

SDG – Lesson #1

An overview to the book of 1 Corinthians

As indicated by the first word of this book, Paul is the author of this letter to “The Church of God that is in Corinth.” Corinth was originally a Greek city that was destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC. Julius Caesar rebuilt it as a Roman colony in 44 BC. It was resettled with Roman veterans who had faithfully served the emperor. Corinth became a prosperous harbor and was a key city along the east/west trade route. As such, it became home to a diverse population with a wide variety of pagan religious influences. Paul, with the help of Aquila and Priscilla planted the Corinthian Church. Eventually Paul left and continued his missionary work. While in Ephesus (16:8-19) he received a letter explaining the trouble the church was experiencing. Paul had written an earlier letter to the Corinthians that dealt with sexual immorality, (5:9). However, the problems with sexual immorality continued and were joined with division, social snobbery and pagan influence of their doctrine. Paul’s over-riding theme in this letter is one of unity in Christian living and outreach. There is an urgency to Paul’s letter because he believed that Christ was returning soon.

1. What does Paul list as his credentials, the reason why the people of Corinth should heed his advice, in the first verse of this chapter?
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Word Study: Apostle and Disciple

Paul refers to himself as being an apostle. The Greek word for apostle is “Apostolos” which literally means, “One sent forth.” The apostles are those who were personally called by Christ and sent forth with the Great Commission. A disciple on the other hand, is “one who follows another.” So, any follower of Christ was one of His disciples’ just as John the Baptist had disciples (Luke 7:19).

2. Why would Paul call himself an apostle? (Acts 9:1-6)

3. Who was Sosthenes? (Acts 18:17)

4. The concept of a church and church membership is a topic of hot debate today. There are those who say the concept of church and membership in it is not Biblical. What do we learn from verse two that supports or opposes this?

5. How does Paul refer to or describe the members of the church in Corinth? What is meant by this/these?

Word Study: Saint/Hagios

Paul writes that the Corinthian believers were called or sanctified/set apart to be saints. This is the English translation of the Greek word “hagios.” The root for this Greek word is “hagos” which means, “an awful thing.” This is not a negative thing or word. It means “full of awe; that which brings awe.” A saint is one who is so dedicated to the Lord that it brings a sense of awe to those who see their lives. This is what we are called to! It is truly an awesome thing to think that we sinners have been made the “Children of God” with the purpose of bringing His Good News to all the world. So, be awesome!

6. What is meant by the phrase, “call upon the name?” (Psalm 116)

7. What is made very clear concerning the nature of the Church, in verse two?

8. How are grace and peace connected? What is the relationship between the two?

9. Why does Paul speak of this grace and peace as coming from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ?

10. Compare and contrast 1 Corinthians 1:4 with Ephesians 1:16. What do you notice?

11. What three blessings from God does Paul identify as being given to the Corinthians? What is meant by each? What is the purpose of each?

12. What were the Corinthians waiting for?

13. Why does Paul use the phrase, “Lord Jesus Christ” when referring to Jesus?

14. How does the Lord Jesus Christ “sustain you to the end?”
(Psalm 55:22; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20; Acts 1:8)

15. How could the Corinthians be “guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ?” (Romans 8:1)

16. Paul writes that God is faithful. What does God do through this faithfulness? What is meant by this? (1 John 1:3-7; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

17. After his greeting and thanksgiving, Paul begins to address the concerns he has for the Corinthians. What is his first concern?

18. What is meant by being united in the same mind and the same judgment?

19. What was causing division among the Corinthians? What was Paul's answer to it?

20. What had Christ commissioned Paul to do? How?

21. How is the cross:

A. "Folly to those who are perishing?"

B. "The power of God?"

22. Where is it written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."?

23. "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" How can we see this in our world today?

24. What is meant by the phrase, “the world did not know God through wisdom?” (Romans 1:20)

25. What is meant by:

A. “Jews demand signs?”

B. “Greeks seek wisdom?”

26. How is “Christ crucified:”

A. A stumbling block to the Jews?

B. Folly to the Gentiles?

C. The power and wisdom of God?

27. God took what seemed to be foolish, death on a cross, to shame the wise. He took what was weak, a humble servant who did not fight back, to shame the strong. He took what was low & despised, a baby born to a virgin, to bring to nothing the things that are. Why?

