A Jew to the Jews

To those without the Law, he was not under the Law but free from it.

Weak to the weak

The weak in this context speaks of the unsaved, not Christian brothers.
It's a different context from the weak brothers in chapter 8.

He made himself a slave to all, that he might win more or lead more to salvation.

NOTE: Verses 23-27 will be studied more in the next lesson.

Verses 24-27

What is the context of these verses?

Paul preaching the gospel so people are saved—won

How did he illustrate this?

A runner competing in a race
He runs until the finish—running to win, to get to the end and receive the prize.

Paul wanted to finish well in God's eyes.

What is another quality brought out in this illustration of the runner?

Self-control over his body

What are the definitions for “discipline” and “disqualified” in 1 Corinthians 9:27?

discipline, *hupōpiázō*—

“To strike under the eyes, beat the face black and blue, give a black eye.”¹

“To keep one’s body under complete control.”²

“Discipline” is in the present tense which means continuous action and indicative mood which means “now.”

As a habit or lifestyle, Paul kept his body under control, not letting it control him.

disqualified, *adókimos*—

“Unapproved, unworthy, spurious, worthless. In a pass. sense meaning disapproved, rejected, cast away.”³

“Strictly *failing to meet the test*; hence *worthless, unqualified*.”⁴

How does this help understand the meaning of Paul’s illustration?

He disciplined himself as he preached the gospel to the lost, and chose to love his brothers in not using his rights.

He didn’t eat food sacrificed to idols if it meant causing a brother to stumble.

He chose love over knowledge.

He ran with discipline, self-control, so that he’d not be disqualified—proven worthless.

How does this relate to his major point in 1 Corinthians 8 and 9?

Paul didn’t do anything that might cause his brother to stumble or hinder the gospel.

He didn’t always rely on his knowledge of liberties or rights, but rather love for those he preached to and his brothers.

To close your discussion, ask your group how they can practice the principles in these chapters.

¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993), G5299.

²Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996, c1989).

³Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993), G96.

⁴Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), p. 35.

1 Corinthians 8	1 Corinthians 9
Knowledge puffs up Love builds up No such thing as idol Don't let liberty ruin weak brother	Paul's defense to those who examine him Did not use his rights, liberties No hindrance to gospel All things to all men . . . to win some

**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 8**

Lesson emphasis

- 1 Corinthians 10
- Idolatry

REVIEW

Why did Paul write this letter to the Corinthian saints?

Tell your group to use their At a Glance charts as a visual aid for this review.

He heard about them	1 Corinthians 1–6
They wrote to him	1 Corinthians 7–16

What did they write about? Which chapters are in each segment?

7	marriage, divorce, and remarriage
8–10	things sacrificed / food offered to idols
11	traditions
12–14	spiritual gifts
15	gospel, resurrection
16	collection for the saints

What were the main points of 1 Corinthians 8–9?

Knowledge without love puffs up, makes arrogant.

All believers should know that there is no such thing as idols, other gods.

Love builds up all brothers, even weak ones.

Paul didn't use his liberties, his rights, so as not to cause anyone to stumble.

His focus in chapter 8 was on the weak brothers, fellow believers.

Then in chapter 9, he used himself as an example.

Next his focus was on winning the lost.

His desire was to offer the gospel to the lost and win some.

How does chapter 9 end?

Paul exercised self-control. He disciplined his body, so he would not be disqualified after he preached to others and led them to salvation.

How does Paul's example of a runner exercising self-control relate to chapter 10?

His next illustrations about self-control and discipline are taken from the Old Testament. They all show a lack of self-control and are warnings about temptation.

The people involved were disqualified by the Lord. It was shown that they didn't believe. Numbers 14:11 says they didn't believe.

1 CORINTHIANS 10

Verses 1-5

Direct your group to the chart in the lesson as a visual aid for this part of the discussion.
Who were these people?

They were the people of Israel, God's people.

What happened?

God led them in a pillar of cloud. They are the ones who walked on dry ground as they passed through the Red Sea. God fed them with manna from heaven and gave them water from a rock in the wilderness.

God was not well-pleased with most of them and laid them low (ESV—overthrown) in the wilderness. He killed them there because they failed the test—unapproved, disqualified.

What benefits did they have?

Spiritual benefits from the Lord Himself.
The rock they drank from was Christ, a picture of Him giving life.

How do Hebrews 11:1-2, 6; and Jude 5 relate to 1 Corinthians 10:5?

The men of old gained approval by God because of their faith.
But those in 1 Corinthians 10:5 did not believe as Jude 5 says.

Verses 6-14

What did they do that showed that they were not really believers?

Some were idolaters.
Some were immoral.
Some tested the Lord.
Some grumbled against Him.

