

1&2 Corinthians Study Guide

History of Corinth

According to Greek legend, Sisyphus was a king of Corinth. For defying the gods with his insolent wit he was sentenced to the eternal drudgery of pushing a huge stone up a hill. When he would reach the summit, the stone would roll back to the bottom and force resumption of the task. Camus, a 20th-century philosopher, found in this legend of the Corinthian king a picture of modern man's condition, the purposeless absurdity of life.

If Camus had read the two biblical letters sent to the Corinthians, he would have gotten a different picture, one with a message of purpose and hope for misdirected people. The attitude of these Corinthians, like their legendary king, smacked of proud self-centeredness. But instead of dealing with a capricious Zeus, these first-century Corinthians interacted with the gracious and loving God and His messenger, the Apostle Paul.

From a human point of view Paul probably had reason to wonder if many saints would be found in Corinth. The ancient city had a reputation for vulgar materialism. In the earliest Greek literature it was linked with wealth (Homer *Iliad* 2. 569-70) and immorality. When Plato referred to a prostitute, he used the expression "Corinthian girl" (*Republic* 404d). The playwright Philetaerus (*Athenaeus* 13. 559a) titled a burlesque play *Ho Korinthiastepus*, which may be translated "The Lecher." And Aristophanes coined the verb *korinthiazomai* to refer to fornication (*Fragment* 354). According to Strabo (*Geography* 8. 6-20) much of the wealth and vice in Corinth centered around the temple of Aphrodite and its thousand temple prostitutes. For this reason a proverb warned, "Not for every man is the voyage to Corinth."

For a hundred years after 146 B.C. no one cared to make the voyage to Corinth. The city was destroyed because of its revolt against Rome. Only a few columns in the temple of Apollo survived the razing. All its citizenry was killed or sold into slavery.

But this favorable location did not go unused for long, as Julius Caesar refounded the city as a Roman colony in 46 B.C. In 27 B.C. it became the governmental seat for Achaia, from which seat Gallio as proconsul would allow Paul's proclamation of the gospel. It was onto this new stage, which nonetheless preserved the vices of the old, that Paul stepped in A.D. 51.¹

¹Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

Introduction

First Corinthians reveals the problems, pressures, and struggles of a church called out of a pagan society. Paul addresses a variety of problems in the lifestyle of the Corinthian Christians: factions, lawsuits, immorality, questionable practices, abuse of the Lord's Supper, and spiritual gifts. In addition to words of discipline, Paul shares words of counsel in answer to questions raised by the Corinthians.

Author

Pauline authorship of 1 Corinthians is almost universally accepted. In addition to the explicit statements of the epistle (1:1; 16:21), the vocabulary and teachings of the text point to Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. References to this letter in extra-biblical literature can be found as early as A.D. 95, when Clement of Rome mentions 1 Corinthians as having been written by Paul.

Date

First Corinthians was probably written during Paul's third missionary journey in A.D. 56 or 57, with 2 Corinthians being written some six to eighteen months later. Paul had founded the church at Corinth during an eighteen-month stay in the city (A.D. 51–52).

The Corinth which Paul knew had been founded as a Roman colony during the century before Christ. It was strategically located in the Roman province of Achaia on a narrow strip of land between the Aegean Sea and the Adriatic Sea, with two adjoining ports. Corinth's location made it a center for trade routes passing from east to west, and the resulting prosperity brought both luxury and immorality. "To live like a Corinthian" meant to live in gross immorality, and many pagan temples located in Corinth encouraged this licentious way of life through temple prostitution.

Themes and Literary Structure

This epistle is quite orderly in its approach as it sequentially addresses a group of problems that have come to Paul's attention. Paul also gives a series of perspectives on various questions and issues raised by the Corinthians in a letter. The three divisions of 1 Corinthians are: (1) the answer to Chloe's report of divisions (chs. 1–4); (2) answer to the report of fornication and disorder (chs. 5–6); and (3) answer to the letter of questions (chs. 7–16).

As he prepares to deal with the serious problems present in the Corinthian church early on in the epistle, Paul proclaims the relevance and sufficiency of Christ for every area of the believer's life. Christ Jesus "became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1:30).