28. How did Christ become:

A. Wisdom? _____

B. Righteousness? _____

C. Sanctification? _____

D. Redemption? _____

29. What should our response be to Christ becoming these things?

SDG Lesson #2
1 Corinthians Chapters 2 & 3

1. Paul begins this chapter by reminding the Corinthians that he had come to them. How long had Paul been with them? (Acts 18:1-176)?

2. What is the testimony of God? (Matthew 3:17; Mark 9:7)

3. What is meant by lofty speech and wisdom? Why wouldn't Paul use these?

4. What was the focus of Paul's message? Why?

5. Why would Paul say he came to Corinth in weakness, trembling and fear? (Acts 16-17)

6. How was Paul's words a demonstration of the Spirit and power?

7. What is meant by faith:

A. Resting in the wisdom of man?

B. Resting in the power of God?

8. What is said about the wisdom and rulers of this age? What does Paul contrast this with?

9. How is the secret wisdom of God hidden? What is this secret wisdom?

10. How is this secret wisdom revealed or made known? Why?

11. What is the “spirit of the world?”

12. What is freely given to us by God? (Ephesians 2:8-9)

13. What makes a person spiritual? (vs. 13) Natural? (vs. 14)

14. How can a spiritual person judge all things?

15. We have the mind of Christ! What does this mean? (Philippians 2:5-11)

Chapter 3

16. Why couldn't Paul address the Corinthians as spiritual people? How did he know this?

17. What was the result of this knowledge? How did it impact Paul's ministry and message?

18. According to Paul, what were both he and Apollos?

19. Who is responsible for the growth of a person's faith?

20. If Paul and Apollos were God's fellow workers who planted and watered the seeds of the Gospel, what did that make the Corinthians?

21. In verse nine, Paul said the Corinthians were "God's building." He uses this to transition into another figurative way of speaking about God's work of salvation. According to Paul, what is the foundation that he laid for "God's building," that is, the Corinthians?

22. Paul speaks about people building on this foundation with physical things such as gold, silver, precious stones, etc. What is his purpose in doing this?

23. Explain verse 15.

24. If we are God's temple and God dwells in us, what should we do?

25. How is verse 18 tied to verse 21 and the message of chapters 2 & 3?

SDG Lesson #3

1 Corinthians Chapter 4

1. Paul begins this chapter with advice to the Corinthians for how they should regard “us.” Who is meant by “us?” (1:12; 4:6)

2. The natural follow up question to #1 is, “How were the Corinthians to view everyone that Paul included in his use of the word “us”? The problem for us today is to understand what Paul was actually saying. There are three powerful words that he uses in verse one; servants or hyperetas, stewards or oikonomous, and mysteries or mysterion. Carefully read the definitions for each of these words and then answer the questions that follow.

Servants/hyperetas-is a compound Greek word made from joining “hupo” (under) with “eresso” (to row). It literally means “under rower” or “under oarsmen.” To fully understand this, we need to think about ships from the first century or modern rowing competitions of today. In both cases the rowers or oarsmen work together following a cadence or drumbeat that their leader creates.

Stewards/oikonomous – Like the previous word oikonomous is a compound word consisting of “oikos” (a house) and “nemo” (to arrange). A steward was the manager of a household or estate. These were highly trusted slaves or freed men who managed the household or estate of their master. In their master’s absence they were to manage the household, business or estate to his advantage. In his absence, they carried his full authority.

Mystery/Mysterion-This is not the mysterious or unknown that we think of in the English language. Rather, it is “that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illumined by His Spirit.” (Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible #3466 ⁽¹⁾).

Considering your answer to #1, how were the “us” truly servants or hyperetas? How does this fit into Paul’s call for unity in chapters 1-3?

Considering your answer to #1, how were the “us” truly stewards our oikonomous? What did this mean for the Corinthians? Us/ How does this impact our regard for what they wrote? (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

It is interesting to note that in the Latin Vulgate, mysterion is translated as “sacraments.” Why would Jerome use this word?

Why must a steward be trustworthy? (vs. 2) How is this true today?

3. Considering your past answers, why would Paul say that the judgments of him by the Corinthians or a human court were a “very small thing?” What can we learn from this and apply to our lives today?

4. What was Paul saying when he said, “For I am not aware of anything against myself”? (2 Timothy 4:7)

5. Why would Paul follow up this comment with the phrase, “but I am not thereby acquitted”? What can we learn from this?

6. Since Paul thought the judgment of others was a “very small thing” and he said, “I do not even judge myself,” who did he feel he was accountable to? What admonition did he give to the Corinthians as a result of this? Why?