Relate this to 1 Corinthians.

These are things Paul wrote to the Corinthians about.

The “so-called brother” was immoral.

They were in the midst of an idolatrous society.

Most of them had probably been idolaters before being saved.

There were quarrels among them.

Ask about the Old Testament cross-references to understand the illustrations better.

1 Corinthians 10:7 and Exodus 32

They made a golden calf and worshiped it.

3,000 people died because of that.

1 Corinthians 10:8 and Numbers 25

Immorality resulted in Israel’s camp because they joined Moab in idol worship of Baal of Peor. Death also resulted.

NOTE: 1 Corinthians says 23,000 fell in one day, while Numbers 25 says 24,000 were killed by the plague. Numbers doesn’t say how long it took for 24,000 to die. The number isn’t the point, however, but rather the action of God against those who disobeyed in this matter—the seriousness of their actions.

Did Israel know the consequences of idolatry?

Deuteronomy 7:1-11

The Lord warned Israel, before they entered their promised land, that they were not to participate in the worship of the nations around them—idolatry. Destruction would be the result of it. Israel was to totally destroy all remains of idols and those who worshiped them.

What is the Old Testament illustration in verse 9?

1 Corinthians 10:9 and Numbers 21:1-9

This tells about when the people spoke against God and He sent the fiery serpents to bite and kill them.

What did Jesus say in John 3:14-16 that relates to this?

The people sinned by speaking against God.

He judged them by sending the serpents to kill.

In mercy, He told Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole.

The bitten person who looked at it was to be healed, live not die.

Jesus was lifted up on the cross because of man’s sin.

Whoever looks at Him, believes in Him, is given life instead of death.

What is the next illustration in 1 Corinthians 10:10? How do the cross-references help?

Numbers 16

Korah and his companions grumbled against Moses and Aaron as the priest. God opened the ground up and swallowed Korah and his companions, and fire also consumed the 250 men who offered the incense. God sent a plague and destroyed the congregation who grumbled.

Numbers 14:1-32

Israel grumbled on more than one occasion in the wilderness.

In verse 11, the Lord Himself said about them that they spurned Him and didn't believe in Him despite what He'd done for them since He led them out of Egypt. That's when He said that none of them, except Joshua and Caleb, were to see the land; all of them were to die in the wilderness. They were an evil generation.

What is repeated in verses 6 and 11?

These things are examples for New Testament believers and written for instruction. These are warnings so believers don't crave evil things like they did.

The Corinthian believers had for the most part been idol worshippers before they were saved and still lived in an idolatrous society. Part of idolatry was immorality. The Corinthians were still tempted by those things.

How does 1 Corinthians 10:11-14 fit with these warnings? There is a short list at the end of this guide which you can use as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

These are examples that serve as instruction for true believers.

Take heed and don't fall because of temptation.

The Lord provides a way of escape for all temptation—"trial, test."¹ He's faithful and doesn't allow true believers to be tempted beyond what they're able to endure.

Therefore, as with immorality, 6:18, believers are to flee idolatry. Paul wrote in Colossians 3:5-6 that greed amounts to idolatry.

Give time for your group to discuss application and how this warning relates to believers now.

How does 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 relate to this?

Don't be bound with unbelievers.
Come out from their midst and be separate.
Don't touch what's unclean.

¹Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). p. 138.

Cleanse yourself from all defilement of the flesh and spirit.

The Corinthians lived in an idolatrous society, as do believers now.

Verses 15-22

What are the main points in these verses?

Paul returned to his main subject in this segment, eating things / food sacrificed / offered to idols.

His first statement is for the believers to judge what he says.

They should have determined that it's good to flee idolatry.

Believers share with each other the cup of blessing representing Christ's blood and the bread representing His body.

According to the Law, Israel's priests ate the sacrifices brought to the Lord's altar.

Idols are nothing and things sacrificed to them are nothing.

But to the Gentiles who worship those idols they have a demonic element.

One cannot drink the Lord's cup and that of demons—can't be a worshiper of God and of idols. It's impossible.

The Lord is a jealous God.

It's better to flee idolatry than to be tempted by it.

Verses 23-30

What are these verses about?

All things are lawful, but not profitable, not all things edify, build up.

Paul made the same statement in 6:12 before he commanded to flee immorality.

Love edifies / builds up according to 8:1.

Eat anything sold at the meat market without asking questions.

If an unbeliever invites a believer to eat, eat without asking questions.

If informed that the meat was sacrificed to idols, don't eat it for the sake of the informer's conscience.

Verses 31-33

How does Paul close this segment?

Do all for God's glory.

Don't offend Jews, Greeks, or the church.

Don't seek one's own profit but that many be saved.

