

1 & 2 Corinthians

Christian Living in a Pagan Culture

I. PREPARING TO STUDY

A. Authorship

1. The introductory texts of both books clearly identify _____ as the author.

1 Cor. 1:1-2 1 Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, 2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

2 Cor. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

Both internal and historical evidence offer corroboration of Pauline authorship as well. As early as 95 A.D., Clement of Rome, one of the early church fathers, refers to Paul as the author of 1 Corinthians.

2. Each of the letters is addressed to the church at Corinth. Corinth was the most important city of Greece and the “sin city” of the Roman Empire. A metropolis of 600,000 to 700,000 people, it hosted a temple to Aphrodite, the pagan goddess of love which was home to 1,000 priestess-prostitutes.

But the letters were written not only to the church of Corinth, but to God’s church throughout Achaia and everywhere else.

3. Scholars date the writing of 1 Corinthians between 54 and 57 A.D. The text indicates it was written from _____, as Paul headed back to Antioch at the end of his second missionary journey or else while Paul was in Ephesus on his third missionary journey. 2 Corinthians followed as early as 6 months later.

B. Relationship to the Other Books of the Bible

In 1 and 2 Corinthians, as in all of the letters of the New Testament, we see the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus _____ to the everyday lives of people and to the church. In the letters action becomes doctrine and sayings become practical counsel for living.

II. EXAMINING THE TEXT OF 1 CORINTHIANS

A. INTRODUCTION (1:1-9)

1. Salutation (1:1-3)
2. Thanksgiving (1:4-9)

B. CORRECTING DIVISIONS (1:10 – 4:16)

1. Existence of divisions (1:10-17)
2. Man's wisdom versus God's wisdom (1:18-25)

1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

3. God sets aside man's wisdom (1:26-31)
4. The _____ theme of God's wisdom and of Paul's preaching (2:1-5)

2:1-2, 5 1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

5. God's wisdom revealed to us by the Holy Spirit (2:6-13)
6. Our spiritual condition is made clear by our _____ of God's wisdom (2:14-16)
7. The Corinthians are carnal – saved but following man's wisdom, not God's (3:1-9)

3:1-3 1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere men*?

8. Building on the true foundation (3:10-15)
9. Warning against the destruction of God's temple (3:16-17)
10. The Christian's limitations and resources (3:18-23)
11. God's _____ (4:1-5)

4:1-2 1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

12. The apostolic example (4:6-13)

C. CORRECTING IMMORALITY (4:14 – 6:20)

1. Paul is their spiritual father (4:14-21)
2. Church Discipline (5:1-13)

5:1, 4-5 1 It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife! 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

3. Christians warned against suing one another (6:1-11)
4. The highest appeal for _____ (6:12-20)

6:15-20 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.” 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

D. ANSWERING CONCERNS ABOUT MARRIAGE (7)

1. Responsibilities of marriage (7:1-7)
2. Instructions to the married (7:8-24)
3. Advice to the single and to the married (7:25-40)

E. ANSWERING CONCERNS ABOUT CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (8 – 11)

1. Regarding idols and meat offered to them (8:1-13)
2. Liberty in the ministry (9:1-23)

3. Running the race – _____ of the Christians (9:24-27)

9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*.

4. Examples from Israel's history (10:1-13)
5. Christian liberty and food offered to idols (10:14-33)

10:23-24 23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*.

10:31-33 31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I also please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

6. Instructions regarding authority in the home (11:1-6)
7. Instructions regarding the Lord's Supper (11:17-34)

11:23-26 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

F. OTHER MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE: CONCERNING _____
(12 – 14)

1. Distribution of spiritual gifts sovereignly controlled by the Holy Spirit (12:1-11)

12:7-11 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

2. The Body of Christ compared to the human body (12:12-31)

12:12-27 12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where *would* the body *be*?

20 But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

3. The more excellent way – that of _____ (13)

13:1-3 1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

13:4-8a, 13 4 Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

4. The greatest gift – that of prophecy (14:1-40)

G. OTHER MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE: CONCERNING THE _____ (15)

15:35-38, 42-44 35 But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” 36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. 37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other *grain*. 38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. 42 So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

H. OTHER MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE: CONCERNING _____ (16:1-9)

I. CLOSING ADMONITIONS (16:10-24)

III. EXAMINING THE TEXT OF 2 CORINTHIANS

A. INTRODUCTION (1:1-11)

B. THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION – PRINCIPLES OF A TRUE GOSPEL MINISTRY (1 – 7)

1. Paul has a clear conscience and postpones his visit to Corinth (1:12 – 2:4)
2. He appeals for sinners to be forgiven (2:5-13)
3. A true Gospel ministry operates in sincerity (2:14-17)

2:14-17 14 Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

4. A true Gospel ministry proves itself by _____ lives (3:1-5)
5. The true Gospel ministry is far more glorious than that of the old covenant (3:6-18)

3:7-9 7 But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of

Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

6. The message of the true Gospel ministry (4:1-6)

4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

7. The power of the true Gospel ministry (4:7-15)

4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

8. The _____ of the true Gospel ministry (4:16 – 5:10)

5:1, 5-8 1 For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

9. The motives of the true Gospel ministry (5:11-16) (Fear of God and love of Christ)

10. The nature of the true Gospel ministry (5:17-21)

5:17-21 17 Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.)

11. The trials of the true Gospel ministry (6:1-10)

12. The call to _____ (6:11 – 7:1)

6:14-15 14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has

light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

13. The joy of the apostle over the Corinthian's conduct (7:2-16)

C. THE MINISTRY OF GIVING: TRUE CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY (8 – 9)

1. The good example of the Macedonians (8:1-6)

8:1-4 1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

2. The supreme example of _____ (8:7-9)

8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

3. Advice concerning giving (8:10 – 9:5)

4. The happy results of generosity (9:6-15)

9:6-8 6 But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 *So let* each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work.

D. THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLE – VINDICATION OF PAUL'S AUTHORITY (10 – 13)

1. Paul asserts his apostolic authority (10)

2. Paul's reason for asserting his authority (11:1-15)

11:2-4 2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

3. Paul's _____ for Christ are further proof of his apostleship (11:16-33)

4. Paul's visions and revelations are further proof of his apostleship (12:1-10)

12:2-4, 7-10 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

5. Paul's unselfish _____ for the Corinthians is further proof of his apostleship (12:11-18)

6. Paul will manifest his apostolic authority when he returns to Corinth (12:19 – 13:10)

7. Conclusion (13:11-14)

13:11-14 11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. 13 All the saints greet you. 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.