7. What further warning or admonition did he give in verse 6? What is meant by this? What is the danger he wants them to avoid?

8. In verse seven Paul puts forth a series of rhetorical questions. What was his purpose in doing this?

9. In verse eight, Paul lays out a series of sarcastic and yet, most likely, haughty claims that some Corinthians were making. They were claiming to have all they want, to be rich and even to have authority like a king. They were making such claims without the support of the apostles, claiming it was earned by their own accord. Why would Paul follow these questions up with his comment, “and would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you”?

10. According to Paul, how did God present the apostles to the world? (Vs. 9a)

11. What is meant by the phrase, “we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men”?

12. How did the apostles and Paul view themselves? How did the Corinthians view themselves?

13. In reality, what was it like to be an apostle or follower of Christ?

14. Why did Paul share all of this with the Corinthians: Why didn't he share this?

15. What did Paul see as the primary problem of the Corinthians? How can we learn from this today?

16. Why would Paul say be imitators of me?

17. What did Paul intend to do, if it was the Lord's will?

18. What option does Paul give to the Corinthians in terms of his intention? What does he mean by this?

SDG Lesson #4
1 Corinthians Chapters 5 & 6

1. Why would Paul begin this chapter with the phrase, “it is actually reported”?

2. What had been reported to Paul? Why was this so bad? What can we learn from the way Paul describes this? (Lev. 18:8; Deut. 22:30)

3. What does Paul say should be done in this situation? Why? (Matt 18:18; 1 Cor. 5:6 & 13; Galatians 5:9)

4. Why Paul follows his revelation of what was reported to him by saying, “and you are arrogant!” What does this tell us about the Corinthians? What can we learn from this?

5. What does Paul mean when he says, “I am present in the Spirit”?
(John 14:26)

6. What does Paul reveal as being the primary reason for removing a person from the fellowship of believers?

7. What is the message of “a little leaven, leavens the whole lump”?

8. What statement does Paul make concerning the Corinthians in verse 7? What does this mean? Why?

9. What festival are we to celebrate? (vs. 8) How? Why?

10. How is this festival celebrated? (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

11. Paul makes an important clarification in verses nine through eleven. What is it? Why does he make it? How should this affect us?

12. Why does Paul say that we're are not to even eat with a brother or sister in Christ who is not repentant? Why?

13. We are often told that we are not to judge. What does Paul have to say about that?

14. There is a very powerful movement within Christianity today that says that church membership is not needed and is actually not biblical. How would you or should you respond to such a person?

Chapter 6.

15. What issue does Paul address at the beginning of this chapter?

16. Why would it be better to settle a civil case between two members of the church within the church?

17. Why would it be shameful for Christians to go to court to settle civil disputes between one another?

18. Instead of filing a civil suit against a fellow Christian, what does Paul say it would be better to do?

19. What does Paul reveal was actually going on in the Corinthian church? (vs. 8)

20. Paul says, “do not be deceived.” What deception were some of the Corinthians believing?

21. What is meant by:

A. Sexual Immorality? – _____

B. Idolatry? – _____

C. Adultery? – _____

D. Homosexuality – _____

E. Thieves? – _____

F. Greedy? – _____

G. Drunkards? – _____

H. Revilers? – _____

I. Swindlers? – _____

What is said about these kinds of people or people who do these things?

What is said about the Corinthians and these things?

22. What is meant by:

A. Washed? – _____

B. Justified? – _____

C. Sanctified? _____

23. Notice that the phrases, “all things are lawful for me” and “food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food” are in quotes. Why would this be?

24. What is our body meant for? Why? What isn't it meant for?

SDG Lesson #5

1 Corinthians Chapter 7

Chapter seven begins with Paul saying, “Now concerning the matters about which you wrote.” With this phrase, Paul addresses three issues that the Corinthian Church asked Paul for advice on. The first issue deals with marriage, divorce and our position in life.

Chapter 7:1-24

1. In chapter six Paul addressed the issues of sexual immorality and a hedonistic lifestyle that had become entrenched in the Corinthian Church. As we often see in life, if there is an extreme position taken by some then there will be an equally extreme position in the opposite direction. What extreme position, that is the exact opposite of the hedonism in chapter six, were some Corinthians taking?