In dealing with the sexual immorality that had arisen in the Corinthian church, Paul stresses the importance of church discipline and purity (5:9–13). Here the apostle also indicates that a primary goal of such discipline is the restoration of the wayward.

The relationship of Christian liberty and Christian love is also explored. Paul writes that "all things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful" (6:12), and chapter 13 contains the most extensive and profound teaching on the self-giving character of Christian love.

In addition, 1 Corinthians contains extensive doctrinal instruction on the place of spiritual gifts in the church (chs. 12–14), and on the nature of the resurrection body (ch. 15).²

²*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts: Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

Chronology of Contacts

The nature and number of Paul's contacts and correspondence with the Corinthians after his first visit in A.D. 51 is subject to considerable debate. Let's start with what we do know:

1. The length of Paul's stay on his first trip to Corinth lasted one and one-half years, after which he sailed in A.D. 52 to Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem. Priscilla and Aquila accompanied Paul to Ephesus where they remained to meet and instruct the gifted Alexandrian Apollos whom they subsequently sent on to Corinth for ministry there (Acts 18:18-28).
 2. While Apollos was ministering in Corinth (Acts 19:1), Paul returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey, about A.D. 53, for a period of about two and one-half years (Acts 19). It was probably during the early part of Paul's ministry in Ephesus that he wrote an unknown letter mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9, a letter seemingly misunderstood by the Corinthians (1Cor 5:10-11).
 3. Paul learned of the divisions in the church at Corinth from the household of Chloe (1:11). Also, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17) seem to have brought Paul specific questions on issues dividing the church. First Corinthians was written, probably about A.D. 56, to address these matters.
 4. This is where it becomes more difficult. There is possibly an additional letter and/or visit that is not recorded in the book of Acts, but some see clues in 2nd Corinthians that lead them to this conclusion. Its possible 1st Corinthians did not resolve the problems in the church. Possibly Timothy returned to Paul bearing this news (1Cor 4:17; 16:10, 2 Cor 1:1). Paul then decided to revisit the church (2 Cor 2:1), a sorrowful visit ensued. (See 2 Cor. 12:14, 13:1, which speaks of a possible third visit, the last leg of Paul's third missionary journey)
 5. Then possibly after a short visit Paul sent a letter borne by Titus, which it grieved him deeply to write (2 Cor. 2:4) apparently because of its disciplinary nature (2 Cor. 7:8-9).
- Or
- 4 & 5. Paul did not visit and the letter he refers to sent by Titus was 1st Corinthians. This would correspond to the events recorded for us in Acts 18-20.
 6. After the silversmiths' riot Paul left Ephesus bound for Troas to meet Titus. Because Paul could not find him there, he anxiously pushed on to Macedonia, apparently with grave concern about Titus' safety (2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5). There he met Titus who brought good news about the general well-being of the Corinthian church but bad news about a group opposed to Paul.
 7. From Macedonia Paul wrote 2 Corinthians and followed it up with a visit about A.D. 57 (Acts 20:1-4).

1 Corinthians Outline

Chapter 1:1 - 9 Apostle Paul's *greeting and thanksgiving* to the church in Corinth.

Paul's teaching on ten reported problems or questions:

Chapter 1:10 - 4:21 Paul writes about the problems of *divisions within the church*.

Chapter 5:1 - 13 Paul teaches Corinthians they must judge *brother committing sin of sexual immorality* with his father's wife and condemns them for their attitude in the matter.

Chapter 6:1 - 11 Paul condemns them for *suing the brethren* in courts of law.

Chapter 6:12 - 20 Paul deals with their attitudes about *sexual immorality* and teaches them the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 7:1 - 40 Paul deals with *question of celibacy*.

Chapter 8:1 - 11:1 Paul teaches on *matters of expediency* or what to do with our freedom in Christ.

Chapter 11:1 - 16 Paul teaches on *head coverings*.

Chapter 11:17 - 34 Paul teaches on the *Lord's Supper*.

Chapter 12:1 - 14:40 Paul teaches Corinthians on the purpose and proper use of *spiritual gifts*.