Instead of wondering how not to offend everyone around, focus on pleasing and glorifying the Lord. Believers have the mind of Christ and God's wisdom by His Spirit.

You might close your discussion by asking how this chapter is relevant to believer's now.

Warnings

Take heed about temptation

Flee idolatry

Do all to God's glory

Don't offend

**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 9**

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Corinthians 11
- Traditions: head coverings and the Lord's Supper

REVIEW

What are the segments of 1 Corinthians 1-10?

- 1-6 Problems that had been reported to Paul
- 7-16 Things about which the Corinthians had written to him
 - 7 Marriage / Divorce / Remarriage
 - 8-10 Things sacrificed / food offered to idols

1 CORINTHIANS 11

Verse 1

How does this verse relate to the previous segment?

Paul used himself as an example in laying down his rights.

not eating meat that would cause a weak brother to stumble
not using liberties or rights, but loving brothers first
exercising self-control

Verses 2

How does the next segment begin? What did Paul say?

Paul praised the Corinthians for remembering him and holding to the traditions he had delivered to them.

Ask what your group learned about the other uses of "traditions" in the New Testament.

"Tradition(s)" is used in both negative and positive ways.

Mark 7:1-13

Traditions handed down by the elders of Israel

They preferred to keep their traditions above keeping God's Word.
They taught their traditions to others as doctrines.

They had set aside God's commandment in order to keep their traditions.

Colossians 2:8

Men's traditions can take one captive and lead away from the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:15

Paul taught the Thessalonians when he was with them and in 1 Thessalonians, which he wrote to them. Then in his second letter, he instructed them to stand firm and hold to the traditions he had given to them.

Ask your group how they can know if the traditions they keep are from the Lord or not.

Verses 3-16

Lead your discussion back to 1 Corinthians 11.

What's the first tradition, and what did Paul want the church to understand about it?

The spiritual significance of head coverings was order and authority.

Evidently the Corinthian saints didn't understand the reason for head coverings. This is one of the subjects they wrote to Paul about.

It seems they did the external but had lost the meaning for it.

He wanted them to understand an order.

A simple drawing of the order is a good visual aid, or a list of the main points of the traditions as on the last page of this lesson's guide. Tell your group to look at their chart in the lesson also.

God

Christ

Man / husband

Woman / wife

There is equality in the God-head and an order.

There is equality between man and woman,
but also a God-ordained order.

How did Paul continue his reasoning about this order and head coverings?

Head covering is a symbol of authority.

A man is not to cover his head when praying or prophesying.

If he does, it disgraces his head—Christ.

He's the image and glory of God.

A woman / wife is to cover her head as a symbol of authority when praying or prophesying.

If she doesn't, it disgraces her head.

She is the glory of man.

Paul wrote that if it's disgraceful for a woman / wife to have her hair cut off or shaved, then she was to cover her head.

NOTE: Some in your group might have read in commentaries about the Corinthian society of that time. In that society women / wives didn't wear short hair or go without a head covering unless making a statement of superiority or freedom. The head covering showed a submissive attitude in Christian women / wives.

How do the Genesis cross-references help to understand these principles?

Equality between man and woman

Genesis 1:26-28

Male and female were created in God's image and given dominion over the earth. He blessed man and woman.

Woman originated from man, created for the man's sake

Genesis 2:18-25

God made woman as a helper suitable / fit for man. It wasn't good in God's sight for the man to be alone.

Man and woman were both created in the image of God, but there is an order of authority.

Lead the discussion back to 1 Corinthians 11 and ask about verses 10-16.

Paul wrote that the woman should have a symbol of authority, the head covering, because of angels.

NOTE: The reference in verse 10 about women and the angels is not easy to understand; even some scholars aren't sure of the meaning. So, don't lose time discussing too much about it.

Men and women are not independent of each other in the Lord.

Woman came from man as Genesis says.

Man is birthed by a woman.

Then Paul asked the questions in verses 13-15. The answer to the first question is probably an issue of their society. But the second question is an illustration of nature.

A woman's long hair can be her head covering.

Paul concluded his instruction about this tradition in verse 16. He didn't want them to be contentious by not keeping this tradition, and maybe because of that, offending those in the churches or misrepresenting the churches to the pagans.

How does this compare with the principles of 1 Corinthians 8–10?

Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God.

Don't seek one's own profit but the profit of the many that they may be saved.

Now, you might ask your group if this tradition is practiced in their church and why.

Verses 17-22

What are these verses about? What is the other tradition in this chapter?

In verses 17 and 22 Paul made it clear that he didn't praise / commend them for how they practiced the Lord's Supper.

There were divisions; relate to 1:10.

But some factions are necessary to show who is a true believer and who is not—those who are “approved / genuine” are evident.

