



A STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS 1 - 6

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ABOUT THIS STUDY

We are excited to journey through 1 Corinthians together in community. This study is designed to help you further understand the good news of Jesus and apply the gospel to your life and the lives of those around you. We believe – and have seen over and over again – that hearing God’s Word preached, studying God’s Word privately and encouraging one another through God’s Word in community results in freedom in the gospel and lives changed more and more into the image of Jesus.

Each week the study is broken into various sections to help you understand, apply and pray through God’s Word, both alone and in community. We encourage you to work through the studies individually, which will then prepare you to help others grow through discussion.

SECTIONS OF THE STUDY

OVERVIEW - This section gives a basic overview of what the passage is seeking to teach, how it points to Jesus and what it means for us today.

MESSAGE APPLICATION - This section gives space to write things you learned, thought were helpful or had questions about from the sermon. In community groups, use these notes and questions to help one another grow in understanding and application of what was taught.

PASSAGE QUESTIONS - This section encourages you to study the Bible on your own. Through study, we grow in our desire and ability to understand the written Word of God – how it points to Jesus, how it connects to our lives and how it fuels us to live as a community that brings glory to God and sheds light in a dark world.

PRAYER / PRAYER REQUEST - This section reminds us of our dependence on God and how God uses others in our lives to serve and care for us. We are called to persevere in praying for others as well as ourselves. The prayer prompts encourage us to pray specifically that we would live for the good life in the kingdom of heaven and that others may experience that good life as well.

AS YOU GO... - Use this section throughout the week – not necessarily the night your group meets. It is intended to provoke thoughts and conversations with your kids, friends, spouse, or others as you spend time with one another in everyday life. Think along the lines of Deuteronomy 6, where the call is to talk of the things of God when “you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”



“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.” - 1 Corinthians 1:2

1 CORINTHIANS 1: 1–9

OVERVIEW

In the opening verses of the letter from the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth we see some of the major themes of the whole book revealed. We see both what Paul is thankful for in the church as well as “elaborations that reflect either directly or subtly many of the concerns about to be raised in the letter itself” (Gordon Fee).

These verses reveal that there were authority issues in the church, there were holiness issues in the church, there were unity issues in the church, there were issues of how people were using their gifts in the church, there were issues in understanding the resurrection in the church – in short, the church was a mess.

But before delving into the issues and mess within the church, Paul begins his letter by reminding the Corinthians of who they are in Christ and thanks them for the ways Jesus is at work among them.

Although they have holiness issues, they are already “sanctified in Christ Jesus.” Although there are unity issues, they are “saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Although there are issues regarding the misuse of spiritual gifts, he gives thanks because of the “grace of God that was given [them] in Christ Jesus.” Although they have issues with understanding the Resurrection, the “Lord Jesus Christ...will sustain [them] to the end” and they will be “guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is a real beauty in the church because of who Jesus is and what he is accomplishing in the midst of the mess.

Paul can write this because he knows Jesus started the good work in the church at Corinth and that God is faithful to finish it – just as he is faithful to finish the good work in your life and church (Philippians 1:6).

MESSAGE NOTES & APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon. What catches your attention, challenges or confuses you?

PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. To whom did Paul write this letter?

- Based on 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, what is their identity?
- Why is this so important?

2. How many times does Paul refer to Jesus in verses 1-9? What do the references teach us about Jesus?

3. Compare the following verses to see themes of the book. Why were these areas of concern?
- Authority: 1 Corinthians 1:1 and 9:1-2
 - Holiness through grace: 1 Corinthians 1:2, 5:1, and 6:9-11
 - Unity: 1 Corinthians 1:2 and 1:10-11
 - Gifts: 1 Corinthians 1:4-7 and 13:1-13
 - The Resurrection: 1 Corinthians 1:7-9 and 15:12-15
4. Despite these areas of concern, Paul begins the letter with thankfulness for the Corinthians (1:4-9). Why is it important to identify and encourage areas where God is working in people's lives and in the church rather than just picking apart what is wrong?
5. Where do you see evidence of God's work in your life, the lives of those in your group and in the church?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the truths of what Jesus has accomplished for his Church that are revealed in this passage.
- Ask God to help you see and encourage gifts and ways he is at work in others as well as in your own life.
- Pray that God will reveal areas where you and your group can grow in your love for him and others.