2. What was Paul’s initial response to this belief?

3. What is Paul’s message concerning marriage in verses 3 & 4?

4. Paul does address abstinence in a marriage. Why might a couple practice abstinence? How would they go about doing this?

5. Verse six is a postscript comment on his direction for abstinence. Why did he give this direction? What does he say about it?

6. What did Paul wish for in verse seven? Why would he wish this?

7. What is Paul's advice to single people?

8. What is Paul's advice for those who are married? (vss.10-11)

9. What is Paul's advice for those who have married an unbeliever? (vss. 12-13)

10. What does Paul make clear about all of his advice about marriage?

11. How could an unbelieving spouse or the children from a family where one parent is a believer and the other is not, be made holy by the believer?

12. Why would Paul say that if an unbelieving spouse separates to let it be so?

13. Verses 17-24 deal with our position in life or our vocation. What does Paul say about this position/vocation?

14. Why would someone want to change or undo their circumcision? Why would a Gentile want to be circumcised? What did Paul say about this? Why?

15. What did Paul say to the slaves? Freedman?

16. What did Paul mean when he said, “do not become slaves of men?”

17. In verse twenty-five Paul again makes it very clear that what he is going to share is his judgment and not the Lord’s. What is the “present distress” that Paul has in view that is also driving his judgment/advice? (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2; James 5:3; see also verse 31 of this chapter) How should this view impact our lives?

18. Paul advises the married to stay married, the single to stay single, those who mourn and rejoice to act as if they are not, the married to act as if they're not, and those who buy and trade as if they didn't. Why? (vs. 29 & 32)

19. Where did Paul want all of the Corinthians devotion to be?

20. Verses 36-38 pose a tremendous challenge to Bible translators. As is often the case, what has been written is very short in nature and the translator tries to fill in what the author was communicating. A very literal translation of the beginning of verse 36 would read: "If-any-thinks-to be unbecoming-over-the (feminine)-virgin-if exists-beyond the prime-has-come into being." This leaves the translating open to interpretation. Both the NKJV and the SASB translate this as being advice to a father who has a virgin daughter who is past her prime. If he lets her marry, he does well and if he keeps her from marriage he does better-the idea being that she can be devoted to the Lord. The ESV applies this to the groom. If he is passionate, he should marry. If he can control his passion, he should stay engaged but not consummate the marriage. It should be noted that he would still be responsible for her care. In either case, what is Paul's ultimate direction?

21. What does Paul say to the woman whose husband has died? What is meant by "only in the Lord"?

22. Why does Paul end this chapter by saying, “I think that I too have the Spirit of God”?

Final Note: There is a faction within Christianity that says that the writers of the New Testament books did not see themselves as writing scripture. Therefore, we shouldn't either. This chapter clearly rebukes this thought. If Paul didn't feel that he was writing scripture, he wouldn't have needed to clarify that he was writing this advice and not the Lord.

SDG Lesson #6
1 Corinthians Chapter 8

1. Paul begins this chapter by addressing another area of concern that the Corinthians had written to him about. What was their concern?

2. Contrast possession of knowledge and the possession of love. Why is this so?

3. Why is it that the person that thinks he knows something, or possesses knowledge, really doesn't know what they should know?

4. It should be noted that when Paul speaks of love building up or of loving God, he uses the Greek word "Agape." This is sacrificial love. The love that gives up for the sake of the one loved. Explain why Paul would say, "If anyone loves (Agape) God, he is known by God? (1 John 4:7-8)

5. Some Bible scholars believe that the Corinthians had written Paul and said, "all of us possess knowledge, an idol has no real existence and there is no God but one." (Notice quotes in ESV but not the NIV, NASB or JKJV) What does Paul say about these statements?

6. What does Paul say about the many gods and lords that were worshipped in the first century?

7. Verse six contains a very simple creed from the early Church. What does this creed say about God? Who He is? What He has done?

8. What does the creed say about Jesus?

9. What does the creed say about us? What does this mean?

10. However, what didn't all the Corinthian Christians possess? (vs. 7)

11. What did these Corinthian Christians actually believe? (vs. 7)

12. How could these Corinthians have their conscience defiled?

13. What does Paul reveal about food?

14. What is the right that Paul speaks of in verse nine?

15. Paul gives us a great lesson in personal rights. What does he say about our use of our rights? Why?

16. What is Paul really saying when he says, “I will never eat meat”?

5. What is the point of Paul's questions about the soldier, farmer and shepherd in verse seven?

6. Why does Paul point out the Mosaic Law concerning the muzzling of an ox? How was this law for the people's sake and not the oxen?