They were getting together to eat supper, but in a selfish way.
Some were going hungry while others were getting drunk.

They should eat and drink at home.

Verses 23-26

Where did celebrating the Lord's Supper come from? How was it passed down? Also, ask about the cross-reference in Matthew.

Jesus Himself delivered this tradition to Paul who delivered it to the Corinthians.

Matthew 26:17-30

Jesus inaugurated the Lord's Supper at the time of the Jewish Feast of Passover.
The blood of the Passover lamb delivered Israel from death in Egypt.

What else do these verses say about the church and the Lord's Supper?

The way they practiced the supper despised the church and shamed / humiliated those who didn't have anything. They weren't practicing self-control over their bodies or love toward one another.

Paul described what Jesus did and the significance of the bread and cup.

The tradition is to remember Jesus and proclaim His death until He returns.

This tradition was commanded for all believers by the Lord Jesus.
It's not determined by the society one lives in.

Jesus described the symbolism.

The bread represented His body.
The cup represented His blood.

It was not His literal body and blood, since He was still in His earthly body and it contained His blood.

You might ask your group how they or if they observe the Lord's Supper?

Verses 27-34

What is the warning?

Don't partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner.

There are serious consequences when one is guilty of Christ's body and blood.
Many were weak and sick / ill, and a number of them had died.

NOTE: The word "sleep" in this text, as well as numerous others in the New Testament, refers to the death of believers.

Each believer is to examine himself before eating the bread and drinking the cup.

He is to judge the body rightly. This compares with self-control and discipline over one's body as in 1 Corinthians 8-10. If believers properly judge themselves, then they won't be judged as the Corinthians were.

Being judged by the Lord as a result of not judging oneself is His discipline.
It distinguishes believers from the world.

Believers might be weak and sick, even die.
But the world is condemned.

How serious is this warning, and does it still apply?

What were Paul's final instructions about this tradition?

When the church comes together, believers are to wait for one another.

If hungry, they're to eat at home.

To end your discussion, ask your group what they've learned about these two church traditions.

Head Coverings	The Lord's Supper
God Christ Man Woman When praying or prophesying: Man/husband—head uncovered Woman/wife—head covered Symbol of authority	Bread = Christ's body Cup = new covenant in His blood Eat and drink in unworthy manner = guilty of Lord's body and blood Examine self

**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 10**

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Corinthians 12–14
- Spiritual gifts

REVIEW

Begin your discussion by asking about the segments of 1 Corinthians.
Use the At A Glance chart as a visual aid.

1–6	problems reported to Paul
1–4	divisions and quarrels
5–6	not judging immorality
7–16	things they wrote to Paul
7	marriage
8–10	things sacrificed / food offered to idols
11	traditions
12–14	spiritual gifts

1 CORINTHIANS 12

Verses 1-3

How does this chapter begin the segment about spiritual gifts?

Don't be unaware

NOTE: Paul said he didn't want them to be unaware of "spirituals." The word "gifts" was not in the original text.

There is a lot to discuss in this lesson, so watch your time. There is a whole Precept Upon Precept course on Spiritual Gifts. Maybe study that course after this one.

What was Paul's caution to the Corinthians? What had they been like?

When they were unsaved pagans, they were easily led astray by mute, unspeaking, idols. So Paul warned them about being led astray by people speaking "spiritual-sounding" things. Don't be led astray when it comes to the true spirituals.

The determining factor between those leading astray and those speaking by the Holy Spirit of God is what they say about Jesus—He is Lord.

You might ask your group if they think this relates to believers now.

The Corinthian believers were immature.
There were factions.
Before salvation the immature believers were easily led astray.

The same is true anywhere now.
Mature believers are to lead the immature to be aware of what God says about spiritual things.

There is a short list of the main points about spiritual gifts at the end of this guide which you might use as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Verses 4-6

What are the main points in these verses?

There are varieties of:	But the same:
Gifts	Spirit
Ministries / service	Lord
Effects / activities	God

The gifts, ministries / service, and effects / activities are different.
But the Spirit, Lord, and God work to the same end—accomplishing His work.

Verses 7-11

What is the contrast in verse 7?

Verse 6 ended speaking about “all” believers.
Verse 7 goes to “each one,” speaking of individual believers.

Each believer is given a manifestation of the Spirit—a spiritual gift, verse 4.

manifestation—*phanérōsis*; “A manifestation, a making visible or observable.”¹

Spiritual gifts are manifestations of the Spirit. By the use of spiritual gifts in the body, other believers are able to “see” the working of the Holy Spirit.

The manifestation or visibility of the Spirit in each believer’s life is for the common good of all believers, not merely for the individual.

How do verses 8-11 further explain the main points of verses 4-7?