Chapter 15:1 - 58 Teaching on the *resurrection*.

Chapter 16:1 - 4 Instructions on the *collection for the saints* in Jerusalem.

Chapter 16:5 - 24 Paul's plans, words of encouragement and *farewell*.

2nd Corinthians Outline

Chapter 1:1-2 ***Greeting***

Chapters 1:3 - 7:16 ***Paul defends his ministry***

Chapter 1:3 - 11 Paul ***comforted*** from suffering.

Chapter 1:12 - 2:17 Paul ***defends change of plans***.

Chapter 3:1 - 18 Paul ***compares old and new*** ministries.

Chapter 4:1 - 15 Paul's ministry is to the ***glory of Christ***.

Chapter 4:16 - 5:11 We are ***passing from this earth*** to throne of Christ.

Chapter 5:12 - 21 Paul's ministry is ***God's reconciliation*** through Christ.

Chapter 6:1 - 18 Do not receive God's ***grace in vain***.

Chapter 7:2 - 16 Paul's ***comfort in the Corinthians***.

Chapters 8:1 - 9:15 ***Instructions to complete collection for saints in Jerusalem***

Chapter 8:1 - 7 Paul makes known the ***generous giving of Macedonia***.

Chapter 8:8 - 15 Paul ***sends Titus and brothers ahead*** to Corinth.

Chapter 9:1 - 15 ***Principals for sharing***.

Chapters 10:1 - 13:10 ***Paul defends his apostleship***

Chapter 10:1 - 18 ***Paul's authority*** is from the Lord.

Chapter 11:1 - 12:13 ***Paul compares*** himself with the false apostles.

Chapter 12:14-13:10 Paul's ***third visit near***.

Chapter 13:11 - 14 ***Closing & Farewell***

Syllabus

Day & Time: Sundays from 11:00am to Noon
Beginning: April 3rd
Ending: June 26th

<u>Date</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>Chapters</u>
Apr 3	1	Corinthians Introduction
Apr 10	2	1 st Cor 1:1 – 31
Apr 17	3	2:1 – 16
Apr 24	4	3:1 – 23
May 1	5	4:1 – 21
May 8	6	5:1 – 13
May 15	7	6:1 – 20
May 22	8	7:1 – 40
May 29	9	8:1 – 13
Jun 5	10	9:1 – 27
Jun 12	11	10:1 – 33
Jun 19	12	11:1 – 34
Jun 26	13	12:1 – 31
Jul 3	14	13:1 – 13
Jul 10	15	14:1 – 40
Jul 17	16	15:1 – 58
Jul 24	17	16:1 – 24
Jul 31	18	2 nd Cor 1:1 – 2:4
Aug 7	19	2:5 – 3:18
Aug 14	20	4:1 – 5:21
Aug 21	21	6:1 – 7:16
Aug 28	22	8:1 – 9:15
Sep 4	23	10:1 – 18
Sep 11	24	11:1 – 33
Sep 18	25	12:1 – 21
Sep 25	26	13:1 – 14

1 Corinthians Chapter 1

April 10th

OVERVIEW

Paul begins his first letter to the Corinthian church by giving thanks to God for the many gifts this church has received from the Lord. He then addresses two problems facing the Corinthian church, elevating human leaders and human wisdom.

EXPLORE IT

1. What is meant by "called apostle"?
2. Why is it called "the church of God"?
3. How does the expression "called saints" relate to the problem at Corinth?
4. How many times is the word "Lord" used in the first nine verses?
5. Knowing the conditions at Corinth, how could Paul say, "I thank my God"?
6. How was the testimony confirmed?
7. What is meant by "called into the fellowship"?
8. What is meant by "mind" and "judgment"?
9. What is meant by "perfected together"? How does this relate to the problem at Corinth?
10. How do you account for Paul's remark about baptism?
11. How could the cross of Christ be made void?
12. What two views of wisdom are given?
13. In what were Jews and Greeks interested?
14. What is meant by the statement, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God"?
15. What did Paul mean by "the foolishness of God"?

APPLY IT

How can we speak the same things and be joined in judgment?

