

First Corinthians

Supplement

Resources & Background Information

First Corinthians is a fascinating book. God has left us with a letter that is chockfull of helpful and life-changing information for people like us who find ourselves in a culture like ours. The book is loaded with answers to questions that we often ponder and sometimes dare to ask. Our study through 1 Corinthians promises to be an insightful and rewarding use of our weekends at PCC. Get excited about the months ahead as we focus our attention on what God has for us in the study of this poignant and practical book. But first let's learn a few pertinent facts about this sprawling metropolis called Corinth.

The City of Corinth



Corinth was one of the most powerful and influential cities in Greece. Its location on a four-mile wide strip of land that split the southern and northern sections of ancient Greece put it at what must have felt like the crossroads of the world. To travel from the north to the south of Greece, you had to go through Corinth. To travel on the sea, you could either traverse the treacherous waters on a 250 mile detour around the southern most part of Greece, or you could drag your boats across the well-worn isthmus through Corinth.

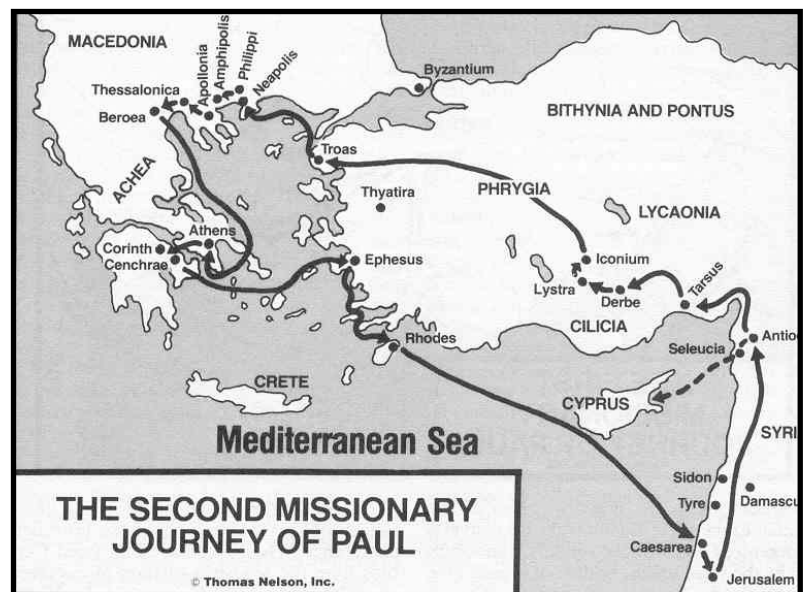
In the Roman days of Paul's church planting efforts, the city of Corinth felt more like Las Vegas than San Pedro. The traveling merchants and swelling downtown crowds had attracted a sordid epidemic of brazen immorality and corruption. Though one could find synagogues and a remnant of god-fearing people in Corinth, the city was largely known as "sin city." The ancients even coined the word "corinthianize" to refer to the engagement in the debauchery that one could so easily find in Corinth.

Church Planting in Corinth

Paul first traveled to Corinth in A.D. 50 on his second church planting trip from Antioch. Paul's heart for the big cities of his day no doubt drew him to this bustling place. As was Paul's practice he sought to preach the gospel in this strategic city so that the good news would find its way to the surrounding areas.

On the surface Paul's first encounter didn't seem to go so well (see the side bar on the back page). And yet through his stay in this important city, many were won to Christ and the core of this church was established.

As you can imagine, living the Christian life in this growing church was exciting yet challenging. The culture in which these young Christians were called to live out their faith made it extraordinarily difficult. By the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians a number of problems had arisen. The church met in the shadow of an 1800-foot mountain that housed



the infamous temple of Aphrodite. This religious fortress of immorality, along with the general disregard for anything righteous in this town made matters worse for the fledgling church.

Paul's Letter to Corinth

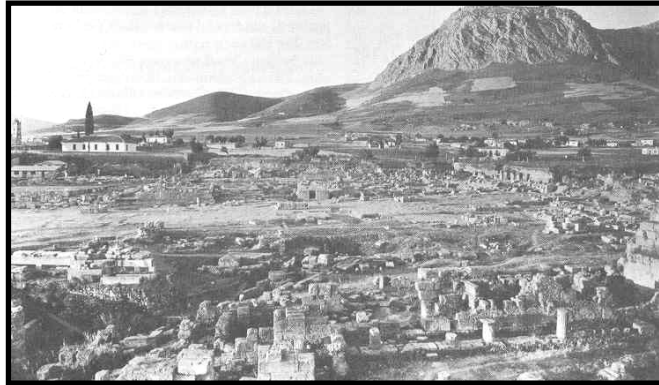
Paul had been informed of some of the needs and problems that existed in the church at Corinth (1 Cor 1:11). First Corinthians is a response to those issues. The topics addressed in this ancient letter are as relevant today as they've ever been.

Acts 18 ¹After this, Paul left Athens and went to **Corinth**. ²There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. ⁴Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. ⁸Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the **Corinthians** who heard him believed and were baptized. ⁹One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because **I have many people in this city**." ¹¹So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. ¹²While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. ¹³"This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law." ¹⁴Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. ¹⁵But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." ¹⁶So he had them ejected from the court. ¹⁷Then they all turned on **Sosthenes** the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever. ¹⁸Paul stayed on in **Corinth** for some time. Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.