Varieties of gifts are given to different individual believers by the same Spirit.

¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993), G5321.

Word / utterance of wisdom
Word / utterance of knowledge
Faith
Gifts of healings
Effecting / working of miracles
Prophecy
Distinguishing of (ESV—ability to distinguish between) spirits
Kinds of tongues
Interpretation of tongues

Then he restates the point in verse 11 by saying that the same Spirit works all these different spiritual gifts in different believers.

The Holy Spirit distributes / apportions to each believer just as He, the Spirit wills, not as the individual wills.

No individual receives from the Spirit all of the gifts listed in this text.

You might ask your group if they understand how the gifts listed in verses 8-10 are for the common good of the church.

Verses 12-31

What is the illustration and how does it further explain about gifts?

The body—a physical body is compared with the body of Christ, the church.

Many different members with different functions, but one body
All members function for the body's benefit.
All are important and needed.

God placed / arranged each member in the body as He desired.

What does verse 13 teach and how does this relate to its immediate context?

By / in one Spirit all believers were baptized into one body. This is a reference to salvation. It's when each believer drinks of this one Spirit.

This is when the Spirit begins to manifest Himself in each believer's life.

The body or church at Corinth was made up of Jews, Greeks, slaves, and free people.

Regardless of how different they were before salvation, the one Spirit made them one body in Christ Jesus.

Their spiritual gifts had nothing to do with who or what they were before salvation. God the Spirit determined, and still does, which gift(s) each one was given.

But all the gifts are given for the common good of the church.

The result is no division, according to verse 25.
The members should have the same care for one another.

Relate this to 1 Corinthians 1:10.

Verses 27-31

What are these verses about? How does this continue the teaching about spiritual gifts?

Verse 11 states that the Spirit distributes / apportions the gifts to individual believers as He desires.

Verse 18 makes a similar statement about God placing / arranging the members in the body as He desires.

And verse 24 says that God composed the body.

The main point is that God—Father, Son, and Spirit—determine all aspects of gifts in the church. The individual believers are merely recipients of gifts given by Him.

Then verse 28 says God appointed in the church...

1st apostles

2nd prophets

3rd teachers

Then miracles

Then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, kinds of tongues

There is an order stated in verse 28.

The first gifts listed are those which are to speak God's Word. It's the foundation of the church.

The Word is what sets things straight. It is what the Corinthians needed, what Paul was writing to them. It is still the primary need in churches.

Based on what the text says up to verse 29, what is the answer to the questions in verses 29-30?

No, all are not apostles. All are not prophets. All are not teachers or workers of miracles.

All don't have gifts of healings, and all don't speak with tongues or interpret tongues.

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit who distributes them to individual believers as He desires for the common good.

Give time for your group to discuss application of these truths.

Based on the context, what does verse 31 mean?

The Corinthian church body was to desire the greater / higher gifts serving in their body. Maybe this is referring to the first gifts listed in the sequence, those gifts focused on speaking God's Word.

This verse refers to the whole church, not individuals within it.

What is the more excellent way?

Use spiritual gifts with love to serve one another.

1 CORINTHIANS 13

What is the key word in this chapter? And what is the context?

“Love” in the context of spiritual gifts

How can the truths in this chapter fix divisions within a church? Let your group discuss application.

Verses 1-3

What are the illustrations about? What is the main point?

The gifts mentioned are to an exaggerated point, but if love is missing, then even the exaggerated is useless.

Verses 4-8

What is in these verses?

It's a description of love and how it behaves, especially relevant to the use of spiritual gifts within the body of Christ.

Verses 8-12

What is the main point in these verses? Discuss word studies at relevant points.

Paul taught a point using the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge as representatives of gifts in general from chapter 12.

The gifts are not forever as love is.

Spiritual gifts are for the proper function of the church, which will not always exist on earth. At a point in the future, the church will be with the Lord in heaven. At that time, the church will be perfect.

“Perfect” is *τέλειος*: “Finished, that which has reached its end, term, limit; hence, complete, full, wanting in nothing.”²

The coming of the complete or perfect will do away with the partial. Knowledge and prophecy are only partial now.

“Will be done / will pass away” is *καταργέω*: “To render inactive, idle, useless, ineffective.”³

At that time tongues will cease, along with the other gifts, as there will no longer be a need for the gifts.

Verse 13 restates that love is eternal.

1 CORINTHIANS 14

What is this chapter about?

It’s a contrast between two spiritual gifts: tongues and prophecy.

Have the group look at the chart from the lesson as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Verses 1-5

What are the main points in these verses?

Pursue love as the main thing.

Verse 1 goes back to the statement in 12:31—what the church is to desire regarding spiritual gifts.