1 Corinthians Chapter 2

April 17th

OVERVIEW

Paul reflects on his founding of the church in Corinth and reminds the Corinthian believers of several facts in regard to the Cross.

EXPLORE IT

1. Why does Paul address them as "brethren" as he begins this chapter?
2. Why did Paul say that he did not come "with excellency of speech"?
3. Why is it impossible for men to have produced the revelation of God's mind which we have in the Bible?
4. Why can we understand the words of wisdom Paul speaks or writes?
5. To whom did Paul refer when he said "we received the Spirit which is from God"?
6. What enabled the apostles to speak "the things of God"?
7. What is the source of the words spoken by the apostles?
8. Why are the "mysteries of God" foolishness to the natural man?
9. What is meant by "judged" in verses 14 & 15?
10. To whom does Paul refer when he says "we have the mind of Christ"?

APPLY IT

Why is the crucifixion of Christ the most important thing to understand?

1 Corinthians Chapter 3

April 24th

OVERVIEW

Paul again reminds the Corinthians not to elevate teachers of the Word of God over the Word itself.

EXPLORE IT

1. What does Paul mean by "carnal"?
2. With what does he contrast "carnal" in this context?
3. What is meant by "spiritual"?
4. What is implied by the expression "babes in Christ"?
5. What is meant by "milk" and "meat" in this connection?
6. What is the mark of spiritual maturity?
7. How long should the "brethren" remain as "babes in Christ"?
8. What is the mark of the "carnal" Christian?
9. What was the relation of Paul and Apollos to the Corinthians?
10. What is meant by the statement, "he who plants and he who waters are one"?
11. How did Paul establish the foundation?
12. What is the foundation of the church?
13. What is the day that shows what sort each man's work is?
14. When he refers to "each man's work" is he speaking of the teacher or of his disciple?
15. What is meant by the remark, "as through fire"?

APPLY IT

How does a babe in Christ cease to be carnal?

1 Corinthians Chapter 4

May 1st

OVERVIEW

Paul writes about the duties of a steward. A steward is a trusted servant whom the master has appointed to conduct his business matters in his absence.

EXPLORE IT

1. Why was Paul not concerned about being judged by the Corinthians?
2. What did Paul mean when he said, "I do not even judge myself"?
3. What is the meaning of the word "justified" as Paul uses it in this chapter?
4. In the sentence, "judge nothing before the time", what is meant by "judge"?
5. Why did Paul use his own name and that of Apollos in his discussion of the sin of division?
6. What is meant by the phrase, "beyond the things which are written"?
7. What does he mean by, "I have begotten you through the gospel"?
8. Why were the Corinthians to imitate Paul?
9. Why did Paul send Timothy to Corinth?
10. What did Paul mean by saying, "the kingdom of God is not in word but in power"?

APPLY IT

Does having a clear conscience justify you before God?

1 Corinthians Chapter 5

May 8th

OVERVIEW

Paul writes about the need and purpose of discipline within the church.

EXPLORE IT

1. How had Paul learned about the sinful situation in the church?
2. In what way was the whole church guilty?
3. What was Paul's attitude toward the failure of the church to act in this case?
4. What was their attitude toward this sin?
5. What was the church puffed up about?
6. What should have been their reaction to this situation?
7. What order did the apostle give the church in the case of the brother who was living in sin?
8. What happens to the church that accepts sin?
9. What is meant by taking this action "in the name of our Lord Jesus"?
10. What should a church refuse to do until he repents?
11. How do we judge those inside?
12. Why do we not judge those outside?

APPLY IT

What is the purpose of casting out members practicing sin?

1 Corinthians Chapter 6

May 15th

OVERVIEW

Paul deals with two sins plaguing the Corinthian church, lawsuits and sexual immorality.

EXPLORE IT

1. What was Paul's attitude toward brethren taking their matters before civil judges?
2. Before whom should matters that arise between brethren be presented for settlement?
3. How are saints to judge the world and angels?
4. What is meant by judging the smallest matters?
5. What kind of persons should be sought out to help decide matters between brethren?
6. How were they failing by going to court before civil judges?
7. How were some of the Corinthians deceiving themselves?
8. What does Paul mean by the expression, "all things are lawful for me"?
9. What "lawful" action is Paul concerned with in this section?
10. When our bodies are involved with sexual immorality, who else do we involve?
11. Who owns our body? Why?
12. How does fornication become a sin against the body?