PRAYER REQUEST

AS YOU GO...

- Write down or talk about the promises that are true about you and for you if you know God as your Father and Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- Tell those you are with what gifts you see in their lives that you are thankful to God for.
- Talk about how it is encouraging for your current and future circumstances to know that God is faithful and that he “will sustain you to the end” (v. 8).





**"I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment."
- 1 Corinthians 1:10**

1 CORINTHIANS 1: 10–17

OVERVIEW

The letter shifts from greeting and thanksgiving to dealing with the core issue of why Paul is writing the Corinthians. It is important to note how Paul addresses the church in calling them "brothers" (vv. 10 and 12). He is reminding them that he loves them, is for them, and that they are part of the same family with God as their Father. He also addresses them "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," which again drives at unity and oneness yet denotes the seriousness of the issues and the authority with which he is writing.

The primary issue in the church is one of disunity. There is quarreling among the church and division as people are aligning themselves with certain teachers and leaders

and looking down on others. Paul calls them to unity and is quick to challenge and call out any disunity. He reminds them that it is all about Jesus: Jesus' body cannot be divided, only Jesus was crucified for them, and you can only be baptized in Jesus' name. Leaders and teachers are there to point people to the beauty and power of Jesus and him crucified.

When we move away from the beauty and power of the gospel, it creates disunity that defames the name of Jesus and fractures the oneness that comes from being brothers and sisters in Christ. The message of the gospel is powerful enough to unite broken, messy people, to make Jesus' name famous and to change lives and communities.

MESSAGE NOTES & APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon. What catches your attention, challenges or confuses you?

PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. Why is it significant that Paul appeals to the Corinthians as “brothers” and “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”?
2. What is the primary issue that Paul is appealing to them about, and why is it of enough importance that an entire letter is written about it?
 - How have you experienced and contributed to disunity in the church?

3. From this passage and 1 Corinthians 3:1-9, how does Paul confront and correct the disunity?
4. How does keeping Christ central (1:17) allow the church to avoid the factions that develop around personality and doctrinal issues?
5. Read Ephesians 2 and write what you learn about unity as Christians. Discuss and pray for it within your group.

PRAYER

- Thank God for the unity with God and one another that we have through Jesus.
- Ask God to give your community and church unity and to identify areas of disunity. Repent of areas of disunity through the power of the gospel.
- Pray that Jesus will remain central in your life and in the church so lesser issues don't cause disunity. Pray that people will know Jesus because of the church's love for one another (John 17:21).

PRAYER REQUEST

AS YOU GO...

- Talk about places where you see disunity (in your family, church, school, the world) and what disunity causes in these places.
- Stop and write down all the things that Christians and churches in your area are united in (as opposed to what brings divisions).
- Read through John 17 with one another and pray that the unity and love of the church would lead to others believing in Jesus (John 17:21).





“And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”
- 1 Corinthians 1:30-31

1 CORINTHIANS 1: 18–31

OVERVIEW

Following Paul’s admonishment against disunity and encouragement toward unity, this passage reveals the division that is caused when the church seeks the “wisdom of the world” instead of the “wisdom of God.” Paul begins by showing that the “word of the cross,” the message of the gospel, is the one thing that brings unity to those “who are being saved.” It is the same gospel message that divides humanity and is folly to those who are perishing.

In a culture that relies on human power and wisdom, Paul reminds them that true wisdom and power come from God. God’s wisdom and power will ultimately show the world’s wisdom to be foolish.