Desire prophecy above speaking in tongues. Relate to the order in 12:28.

Prophecy is a greater gift than tongues, unless tongues are interpreted so the church can understand what is being said and edified / built up by it. The focus is edifying / building up the church.

One who has the gift of prophecy speaks:

Edification / up building

Exhortation

Consolation

The church is edified / built up when one prophesies.

²Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993), G5046.

³Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993), G2673.

Prophecy (*propheteia*) is “speaking forth.”⁴ A prophet proclaims a message from God. It’s based on His Word.

One who speaks in a tongue edifies / builds up self only, unless there is an interpretation.

Tongues (*glossa*) can mean “language” or “utterance.”⁵

In this context it’s clear that the hearers don’t understand what is being said.

Verses 6-19

What do these verses say about prophecy and tongues?

The main point is that the church needs to understand what is being said.
It’s illustrated with a flute, harp, and bugle.

There are many different languages in the world, and all have meaning.
But the one hearing the language needs to be able to understand what’s being said.

Again, the church is to be edified / built up. And for that to take place, the church needs to understand the meaning of what’s being said.

Paul had the spiritual gift of tongues, but his desire was to edify / build up the church.
So he spoke the language the people of the church understood.

Verses 20-33

What are the main points of these verses?

Paul called the Corinthians to be mature, not children, in their thinking about these gifts.

His quote from the Law indicates that although someone speaks in another language, it does not guarantee that the hearers will listen to God.

Tongues are a sign to unbelievers.
Prophecy is for believers.

Give time for your group to discuss the relevance of the illustrations in verses 23-24.

⁴W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1996), G4394.

⁵Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). p. 37.

According to verses 26-33, what is the desired outcome?

When the church is assembled, all is to be done for its edification.
There are guidelines for who speaks and when.

Tongues require interpretation.
Only two or three
In turn, not all at once

Only two or three prophets speak in turn.
The others judge what is being said.
Prophecies are subject to all with the gift.

Verses 34-36

Who / what are these verses about?

Still in the context of the whole church assembled and who is to speak and when
Women also are to keep silent in that situation.

Verses 37-40

How did Paul end this segment about spiritual gifts?

This is from the Lord. It is all direction from Him about spiritual gifts.

Earnestly desire to prophesy.

NOTE: The verb earnestly desire / desire earnestly is plural and shows that the church is to desire the gift of prophecy within their body.

Do not forbid to speak in tongues.
All should be done properly / decently and in an orderly manner.

To end this discussion, ask your group what they learned about their gifts and ministry / service and how important the body is for all believers.

Spiritual gifts

Given by the Spirit to each believer
for the common good

All don't have same gifts
Minister / serve in love
Edify / build up the body

**1 CORINTHIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 11**

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-49
- The resurrection

REVIEW

Spend a few minutes reviewing the main segments of this letter to the Corinthian saints. Use the At A Glance chart as a visual aid for this review.

1–6	problems reported
1–4	divisions and quarrels
5–6	not judging immorality
7–16	things about which they wrote
7	marriage
8–10	idols
11	traditions
12–14	spiritual gifts

1 CORINTHIANS 15

How does 1 Corinthians 15 begin?

“Now...” indicating another subject in the second main segment.

The subject is Jesus’ resurrection as part of the gospel.

As a visual aid for this discussion, tell your group to look at the chart from the lesson “The Gospel of the Death and Resurrection of the Christ.”

Verses 1-11

What are the points about the gospel in these verses?

Paul preached the good news to the Corinthians. Relate this to 1 Corinthians 4:15.
They received it and stood in it.

They were saved by it if they held fast to it.

If they didn’t, then they believed in vain—weren’t really saved.

The main points of the gospel, based on verses 3-4, are:

1. Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

The fact that Jesus was buried showed He was really dead.

2. He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

His appearance to many after His resurrection proved that He was alive again.

He appeared to Cephas or Peter, then to the twelve.

He appeared to more than 500 brethren at once, most of whom were alive when Paul wrote this letter.

Then He appeared to James and then to all of the apostles.

According to the Gospels, Jesus appeared more than once to the apostles.

Last of all, He appeared to Paul, who was also an apostle.

Paul considered himself the least of the apostles because he persecuted the church. It was by God's grace that he became an apostle.

God's grace in making him an apostle did not prove vain, because that grace within him labored more than all of them. His concern was not who had labored the most, but that the gospel was preached and people believed.

Relate this to 1 Corinthians 9:12-23.

Paul endured all things so that there was no cause for a hindrance to the gospel.

He became all things to all men so that he might win some with the gospel.

His preaching the gospel was a stewardship from the Lord. He offered the gospel without charge.

God's grace turned Paul's life around.