APPLY IT

What should we do to settle disputes with brethren instead of suing?

1 Corinthians Chapter 7

May 22nd

OVERVIEW

Paul deals with their questions regarding relationships between men and women.

EXPLORE IT

1. What question is Paul asked that makes him teach about marriage?
2. What does each partner in marriage owe the other?
3. To who does the right over the body of the wife or husband belong?
4. In what way did Paul wish all people were as himself?
5. Under what circumstances is it better to marry?
6. What was Paul saying as a concession?
7. What is the commandment to the married? Who commanded it?
8. Who are the married? And who are the rest?
9. Why is the principle given here to live in the calling in which you are called?
10. Why did Paul say he had no command of the Lord about virgins?
11. How are we to regard his opinion?
12. What was the present distress the Corinthians faced?
13. How Does Paul's teaching help those who remain unmarried?
14. What does it mean for a widow to marry only in the Lord?

APPLY IT

What advantage can there be in being unmarried?

1 Corinthians Chapter 8

May 29th

OVERVIEW

In the next three chapters, Paul deals with the subject of Christian liberty. Here Paul answers a question the Corinthian church asked him concerning eating food offered to idols.

EXPLORE IT

1. What is meant by the expression "Knowledge puffs up"?
2. Why is an idol really nothing?
3. What is the function of our conscience?
4. How do we defile our conscience?
5. What is a weak conscience?
6. How can a weak conscience be strengthened?
7. What limit did Paul put on the liberty of the one who possesses knowledge about idols?
8. Why should a Christian be concerned about their effect on a weaker brother?
9. How were they wounding the conscience of the weaker brother?
10. Why would Paul never eat meat again?

APPLY IT

What should be our attitude towards liberties?

1 Corinthians Chapter 9

June 5th

OVERVIEW

Paul offers himself as a proper role model for using one's liberty in Christ to serve God and others.

EXPLORE IT

1. What is the relationship between the subject matter of this chapter and chapter eight?
2. Why did he ask, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord"?
3. What difference is there between the witness of Paul and the other Apostles?
4. What did he mean when he said, "You are the seal of my apostleship"?
5. Why did he mention his right to be accompanied on his journeys by a believing wife?
6. What did he mean by sowing spiritual things and reaping material things in vs. 11?
7. To whom did he refer by the statement "if others are partakers of this right over you"?
8. How did he approach Jews?
9. Since he was a Jew, how did he approach gentiles?
10. What lesson is Paul trying to teach with the figure of the race?

APPLY IT

Why do we have to discipline our body? How?

1 Corinthians Chapter 10

June 12th

OVERVIEW

Paul warns the Corinthians of falling away as Israel did and exhorts them to use their freedom in Christ to serve others.

EXPLORE IT

1. Why use Old Testament examples in discussing the problems of gentile Christians?
2. How could he speak of the ancient Israelites as "our fathers" when writing to the gentiles?
3. What is meant by the statement that the Rock was Christ?
4. In what ways were the failures of Israel examples for us?
5. Why were the failures of the fathers written in the Old Testament?
6. What provision did God make for our victory over temptation?
7. What does "communion" mean?
8. What is the significance of one bread?
9. What did he mean by "ask no questions" in vs. 25?
10. Whose conscience is to be considered in exercising one's liberty?

APPLY IT

What do we need to do to prevent falling like Israel did in the desert?

1 Corinthians Chapter 11

June 19th

OVERVIEW

Paul deals with two issues, authority having to do with the covering or uncovering of our head, and the proper approach to the communion.