Paul was prompted to give God's inspired counsel on issues like marriage, singleness, "charismatic" outbursts in church meetings, the need for unity, sexual purity, church discipline, gender roles in church leadership, the importance of the resurrection, communion services, how to interface the Christian faith with the secular marketplace and the list goes on. What a wealth of God's insight on issues that affect so many areas of daily life!

Paul most likely wrote this important letter to the Corinthians during his extended three-year stay at Ephesus during his third church planting trip. The date he wrote the letter was A.D. 54 or 55.

First Corinthians is 16 chapters long and will probably take us a couple of years to glean all that God has for us in this important study. Make a decision to be involved in our study each weekend. Let's be sure to take what we learn and put it to work in our lives.



A Few Worthwhile Books on First Corinthians

*Barret, C. K. **The First Epistle to the Corinthians**. BNTC; Hendrickson, 1968.*

*Bloomberg, Craig. **1 Corinthians**. NIVAC; Zondervan, 1994.*

*Bruce, F. F. **1 & 2 Corinthians**. NCBC; Eerdmans, 1971.*

*Fee, Gordon. **The First Epistle to the Corinthians**. NICNT; Eerdmans, 1987.*

*Godet, Franz. **Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians**. Zondervan, 1971.*

*Ironside, H. A. **Addresses on the First Epistle to the Corinthians**. Loizeaux, 1936.*

*MacArthur, John. **1 Corinthians**. MNTC; Moody, 1984.*

*Mare, Harold. **1 Corinthians**. EBC; Zondervan, 1976.*

*Morgan, G. Campbell. **The Corinthian Letters of Paul**. Revell, 1946.*

*Morris, Leon. **1 Corinthians**. TNTC; IVP, 1985.*

*Prior, David. **The Message of 1 Corinthians**. TBST; IVP, 1985.*

*Robertson, Archibald. **A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians**. ICC; T & T Clark, 1963.*

*Thiselton, Anthony. **The First Epistle to the Corinthians**. NIGTC. Eerdmans, 2000.*

*Thomas, Robert. **Understanding the Spiritual Gifts – 1 Cor 12-14**. Kregel, 1999.*

Text: 1 Corinthians 1:1
Topic: Sanctification
Study: First Corinthians
Week: 1
Series: 1 of 2

Focal Point Radio Ministries

April 6 & 7, 2002

Message # 02-13

Pastor Mike

Weirdos!?

part 1

How God Wants Us to Think Differently About Ourselves



1. Think: “ _____ ” (v.1a)

1 Cor. 1:1

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

2. Think: “ _____ ” (v.1b)

3. Think: “ _____ ” (v.1c)

Application Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message. Thoughtfully writing out the answers to these questions will help to drive home the point of today's message. It is also helpful to discuss your answers with others. This can take place with friends, your family, accountability partners, or ministry groups within the church.

1. What difference would it make in the way you think about your everyday life if this afternoon you conclusively discovered that there is no God, no one created you, the universe is a cosmic accident, the earth was never planned nor did anyone construct it, there is no reason or purpose for your existence, and what your life consists of is nothing more than a series of random events?

What kind of a daily difference should it make that there is a God, he made you for a reason and he is working out a plan in and through you?

2. How clued in are you to the purpose of your life—both generally and specifically?

In what practical ways can you deepen your awareness of God's plan for you?

3. How do the world's values condition you to disregard anybody's desires or plans for your life but your own?

How can you give more deference to God's plans and desires for your life?

4. In what ways have you isolated your thinking and planning from other Christians?

Describe a situation about which you should consult or collaborate with another Christian. Who will you talk to about this?

We are reading through the Bible in a year! Here is this week's schedule.

Sunday

Josh. 9-10 & Lk. 22

Monday

Josh. 11-12 & Lk. 23

Tuesday

Josh. 13-14 & Lk. 24

Wednesday

Josh. 15-16 & Jn. 1

Thursday

Josh. 17-18 & Jn. 2

Friday

Josh. 19-20 & Jn. 3

Saturday

Josh. 21-22 & Jn. 4

Here are some resources to help you think biblically about your life, its direction and priorities.

Adams, Jay. **The Biblical View of Self-Esteem, Self-Love & Self-Image**. Harvest House, 1986.
Buford, Bob. **Halftime: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance**. Zondervan, 1994.
Fabarez, Mike. **Hitting God's Target for Your Life**. (call the Focal Point office for more info on this series).
_____. **Taking Christ to Work**. Tape series (call the Focal Point office for more info on this series).
Flynn, Leslie. **You Don't Have to Go It Alone**. Accent Books, 1981.
MacArthur, John. **The Battle for the Beginning: Creation, Evolution and the Bible**. Word Publishing, 2001.
Moreland, J. P. **The Creation Hypothesis: Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer**. InterVarsity, 1994.
Guinness, Os. **The Call: Finding and Fulfilling The Central Purpose of Your Life**. Word Publishing, 1998.
Piper, John. **A Godward Life: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life (Book 2)**. Multnomah Press, 1999.
Sproul, R. C. **Almighty Over All: Understanding the Sovereignty of God**. Baker Books, 1999.
Youssef, Michael. **If God is In Control Why Is My Life Such a Mess?** Thomas Nelson, 1998.