Verses 12-19

What was the problem Paul addressed in these verses? How do these verses relate to verses 1-11?

Some said there was no resurrection from the dead.

Paul stated what the results are if there is no resurrection.

- Not even Christ has been raised
- Paul's preaching was in vain
- Their faith was in vain
- Paul and others who preached the gospel were false witnesses against / misrepresenting God
- Their faith was worthless / futile
- They were still in their sins
- Those who died / fallen asleep in Christ have perished
- Hope only in this life

Give time for your group to discuss how important Jesus' resurrection is to the gospel message.

It's the hope and the life.

Verses 20-28

What are these verses about?

Christ has been raised from the dead, the 1st fruits of those who are asleep—those who believed in Him and died. So the first statement Paul made is about those who were already dead, those who did not perish.

First fruits of a crop indicate a harvest to come.

Adam was the first man, and because of his sin all men die.

Christ is the first fruits of resurrection, and all who believe in Him will live.

What is the order in these verses?

Christ has been raised, the first fruits.

Those who are Christ's will be raised at His coming.

This refers to believers who die before Jesus' coming.

Then, after Christ's coming, the end

The end is when Christ hands over the kingdom to God the Father.

Between His coming and the end, He'll reign.

During that time all of His enemies will be defeated / destroyed, under His feet.

The last enemy abolished / destroyed will be death.

All things will be put in subjection under Him.

He'll abolish / destroy all rule and authority by the end when He hands over the kingdom.

The only one not subject to Christ is God the Father.

Verses 29-34

What is Paul's concern, warning?

Don't be deceived, especially in this context about resurrection from the dead

You might briefly review the main points of 1 Corinthians 15:1-34.

Verses 1-11	the gospel of Christ, death and resurrection
Verses 12-19	some say there is no resurrection
Verses 20-28	Christ has been raised from the dead
Verses 29-34	don't be deceived

What is Paul's reasoning in verses 29-32?

He offers two examples of people who believe there is resurrection from the dead.

Those who are baptized for the dead

Paul didn't teach that this will help the dead. He merely stated it as a fact that some were being baptized for the dead.

His point was that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and even those being baptized for them, whoever they were, realized this truth.

Paul himself, his life of suffering here on earth and looking to the future

He referred to his own life and all who preach the gospel. Why put themselves in danger by preaching the gospel if it has no profit?

If the dead are not raised, then people need to simply enjoy this life to the utmost. Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

If there is no resurrection and thus, no more than life here on earth, people might as well live however they want.

Give your group time to discuss application of these truths to now.

How does verse 33 relate to this teaching about the resurrection?

Those who said there is no resurrection were deceived.
Those who only live for this life are deceived.
They are the bad company who can corrupt the true believers.

You might ask your group if any of them are keeping company with those who are trying to deceive them. What should they do?

What did Paul tell the Corinthians to do? Why?

Become sober-minded (ESV—awake from your drunken stupor) and stop sinning, for some have no knowledge of God.

They needed to return to their senses and not be deceived by those who say there is no resurrection. They needed to think right.

“Stop sinning” might be a command to stop keeping company with and listening to the teaching of those who say there is no resurrection. The result of believing there is no resurrection is having no knowledge of God.

Verses 35-49

What are the questions some might have asked? What are the answers in these verses?

How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?

Paul used illustrations from everyday life to show that all people can see how resurrection from the dead takes place.

He illustrated first with sowing grain. Grain doesn't come to life unless it dies and is planted.

In answering the first question, Paul also answered the second one.
All flesh has different bodies: birds, fish, etc.

There are also heavenly bodies, as well as earthly ones—sun, moon, and stars are different heavenly bodies.

Resurrection of the dead is like that. The resurrected body is different from the body that died, like the grain. It's sown perishable and raised imperishable, sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body.

Adam, the first man, became a living soul. He had the natural body.

Jesus Christ, the last Adam or man, became a life-giving spirit. He was resurrected.

The natural (earthy) body is first, then the spiritual (heavenly).

To end this discussion, give your group time to share any application not already discussed.

1 CORINTHIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 12

Lesson Emphasis:

- 1 Corinthians 15:50–58
- 1 Corinthians 16

REVIEW

Ask about the main segments of 1 Corinthians.

Use the At A Glance chart as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

1 Corinthians 1–6	Problems reported to Paul
1 Corinthians 7–16	Paul’s response to what the Corinthians wrote to him about
7	Marriage
8–10	Things sacrificed to idols
11	Traditions
12–14	Spiritual gifts
15	The gospel, resurrection
16	The collection for the saints

What are the main points of 1 Corinthians 15:1-34?

Use “The Gospel of the Death and Resurrection of the Christ” chart as a visual aid for the rest of your discussion about 1 Corinthians 15.