In *The Cross and Christian Ministry*, D. A. Carson unpacks how the Cross of Christ and Christ himself is the wisdom and power of God and at the same time reveals the weakness

and folly of human wisdom. He explains that God’s wisdom is not just a better version of the world’s wisdom – its focus is wholly different:

“Thus, Christ Jesus, the crucified and risen Christ Jesus, is himself God’s plan, God’s wisdom; he ‘has become for us wisdom from God’ (1:30). This is not the wisdom of the world, which cannot make room for the cross. This wisdom from God is the cross; it is ‘Christ crucified’ (1:23). Far from being vain and pompous and of no eternal importance, this ‘wisdom’ effects eternal changes and brings men and women into a deep relationship with the living God. In short, this ‘wisdom,’ this plan, means nothing less than ‘our righteousness, holiness and redemption.’”

Paul reminds the Corinthians that it was the strength and wisdom of God, not their own, that brought them to God and will sustain them. In a world that boasts in itself and human wisdom, the wise will trust and boast in the Lord.

MESSAGE NOTES & APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon. What catches your attention, challenges or confuses you?

PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. Why is the word of the cross (the gospel) folly and offensive to some?
2. Why is it important as Christians and the church to give people what they need – “Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (v. 24) – rather than what they want – “signs and wisdom of the world” (v. 22)?
 - Why is this challenging?
3. Read James 3:13-15. What is the difference between God’s wisdom and human wisdom? What does each result in?

4. What is the end result (vv. 29-31) of God using weak and low people (vv. 26-28) to accomplish his mission?
 - Why is this significant?
5. Read Jeremiah 9:23-24. What are things that you tend to boast in or put your confidence in other than the Lord?
 - What is the importance of boasting in the Lord only?
6. What would it look like for you to boast in the Lord in the everyday things of life in response to being “in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption”?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the Cross of Christ which is the power of God that brings salvation.
- Ask God to help you see ways you are seeking signs and wisdom that are not from him. Ask him to help you to trust in him alone.
- Pray that God will show you your dependence on him and show you how you can trust and “boast in the Lord” in both the ordinary and exceptional moments of your life.

PRAYER REQUEST

AS YOU GO...

- What is some of the wisdom of our age? What does some of the commonly accepted wisdom of our world say? How does what the Bible teaches and who God is show this sort of wisdom to be foolish?
- What are some things about God that are “stumbling blocks” and seem to be “folly” for you?
- Talk about something or someone that you are proud of and tend to boast about (in a good way). What do you say? Who do you say it to? How often do you talk about them? What would it look like to “boast in the Lord” in the same way?





“Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.”
- 1 Corinthians 2: 12

1 CORINTHIANS 2: 1–16

OVERVIEW

This passage continues to reveal the difference between true wisdom, which comes from God through Christ and his Spirit alone, and sinful human wisdom.

Paul reminds the church that his focus was not on his speaking abilities or an over-the-top presentation, but on the message of the gospel, “Jesus Christ and him crucified.” It is faith that rests in the power of God and his Spirit and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that is powerful enough to change lives.

Richard Pratt sums up what this passage teaches about the purpose of the Holy Spirit, “For what purpose does the Spirit of

God come to those who believe?

He comes in order that they may understand what God has freely given. Christians cannot understand the wonder of all they have received from God by observing things with their natural eyes. God freely gives the salvation that culminates in their blessings with Christ in the new heavens and new earth. The Holy Spirit enables them to see the wonder of this gift as well as the wisdom that leads to it.”

The church has this powerful gospel message, this good news of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit that will change lives. It is only this message that will bring beauty out of the brokenness and messiness of our lives and our city.

MESSAGE NOTES & APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon. What catches your attention, challenges or confuses you?

PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. Read 2:1-5. What did Paul do (and not do) when he came to them and why?
2. What do we learn about the Spirit of God in this passage?
3. Discuss the greatness of the truth and promise that we have "received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God."
 - How can this shape how you view and live life?
4. Read Romans 8:1-11. How does one receive the Spirit of God (v. 3)? What is the result of receiving God's Spirit?

5. Meditate on Isaiah 40:1–31. What does this teach us about 1 Corinthians 2:16 and having a proper view of God compared to ourselves?
6. What would it look like to rest and trust in “Jesus Christ and him crucified” and apply the truths of this passage in your everyday life and decisions?
- “so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (v. 5)
 - “now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.” (v. 12)
 - “And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.” (v. 13)
 - “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” (v. 16)

PRAYER

- Pray that God will help you to understand the centrality and significance of “Christ and him crucified” and how that impacts all wisdom and every area of life.
- Thank God for the sending of his Son and Spirit, and ask him to empower you to seek true wisdom and understanding about him and life.
- Ask God to give you eyes to see, ears to hear and a heart to imagine and know what God has prepared for those who love him (v. 9).

PRAYER REQUEST

AS YOU GO...

- Write down areas where you trust and rest in the wisdom of men rather than the wisdom of God. Help one another to seek God's wisdom in these areas and to see that he is trustworthy.
- Discuss your understanding of the Spirit of God with one another. Talk through the questions you have about the Spirit of God.
- As you are driving or eating dinner, talk about how you can see, hear and feel in your heart how much God loves you.





“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”
- 1 Corinthians 3: 8

1 CORINTHIANS 3: 1–23

OVERVIEW

This passage continues to press in on the overall theme of disunity in the church, specifically through people’s allegiances to specific leaders and teachings. Paul starts with love and the ultimate title of unity by calling them brothers – they are a part of the church, they are family.

Paul pushes on the Corinthians’ immature and fleshly behavior of exalting leaders and groups, thereby causing jealousy and strife. He reminds them that in the Christian world people are merely servants, workers and tools in the hands of the mighty God who causes the growth and change. This passage guards against the two extremes of no leadership and exalting leaders. These

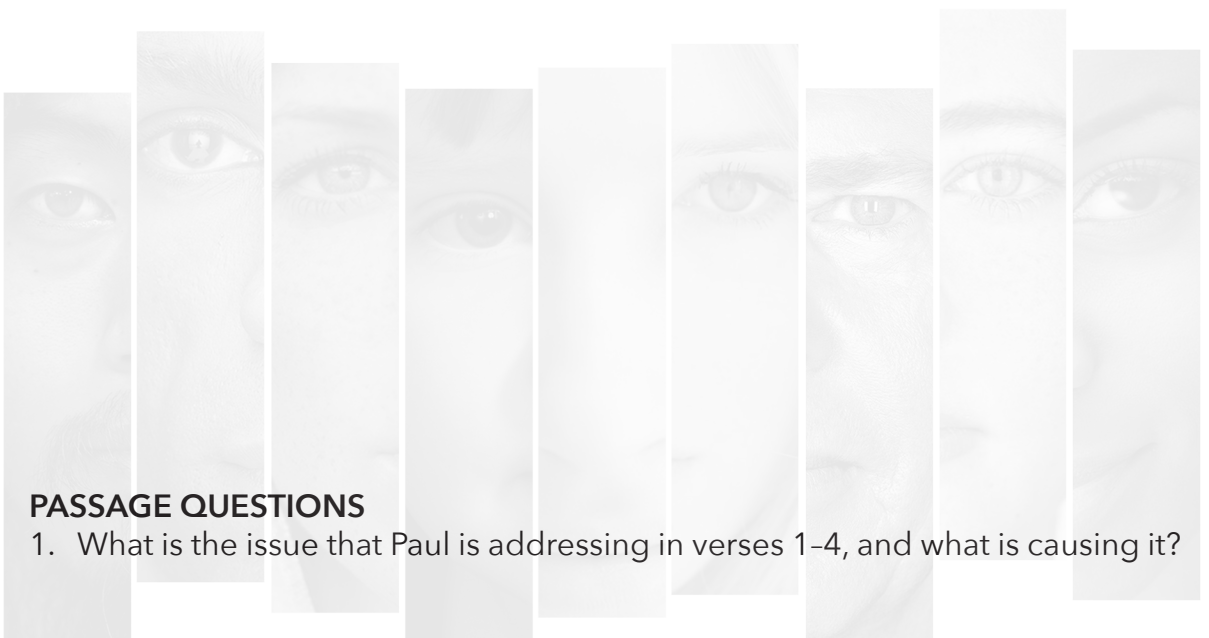
extremes are unhealthy both for the leaders and for God’s people.

