

- ◆ Vs. 12 How does Paul say the believer should treat those outside of the church fellowship? Why?
- ◆ How does Paul say the believer should treat those inside of the church fellowship? Why?
- ◆ Vs. 13 Why would the church need to follow these directions given here by Paul?
- ◆ What would be the results if the church does not?
- ◆ In 1 Corinthians 1.2 when Paul writes to the sanctified and those called to be holy, is he writing to all the church or a particular group.
- ◆ Why would he do this.

Remember the letter of 1st Corinthians is about ten particular problems in the church at Corinth. As you go through this study remember this is the low road the church at Corinth had chosen. We need to see what they were doing wrong so we can make better decisions and learn from their mistakes (sins).

Paul wrote this letter to try and deal with the problems. In some cases he will offer advice and in other places he will define clearly how to respond to sinful people in the church fellowship. The reader must be careful to always pay attention to the complete answer and context Paul puts it in.

From this study: What do you think Paul was trying to accomplish with this letter? Why did he write it to a particular part of the church?



INTRODUCTION

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The translation quoted here is the New International Version (NIV)*

1 Corinthians 1.1-9

(emphasis added)

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

*To the church of God in Corinth, **to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:***

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

The purpose of this introduction study is to show you the key reasons behind the writing of 1st Corinthians and to prepare you for the study of the ten problems Paul wrote to them about.

BACKGROUND OF PAUL AND THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

Read Acts 18.1-18a (c. AD 51) Then answer these questions.

- ◆ Vss. 1-4 When Paul first arrived in Corinth what did he do and why.
- ◆ Vs. 5 How and why did this change?
- ◆ Vss. 6-8 What happened that caused Paul to rethink his approach?
- ◆ How did Paul respond to this situation?
- ◆ What was the results of his decision and determination?
- ◆ Vss. 9-11 What happened to Paul and how long did he stay in Corinth?
- ◆ Vss. 12-17 How does this fulfill the prophecy Paul received in verse 9-10?
- ◆ Why would the Jews treat their own leaders this way?

- ◆ To believe means more than just recognizing who Jesus is and going to church. It is also about how you live your life after accept Jesus as your savior. Read Matthew 7.15-23 and answer the following questions.
- ◆ Vss. 15-20 What is the key way a person can be recognized as a follower of Jesus?
- ◆ Vss.21.23 According to Jesus will everyone who calls out or claims to be a follower spend eternity with Him? Explain why or why not.
- ◆ Read Romans 2.7-8 Explain the difference between those who will receive eternal life and those who will not.
- ◆ Read Matthew 25.1-13 and answer the following questions.
- ◆ What was the difference between the two groups of virgins waiting on the bridegroom?
- ◆ What allowed the one group in and kept the other group out?
- ◆ How could this be applied to the people in the church at Corinth?
- ◆ Read 1 Corinthians 5.9-13
- ◆ Vs. 11 What standards does Paul set for fellowship inside of the church?

- ◆ Yet to understand the word holy you need to see it in three distinct ways. (Hint Read 1 Thessalonians 5.23)

1. It means to be _____ pure.
2. It means to be _____ faithful.
3. It means to be _____ clean.

- ◆ In the Old Testament holiness or purity was outward and physical. Jesus redefined holiness or purity as he taught his disciples, and example of this is found in Matthew 5.27-28.
- ◆ What was the Old Testament Standard Jesus quoted?
- ◆ Where is this found in the Bible?
- ◆ What does Jesus say the new standard is?
- ◆ How does this change the way holiness and sin are defined?
- ◆ According to 1 Corinthians 1.2 who is Paul appealing and writing his letter to and why does he expect them to straighten out the church at Corinth?
- ◆ Is everyone who calls themselves a Christian or who goes to church going to spend eternity with God?
- ◆ Read John 3.15,16, 36.
- ◆ What is the key to eternal life?
- ◆ What is the hindrance to eternal life with Jesus?