EXPLORE IT

1. What is meant by traditions in vs. 2?
2. What two types of traditions are found in the New Testament?(hint: Mt 15 & 2Thess 3)
3. What tradition involving head coverings do you think Paul delivered to them?
4. How is the word "head" used in this chapter?
5. What limitation is placed on the activity of women according to 1Tim 2:12?
6. Why did he say, "we have no such custom"?
7. Why did Paul withhold his praise in the matter of eating the Lord's Supper?
8. Why did Paul remind them that he received from the Lord the instructions he gave them?
9. What does the Lord's Supper call upon the worshiper to remember?
10. How would someone eat in "an unworthy manner"?
11. What is meant by "not discerning the Lord's body"?

APPLY IT

How should we consider other Christians when we partake in the communion?

1 Corinthians Chapter 12

June 26th

OVERVIEW

In the next three chapters, Paul instructs about the proper attitude and use of spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit. In this chapter he explains the purpose of spiritual gifts.

EXPLORE IT

1. How are the idols “dumb”?
2. What does Paul mean that no one can say "Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit"?
3. What is the difference between various gifts and various ministries?
4. Why are the different gifts manifested?
5. What are “various kinds of tongues”
6. Who decides who gets what gift?
7. How is the body of Christ like a human body?
8. Are all the parts of the body equally important?
9. What's more important, teaching somebody God's word or healing someone of a deadly disease?
10. Did everyone in Corinth have some spiritual gift?

APPLY IT

Does viewing other Christians as part of you change the way you think of them?

1 Corinthians Chapter 13

July 3rd

OVERVIEW

In this chapter, Paul contrasts the better way to live with God compared to the spiritual gifts mentioned in chapter 12. The better way is faith, hope and love, which will not end, whereas spiritual gifts end.

EXPLORE IT

1. Is there any profit in doing good works without love?
2. List the things Paul says love does.
3. List the things Paul says love does not.
4. What is the perfect thing in verse 10?
5. What would cease when the perfect comes?
6. When is the now of verse 12?
7. When is the then of verse 12?
8. What is the abiding of faith, hope and love contrasted with in this section?
9. What does abide mean?
10. What is the more excellent way that Paul shows (see 12:31)?

APPLY IT

Why are spiritual gifts compared to speaking like a child?

1 Corinthians Chapter 14

July 10th

OVERVIEW

Paul explains the proper use and purpose of spiritual gifts in the church.

EXPLORE IT

1. What is the difference between pursuing love and desiring spiritual gifts?
2. What is meant in verse 2 by "in the spirit he speaks mysteries?"
3. What should the profit be when speaking in tongues?
4. What profit is there in praying in a tongue that I can't understand?
5. What is the purpose of tongues?
6. What is the purpose of prophesying?
7. What is the purpose of the church coming together?
8. What is the context of "speaking" in this chapter?
9. Does verse 34, "women keep silent" refer to any and all forms of speech?
10. Could someone speak and still be in submission?
11. If you are a spiritual person how should you regard what Paul writes?
12. What basic principal should guide us when the church comes together?

APPLY IT

How do we sing with understanding?

1 Corinthians Chapter 15

July 17th

OVERVIEW

Paul writes concerning the resurrection of the dead, which was questioned by some. He explains this subject is foundational to the gospel of Christ and demonstrates its importance.

EXPLORE IT

1. What are the facts of the gospel which Paul preached?
2. What scriptures is Paul referring to that talk about the death and resurrection of Christ?
3. Why does Paul mention the people who saw Jesus after the resurrection?
4. What are some consequences if there is no resurrection of the dead?
5. If there is no resurrection of the dead why would we be the most pitiable among men?
6. What does "baptized for the dead" mean"?
7. What does Paul speak to the Corinthians shame in verse 34?
8. What must happen for us to be resurrected?
9. Will the body that we receive in the resurrection be like the body we have now?
10. What happens to those who are alive when Christ comes?
11. How should we behave in light of Paul's assurance of the resurrection?

APPLY IT

Why should people pity us if there is no resurrection?

1 Corinthians Chapter 16

July 24th

OVERVIEW

Paul concludes with instructions about the offering for the Christians in Jerusalem and about his future visit to them. He conveys greetings from several people and ends with a curse on unbelievers and a plea for Christ's return.