John Calvin said, “Those that extol men above measure, strip them of their true dignity. For the grand distinction of them all is...that they gain disciples to Christ, not to themselves.”

Leaders are merely servants of God who point people to and help people to follow Jesus. It is through Jesus that we are God’s temple. It is through Jesus that God’s Spirit dwells in us (3:16–17). The call of all Christians is to point one another to Jesus – to remind one another that in Christ, you already have all things. When you are in Christ, the mess of your past or present doesn’t matter; you are beautiful because “you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”

MESSAGE NOTES & APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon. What catches your attention, challenges or confuses you?



PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. What is the issue that Paul is addressing in verses 1-4, and what is causing it?
2. What is challenging about submitting to and learning from leaders and others (see Hebrews 13:17) yet not exalting them or fully relying on them?

3. Read 3:5-23. How does Paul combat the division, jealousy and strife that the church is experiencing?
 - How does his response bring unity to people, freedom to leaders and glory to God?
4. Read Luke 22:24-30. What is the difference between the kings of the Gentiles and leadership of those who follow Jesus?
5. How does Jesus fulfill the ultimate role of the servant leader?
6. What promises of God do we see in 1 Corinthians 3:16-23? How do these promises shape how we view God and others and how we live day to day?

PRAYER

- Ask God to show you where you tend to exalt people rather than exalting and trusting God.
- Pray that God will use you to point people to Jesus and build on his foundation in ways that will last and have eternal value.
- Praise God for the promises that we are his temple where his Spirit dwells and that we have all things in Christ.

PRAYER REQUEST

AS YOU GO...

- Discuss the challenge of honoring and submitting to leadership yet not exalting leadership.
- Talk about the beauty of knowing that we are God's fellow workers but that it is God who gives growth. How does this bring both freedom and purpose to our lives?
- Talk about what it means that Christians are God's temple. How does this affect how you view other people? The church? Yourself?





“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”
- 1 Corinthians 4: 1

1 CORINTHIANS 4: 1–21

OVERVIEW

This passage closes Paul’s argument on divisions within the church with a focus on leadership – leaders’ function and how we are to respond to leaders in the church.

D. A. Carson lays out the fundamental call of the Christian leader (and ultimately all Christians), “The servants of Christ have a fundamental charge laid on them: They have been entrusted with the gospel, and all their service turns on making that gospel known and on encouraging the people of God, by word, example, and discipline, to live it out.”

God is the ultimate judge of the faithfulness of leaders (not others or even the leaders themselves), and he will ultimately judge in the end. Paul

uses irony to rebuke the Corinthians who had become prideful in their leadership, which was driven by worldly comfort, power and wisdom.

Paul reminds them that true leadership is sacrificial, relies on the “foolishness of the gospel” and often leads to suffering, persecution and reviling by the world. This is true power and is in line with the suffering, persecution and reviling Jesus experienced through his life, death and resurrection. He reminds them that he loves them as a father and lovingly exhorts them to “imitate” him and his ways in Christ.

God uses the broken, the messy – those who realize they are fully dependent on him – to serve Christ and point people to him and his beauty.

MESSAGE NOTES & APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon. What catches your attention, challenges or confuses you?

PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn about the call of Christian leaders (and really all Christians) and who they are accountable to in verses 1-7?
2. Paul goes on to call all to “imitate him” (v. 16). What does it look like for you to be ::
 - a servant of Christ (v. 1)?
 - a steward of the mysteries of God (v. 1)?
 - faithful (v. 2)?
 - living in light of God and his final judgment (vv. 3-7) rather than your own or others’ judgment?

3. Verses 8–13 use irony to admonish the Corinthian church for being puffed up. What is laid out as the difference between the prideful life of the Corinthians and the true life of a servant of Christ?
4. Read Luke 23:26–43. How do vv. 10–13 point to Jesus, his servanthood and the gospel?
5. Who has been a spiritual father (or mother) to you that you can imitate? Who is someone you are (or can be) functioning as a spiritual father (or mother) for that needs to know or grow in Christ? Expound.

PRAYER

- Thank God for the gift of Jesus, who is the perfect servant of God and fulfilled the call of God for us so we could be judged as righteous by God.
- Ask God to help you see the ways you are prideful and seek your own desires and the desires of the world rather than seeking, serving and being satisfied in him.
- Ask God to use you as a spiritual father or mother for specific people who need to know Christ and grow in Christ.

PRAYER REQUEST

AS YOU GO...

- Think about and discuss the things that hinder you from fully serving Christ and stewarding the mystery of the gospel.
- What difference would it make in what you do if you lived in light of being judged by God rather than judging yourself or being judged by others?
- Talk about what a good parent does for a child. What does it look like to do that for someone spiritually?





**“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”
- 1 Corinthians 5: 6-7**

1 CORINTHIANS 5: 1–13

OVERVIEW

“In all of Paul’s letters no instruction speaks more forcefully about the seriousness of sin, the holiness of God’s people, and their corporate standing before him than this passage, which is the longest text in the New Testament on the subject of church discipline. The church must expel the wicked man in the hope of regaining him and, above all, to protect its standing before God and the world.” (Pillar New Testament Commentary on 1 Corinthians)

In this passage, Paul is rebuking and instructing the Corinthian church in regard to their mishandling of the man who is in an ongoing sexual relationship with his stepmother. As Paul’s letter unfolds, it is clear that there are many problems plaguing this church, but for Paul this incestuous relationship is a top priority that is to be dealt with swiftly.

While he is clearly indicting the man

for his sin, he is also indicting the church for their failure to properly rebuke him. Paul likens this man’s sin to leaven, a common metaphor used to show how a seemingly small thing can actually spread throughout the whole batch, ruining it all. As the modern phrase goes, “One bad apple spoils the whole barrel.”

Here Paul is doing his best to protect the integrity of the church, because he understands that the church is a new community that is marked by holiness and transformation through Christ. If they allow this man to continue to enjoy their close fellowship, they pose the risk of destroying the church from the inside out and ignoring their new status of being “in Christ.” So while Paul’s remarks seem harsh at first glance, they are for the protection of this community of believers as they are figuring out what it means to live as those who are under the power and rule of Christ.

MESSAGE NOTES & APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon. What catches your attention, challenges or confuses you?

PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. In verse 1, Paul notes that this sin isn't even tolerated by pagans (i.e. those outside of the church) to heighten the impact of his rebuke. What sins do you (and the church at large) seem to tolerate despite the fact that you know that they are wrong?
 - Why do you do this? Why do you think the Corinthians did it?
2. Paul's call to the church in verse 2 is to mourn the sins of this man and to mourn their failure to address the situation properly. What do you think it would look like if we were to mourn our sin and the sins of others? How does this change the way the church looks?
 - Why is this difficult?