- ◆ NOTE: Paul spent _____ years in Corinth teaching them. They had a strong foundation from one of the greatest teachers in the church.

UNDERSTANDING 1 CORINTHIANS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

The letter we have as 1st Corinthians is actually the second letter he wrote to the church at Corinth. The first letter has never been found but is referenced in 1 Corinthians 5.9. After receiving reports of the problems in the church at Corinth he wrote the letter we now have as 1 Corinthians. Paul made another visit to Corinth that did not go well. He wrote a third letter we do not have and finally wrote the last letter to them, his fourth, which is 2nd Corinthians.

Quick Overview of the Correspondence And Paul's interaction with the church at Corinth.

- First visit to Corinth lasting 18 months (c. AD 51)
- Goes to Jerusalem, then travels to Ephesus to begin a three-year stay (c. AD 53-55)
- Writes the "previous letter" [Corinthians A] (c. AD 53-54)
- Hears of reports from the Corinthians
- Writes "1 Corinthians" [Corinthians B] (c. AD 54-55)
- Deploys Timothy to Corinth
- The "painful visit" (Second visit)
- The "severe letter" [Corinthians C]
- Leaves Ephesus and meets Titus in Macedonia
- Writes "2 Corinthians" [Corinthians D] (c. AD 56)
- Visits Corinth a third time
(<https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/intros/corintheta.cfm> Accessed 1-5-2015)

The church at Corinth could be called dysfunctional. It was filled with people who can basically be broken down into two groups. The first are the sanctified believers. The second are the dysfunctional members who may or may not have actually ever made a commitment to Jesus as their savior.

Paul wrote this letter not to teach them theology but to try and restore Christian order to a church that was allowing sinful people to misrepresent Christ to the world.

1 CORINTHIANS STUDY GUIDE & OUTLINE

The ten problems defined

- Week ONE: 1 Corinthians 1.1-9—Introduction to the sanctified in the church at Corinth.
- Week TWO: 1 Corinthians 1.10-4.21
⇒ Problem 1: Divisions in the Church over Leadership
- Week THREE: 1 Corinthians 5.1-13
⇒ Problem 2: Sexual Immorality tolerated
- Week FOUR: 1 Corinthians 6.1-20
⇒ Problem 3: Members suing each other in court.
- Week FIVE: 1 Corinthians 7.1-39
⇒ Problem 4: Understanding SEX and marriage.
- Week SIX: 1 Corinthians 8.1—13 & 1 Corinthians 10.1-11.1
⇒ Problem 5: Food offered (sacrificed) to Idols
- Week SEVEN: 1 Corinthians 9.1-27
⇒ Problem 6: Rights and privileges of spiritual leaders & whether they should be paid salaries.
- Week EIGHT: 1 Corinthians 11.2-16
⇒ Problem 7: Paul's view on Women in Worship (the church)
- Week NINE: 1 Corinthians 11.17-34
⇒ Problem 8: Proper attitude toward the Lord's Supper

- Week TEN: 1 Corinthians 12.1-14.40
⇒ Problem 9: Confusion in worship by speaking in various languages.
- Week ELEVEN: 1 Corinthians 15.1-58
⇒ Problem 10: Understanding the resurrection
- Week TWELVE: 1 Corinthians 16.1-24—Conclusion

Each of these will be looked at in detail as we progress through the book of 1st Corinthians.

DISCOVERING WHO THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN TO.

The first matter we will need to deal with is who the letter is written to and why.

¹ Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

² To the church of God in Corinth, **to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:**

³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 1.1-3

- ♦ VS. 2 Who was this letter primarily written to?
- ♦ What two words does Paul use to describe them? Define each word as you understand them.
 - 1.
 - 2.
- ♦ These two words are directly related to each other. Sanctified means "to make holy," and holy means "sacred" and is sometimes translated "saints" in this verse.