EXPLORE IT

1. What is the "collection for the saints" in verse 1?
2. Why were they instructed to lay something aside on the first day of the week?
3. Who was holding the money laid aside?
4. How were the Corinthians to determine what to lay aside?
5. How does this relate to what you give on the first day of the week?
6. Why would Paul send letters with whomever they chose to carry the gift to Jerusalem?
7. Why was Paul remaining in Ephesus until Pentecost?
8. Who were some of Paul's adversaries in Ephesus?
9. What are we to do to laborers and workers in the ministry of the saints?
10. In verse 20 Paul says greet one another with a holy kiss should we do the same today?
How?
11. What is the significance of verse 21 "salutation with my own hand"?

APPLY IT

Who are the people Paul urges them to submit to in vs. 16 and how should we apply that?

2 Corinthians 1:1-2:4

July 31st

OVERVIEW

Paul opens his second letter to the Corinthian church with consolation in the face of suffering and an explanation of his recent experiences.

EXPLORE IT

1. Why might Paul be calling attention to the fact that he was an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God?
2. What does God do when we suffer affliction?
3. What could the comforting of Paul produce in the Corinthians?
4. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians about the hardships he had endured?
5. What is Paul saying about his letters to them?
6. What were Paul's first travel intentions?
7. What point about "yes" and "no" did Paul make using his change of plans?
8. Why did Paul not go again to Corinth?
9. Why did Paul write with many tears?

APPLY IT

How do we know whether it is the Lord's will to do something or not?

2 Corinthians 2:5-3:18

August 7th

OVERVIEW

In chapter 2, Paul writes about forgiveness and about the effect of the gospel through Christians. In chapter 3, he writes about the grace of God and the glory of the new covenant.

EXPLORE IT

1. What was the punishment of the majority? What was its purpose?
2. What advice did Paul give the Corinthians regarding the man who had sinned?
3. Why was it important that the Corinthians forgive the man whom they disciplined?
4. Why was Paul willing to leave Troas, despite the opportunities there?
5. In what way are Christians the fragrance of death to some and the fragrance of life to others?
6. Did Paul need letters of commendation to have people listen to him?
7. What does Paul mean by "for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."?
8. What is the ministry of death? What is the ministry of the Spirit?
9. What is meant by "when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart."?
10. What must people do to have the veil that covers their hearts taken away?

APPLY IT

How can Christians understand the law of Moses better than Jews?

2 Corinthians 4:1-5:21

August 14th

OVERVIEW

In chapter 4, Paul writes about appropriate attitudes toward the Scriptures and toward suffering. In chapter 5, He writes about the new bodies believers will one day receive and about the duty of believers as ambassadors for Christ.

EXPLORE IT

1. If the "gospel is veiled", what does Paul say the problem is?
2. Who is the god of this age?
3. What is the "earthly vessel" that contains the treasure Paul speaks of?
4. How is the inward man being renewed day by day?
5. What is the light affliction that is for a moment? How long might the moment be?
6. What is the house not made with hands that Paul is referring to?
7. Why will each one of us appear before the judgment seat of Christ?
8. What was well known to the Corinthians conscience?
9. What is true about every person in Christ?
10. What is "the word of reconciliation" that Paul said he was committed with?

APPLY IT

How do we walk by faith and not sight?

2 Corinthians 6:1-7:16

August 21st

OVERVIEW

In chapter 6, Paul writes about the hardships he has endured and warns the Corinthians not to join with unbelievers. In chapter 7, Paul expresses his joy over the Corinthian church's repentance and explains true repentance.

EXPLORE IT

1. What price did Paul pay for following Christ?
2. List 5 things that commend Paul as a minister of God?
3. In what way was Paul poor yet rich?
4. What is the problem of being bound together with unbelievers?
5. How did Paul sum up his quotation of Isaiah 52:11?
6. Give the scripture reference from Acts that corresponds to Paul coming to Macedonia, 7:5?
7. What two things comforted Paul, 7:6, 7?
8. Why did Paul's feelings change about the letter he about sent?
9. Explain Godly sorrow.
10. What did Titus do to encourage Paul?

APPLY IT

How can sorrow work to our benefit?