3. Many scholars have asserted that this sinful man was likely of high social standing in the church and in the community, which led to the Corinthians' failure to deal with his sin. Why do we overlook the sins of some people while being quick to point out of sins of others? How can the sin of favoritism (James 2) lead to problems in the church?
 - How does having a biblical view of humanity radically change our response to the sins of those we like and of those we don't like?
4. Paul calls for the church to cast this man out for the good of the community and with the hope that he will repent. What do you think this looks like and why is it necessary? Why is this difficult to do? See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 5:6-8.
5. The emphasis in this passage is on the community of believers and their status of holiness before God. Their identity is rooted in Christ, and Paul is calling them to reflect that in their daily lives and their dealing with sin. How does our new identity in Christ change the way we view sin? How does this new identity bring us hope and comfort? See Romans 6:15-19.

PRAYER

- Pray that we will be better as a church at confronting and dealing with our personal sinfulness and the sinfulness in our community.
- Pray that we will desire lives of holiness rooted in our new identity in Christ.
- Pray that we will be humbled by our sin and Christ's forgiveness in spite of it.

PRAYER REQUEST

AS YOU GO...

- Talk about why you think it is hard to confront people in sin and be confronted when we ourselves are in sin.
- Talk about the impact you think the church could have in the wider community if it took the sin within it seriously.
- Think about the sins you commit that are infectious to the body of Christ and try to discuss ways that you can be held accountable for them.





“And such were some of you.
But you were washed, you were
sanctified, you were justified in the
name of the Lord Jesus Christ and
by the Spirit of God.”
- 1 Corinthians 6: 11

1 CORINTHIANS 6: 1–11

OVERVIEW

“Property and material possessions are of little consequence to those destined to inherit the kingdom. Once again, who Christians are, or rather will be in the future, should determine how we behave in the present...Paul challenges the Corinthians to allow themselves to be wronged and cheated rather than to do wrong to each other and the church by taking the matter to a secular court.” (Pillar New Testament Commentary on 1 Corinthians)

In this passage, Paul is concerned with how the believers in Corinth are dealing with each other in regard to personal disputes. He has received word that they are taking each other to the local courts in order to sort out their arguments, and he finds this to be a terrible situation for the church to be in.

First, the courts of the Roman world

were notorious for being unfair; bribes we given left and right, and favoritism had a huge role in outcomes. Second, in 5:12 Paul urges the church not to judge those outside of the church. If this is true, then the church should not allow its internal disputes to be judged by outsiders who do not share the same core beliefs about morality and justice. Lastly, Paul wants the believers in Corinth to deal with matters amongst themselves for the reputation of the church and the people within it. Litigation can turn ugly quickly and, no matter what the outcome is, there is always a loser. By dealing with internal issues among themselves, the Corinthians can protect their relationships and protect the reputation of God’s people. If they are truly shaped by their identity as those who are in Christ, then petty civil issues can easily be dealt with as they look forward to their future glory.

MESSAGE NOTES & APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon. What catches your attention, challenges or confuses you?

PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. Think of a time when someone within the church wronged you. How did you deal with it? Do you think there would have been a better way of dealing with it?
2. In Israel, God always had the people deal with matters among themselves rather than taking their issues to outsiders (Deuteronomy 16:18-20, Judges). Why was this the case? What does this say about those involved, and why is it important (their identity, their view of justice, etc.)?

3. Paul uses the familial term “brothers” to describe the relationship between the Christians in Corinth. What does this say about the church body and how it should deal with disputes? Why does he see their lawsuits as a failure (v. 7)? What sacrifices should we be willing to make when we are wronged (vv. 7-8) and why is that difficult?
4. Paul’s list in verses 9-10 is used to show the behavior of those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Why does he use this list for his present argument? What does it say about those who will inherit the Kingdom of God and how they are to respond to one another? Why does Paul view this as an “identity” issue?
5. What three words does Paul use to describe Christians in verse 11? How does this shape our view of ourselves and our brothers and sisters in Christ? How does this lead to righteous living with one another?