Verses 1-11	The gospel
Verses 12-19	Some say there is no resurrection
Verses 20-28	Christ has been raised
Verses 29-34	Don’t be deceived
Verses 35-49	How are the dead raised? With what kind of body?

THE BODY

How does 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 relate to 1 Corinthians 15:35-49?

The earthly body, this tent, will be torn down—it will die.

As long as believers are in their natural body, they are absent from the Lord.
When present with the Lord the tent, earthly body, will be swallowed up by life.

Believers have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
God gave believers the Spirit as a pledge of this.

What was Paul's ambition?

Whether alive on earth or with the Lord, Paul wanted to be pleasing to Him.

All believers should have the same ambition because all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ and be recompensed for their deeds—good or bad.

How does 1 John 3:2 help with understanding what 1 Corinthians 15 is teaching?

We don't know yet what those heavenly bodies will be like, but when Jesus appears,
we will be like Him,
and we will see Him just as He is.

Give your group time to discuss application of these truths.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-58

What are these verses about?

A mystery—all not die, but all changed

Victory over death

How did Paul begin this section? How did he explain his point?

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.
This earthly body has to be changed.

All believers will be changed, although all will not die.

At the last trumpet, the dead will be raised imperishable, and all believers will be changed.

In a moment
In the twinkling of an eye

How do the cross-references in Thessalonians compare with this?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 5:9-10
Jesus will come in the clouds.

He'll bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Him, whose bodies were buried.

He will descend with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God.

The dead in Christ will rise first. This has to be their bodies because they are with Him.

Then those who are alive shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.
This is the moment when all are changed,

Flesh and blood mortal bodies changed into immortal bodies, imperishable bodies.
When He appears, we'll be like Him.

Then all will meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with Him.

What did Paul write about death and sin in verses 54-58?

Death is swallowed up in victory because those who were asleep will have new bodies.
Those who are alive at that time won't die.

The sting has been taken out of death. Its sting was sin—the wages of sin is death.
The law showed what sin is; it defined sin by giving God's standard of righteousness.

Thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! The victory over
sin and death comes only through Jesus Christ.

How does this chapter end?

Paul told the Corinthians saints, and all believers, to be steadfast and immovable.
They could do that because the victory is sure.

Always abound in the work of the Lord; that labor is not in vain.

Give time for your group to discuss how these truths apply to them.

1 CORINTHIANS 16

Verses 1-4

What are these verses about?

The collection for the saints

Paul gave directions for it.

- Put aside and save on the 1st day of every week
- No collection made when Paul got there
- After his arrival, someone sent with the gift to Jerusalem
- That one will go with Paul

How does this relate to believers now? How do the cross-references relate?

They gave to support other believers who had need.
They had a specific day to put aside and save for the need.
When the collection was done, then it was taken to the believers who needed it.

An interesting point is that the Corinthians were primarily Gentiles, and the church at Jerusalem was made up of primarily Jews. There were no barriers in Christ and should not be now.

Galatians 6:6-10

Let the one who is taught the Word share all good things with him who teaches.
Do good to all, especially God's household.

Ephesians 4:28 and 1 Thessalonians 4:12

Believers are to work so they can share with those in need and not be in need themselves.

Verses 5-9

What are these verses about?

Paul was planning to come to Corinth, and maybe spend the winter with them there.
He wanted to stay with them for some time.
That's when the collection was to be prepared to send with him when he left.

He wrote from Ephesus where he ministered at that time and would stay until Pentecost in the spring.

Verses 10-18

Who are these verses about?

Timothy

Paul instructed the Corinthians to care for him if he came to them on his way to Paul.

Apollos

He was also encouraged to come to Corinth.

What are the instructions in verses 13-14, and why?

Paul wanted the Corinthians to grow from infants (1 Corinthians 3:1-3) to men.
He wanted his letter to help them be of the same mind.

Maybe that's also why he wanted Timothy and Apollos to go to them, minister to them and see if the letter was taken to heart.

He commanded them:

Be alert / watchful
Stand firm in the faith
Act like men
Be strong
Do all in love

You might write the above commands on your visual aid for emphasis.

Who else did Paul mention in his closing?

Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus

Be subject to those who help in the work and labors.

They went to Paul and refreshed his spirits.
The Corinthians were to acknowledge them because of that.

What did Paul emphasize in his greeting in verses 19-24?

Love

To close your discussion, you might ask your group how this study of 1 Corinthians has ministered to them, what they've learned from it for their lives.

Do they know how to be on the alert / watchful and why they should be?

Do they know how to stand firm in the faith?

Are they growing in spiritual maturity? Acting like adults instead of children?

Doing all in love? Is love the basis for ministry and work?