2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15

August 28th

OVERVIEW

In the next two chapters Paul deals with the offerings made for those in need. Paul urges the Corinthians to complete the financial offering they are collecting for the believers in Jerusalem in chapter 8 and then in chapter 9, he explains biblical principles for graceful giving.

EXPLORE IT

1. How was the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia?
2. Why was Paul telling the Corinthians of the grace bestowed on the churches of Macedonia?
3. What does Paul mean by "they gave themselves first to the Lord,"?
4. What is the principle of one church giving to another?(8:14)
5. Why did Paul send Titus and two other brothers ahead to Corinth?
6. What boasting did Paul do about the Corinthians?
7. How does our giving relate to God's giving to us?
8. What was the Corinthians gift doing besides supplying the needs of the saints?
9. What is God's indescribable gift in verse 9:15?

APPLY IT

How does graceful giving impact other people?

2 Corinthians 10:1-18

September 4th

OVERVIEW

Paul defends his apostleship against the accusations of others commending themselves. He explains the spiritual warfare that Christians should be engaged in.

EXPLORE IT

1. Of what did Paul's opponents accuse him?
2. What are the weapons of Paul's warfare?
3. What is the purpose of this Godly warfare?
4. For what purpose was authority given to Paul?
5. Why would Paul's opponents try to convince the Corinthians that Paul was unimpressive in person?
6. What does Paul mean that the Corinthians are within his sphere?
7. Why was Paul justified in boasting, whereas his opponents were not?
8. What was Paul's hope as the Corinthians faith increased?
9. In what did Paul's opponents pride themselves?

APPLY IT

How can we be misled by the appearance of something?

2 Corinthians 11:1-33

September 11th

OVERVIEW

Paul warns against false apostles and teachers and then compares himself with the fools who exalt themselves.

EXPLORE IT

1. What was Paul's fear concerning the Corinthians?
2. What criticism did Paul's opponents voice against him?
3. Why does Paul question if it was sin to preach to the Corinthians free of charge?
4. Why did Paul “rob” the Macedonian churches while in Corinth, yet refuse to accept money from the Corinthians themselves?
5. Who are the false apostles working for?
6. How did Paul's opponents try to deceive the Corinthians?
7. What tone of speech is Paul using toward the Corinthians in 11:19-21?
8. What do we learn about the false apostles in 11:22?
9. Why did Paul give so many examples of how he endured hardship for Christ?
10. Why did Paul burn with indignation when Christians were made to stumble?

APPLY IT

What should we boast about?

2 Corinthians 12:1-21

September 18th

OVERVIEW

Paul describes the experience of being “caught up into the third heaven” and talks about his thorn in the flesh God allowed to keep him humble. He writes about some of his concerns for the Corinthians.

EXPLORE IT

1. What is the third heaven?
2. Why did God allow the thorn in Paul’s flesh to remain?
3. How is God's "strength made perfect in weakness"?
4. What would Paul boast about?
5. Instead of Paul boasting about himself to the Corinthians, what should have happened?
6. What were the signs of a true apostle?
7. What was Paul's purpose in all the things he did for the Corinthians?
8. Why does Paul mention that he didn’t take advantage of them?
9. What was Paul afraid might happen when he visited them again?
10. Why did Paul fear that the Corinthians might cause him to be humbled before God?

APPLY IT

What reasons might there be for the suffering we endure?

2 Corinthians 13:1-14

September 25th

OVERVIEW

Paul writes about his coming visit to Corinth and gives a few closing words.

EXPLORE IT

1. How many visits that we know of has Paul made to Corinth when 2nd Cor is written?
2. How do we know the Corinthians doubted Paul's authority?
3. Why did Paul plan to be firm with the chronic sinners in Corinth?
4. How should we know if we are in the faith? How do we know if Christ is in us?
5. What does this passage reveal about Paul's concern for the Corinthians' spiritual welfare?
6. Why did Paul write these things?
7. In verse 11 Paul writes "become complete", what is he telling the Corinthians to do?
8. Just as in 1st Corinthians Paul writes "Greet one another with a holy kiss." How does this relate to the problems in Corinth?

APPLY IT

How can we test our faith this week?