PRAYER

- Pray that the church would be a place where we can openly and honestly deal with our disputes in a manner that glorifies God.
- Pray that we would have hope in our future glory and be willing to suffer loss for the glory of Christ.
- Pray that we would view each other as children of the King and treat each other with respect and dignity.

PRAYER REQUEST

AS YOU GO...

- Talk about why you find it hard to deal with issues amongst believers in a Godly manner and figure out where you are putting your hope in those situations.
- Reflect on the hope you have in the New Heaven and New Earth and compare it to the present issues you face in our world.





“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God with your body.”
- 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20

1 CORINTHIANS 6: 12–20

OVERVIEW

“Paul certainly believes that moral absolutes remain in the Christian era (cf. Gal. 5:19–23). But the fundamental contrast between the age of the Law and the age of the Spirit has to do with living by long lists of external standards versus loving from internal attitudes birthed by a correct relationship to God in Christ. The sense in which the Corinthian slogans remain valid is later captured by St. Augustine in his famous proverb, ‘Love God and do as you please.’ But that proverb can equally easily be abused! Christians who operate out of heartfelt concern for their own and others’ well-being will recognize many things as inherently harmful or even addictive. ‘The great fact of the Christian faith is, not that it makes a man free to sin, but that it makes a man free not to sin.’ Furthermore, ‘the man who has to express his freedom is actually in bondage to the need to show he is a free man. The genuinely free man has nothing to prove.’” (Craig Blomberg, 1 Corinthians - NIVAC)

In this passage, Paul is critiquing the Corinthian view of Christian freedom. While

they understand that God is gracious and forgives sin, their slogan of “all things are lawful for me” demonstrates their failure to understand how their new status in Christ shapes the way they live in the present. The modern version of this slogan that our culture is guilty of following is “if it feels good, do it.” Although it may be lawful, just because something feels good or seems good doesn’t mean that we should participate in it.

As Christians we are to be shaped by our identity in Christ and are to live lives that set us apart as the people of God. Yet we tend to take good things to sinful extremes. We love food, so we become gluttons. We love drink, so we become alcoholics. We love work, so we become workaholics. We love sex, so we become sexual addicts. All of those things are good when used in the appropriate ways and appropriate contexts, but when we use things in a way that goes against what God asks of us we live in a way that contradicts our identity. If we, as the church, are a temple of the Holy Spirit, we should live in a way that reflects that present reality.

MESSAGE NOTES & APPLICATION

Write down notes as you listen to the sermon. What catches your attention, challenges or confuses you?

PASSAGE QUESTIONS

1. How can the misuse of Christian freedom actually lead to bondage? What are some examples of this in your life and in scripture? (John 8:34, Romans 6)
2. In verses 13-14, the Corinthians argue that their sin is “only natural” (gluttony and sexual immorality). How is this view prevalent in our culture? How does Paul argue that this view is incorrect? Why is it hard to live this out?

3. A major issue that Paul is dealing with is sexual immorality. How does Paul's (and God's) view of sexuality differ from our culture? How does sexual sin damage individuals, their spouses and their relationship to Christ? (Matthew 5:27-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 15-16, Ephesians 5:3)

4. What does it mean to "flee from sexual immorality"? Why is this hard to do? What are some things we can do as Christians to make this a priority?

5. What does it mean that our bodies are temples and the church, as a body, is a temple? What does it mean that we were "bought with a price," and how should this impact the way we live? What does this look like?

PRAYER

- Pray that we will not abuse our Christian freedom and that we will live in a way that reflects our identity in Christ.
- Pray that we would flee from sexual immorality and be honest about our struggles.
- Pray that we will take our identity as a temple of the Holy Spirit seriously.

PRAYER REQUEST

AS YOU GO...

- Discuss the ways that our identity as a temple should impact how the outside world views us.
- Think about how you can flee from sexual immorality, and get a game plan together for how you can carry this out.
- Reflect on the sins in your life that aren't fitting for a "temple" and repent.