7. What right had Paul and Barnabas not made use of? Why?

8. Not to spend too much time on one point, but what was Paul's last example/question concerning those who got paid for their work? (vs 13)

9. Where did the Lord command that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel?

10. According to verse 15, why wasn't Paul being paid for the work he did as an apostle? Your answer should lay the ground work for the next question.

11. What could Paul boast about? What couldn't he boast about? Why?

12. What does Paul mean when he says, "for if I do this at my own will, I have a reward."?

13. What stewardship was entrusted to Paul?

14. What did Paul see as his reward for this stewardship?

15. Why was Paul free from all?

16. Paul was free from all. What did he choose to do? Why?

17. Paul made himself to be a servant. What did he mean by that? What can we learn from his example?

18. Why would Paul use an athletic metaphor in writing to the Corinthians?

19. How was Paul like an athletic track runner?

20. What would an Olympian runner receive if he won his race? What would Paul, the Corinthians and us receive?

21. Some have interpreted verse 27 as a call to asceticism or the punishing of the body for spiritual gain. Why can't this be so? (6:19) What then is Paul talking about?

22. How could Paul be disqualified?

SDG Lesson #8
1 Corinthians Chapter 10

1. Chapter ten begins with the word “for.” For, what? Why does he start with this word?

2. What was Paul referring to when he writes, “I want you to know brothers that:”

A. “Our fathers were all under the cloud?” _____

B. “All passed through the sea?” _____

C. “All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea?” _____

D. “All ate the same spiritual food?” _____

E. “All drank the same spiritual drink?” _____

F. “For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them?” _____

3. Who was the Rock that followed Israel and did these things? What does that make Him?

4. Though all of Israel saw/experienced these things, what happened?

5. Why did God perform these miracles for all of Israel to see and experience?

6. How were they idolaters and “sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play”? (Exodus 32)

7. What event is Paul speaking of in verse eight? (Numbers 25)

8. When did the Israelites put Christ to the test resulting in some being destroyed by serpents? (Numbers 21)

9. Who or what is the “Destroyer?” (Ex. 12:23; Heb 11:28)

10. Why did these things happen to the Israelites? Why were they written down?

11. What is the point Paul is making in verse 12?

12. What three things does Paul reveal about temptations?

13. All of this leads up to a simple admonition. What does Paul tell the Corinthians to do?

14. What is Paul referring to when he speaks of “the cup of blessing?”

15. According to Paul, what happens when we drink the cup of blessing or partake of the bread that is broken? What does this mean?

16. What is one outcome of participating in Holy Communion? (vs. 17)

17. What does Paul compare the participation in Holy Communion to? (vs. 18) Why?

18. Why did Paul make this emphasis on the participation in the body and blood of Christ and the participation in the Old Testament sacrificial feasts. What was happening in Corinth? Why was this bad?

19. In verse 23 Paul again (see 6:12-13) quotes what some Corinthian Christians were saying: “all things are lawful.” What is Paul’s two-part response to this saying? Why would a Corinthian make such a statement?

20. What is the goal that all Christians are to seek? (vs. 24)

21. There was a meat market in Corinth called the “macellum.” Meat that was sold there came from farmers, butchers, and from the pagan temples. Paul had told the Corinthians not to participate in the pagan sacrifices but then says to “eat whatever is sold in the meat market.” Explain why this isn’t contradictory?

22. What guidelines does Paul give to the Corinthians when it comes to eating meat that was used in a sacrifice? Why does he say this?

23. What should we always do when we eat? (vs. 30)

24. What should be the overarching rule of all that we do?

4. To understand what Paul is saying in verses four through six we need to understand first century customs. In pagan cultures, men covered their head as a sign of their piety. In both pagan and Jewish culture, a woman who covered her head or wore a veil was showing the world that she was married. In Roman culture, a woman who shaved her head had been convicted of prostitution. Why shouldn't a man cover his head? Why should a wife cover hers? Why should she cut her hair short?

5. How is man the image and glory of God? How is a wife the glory of a man?

6. Why was "woman" created? (Malachi 2:15) What impact does this have on the view of homosexual marriage?

7. What does Paul mean when he says, "because of the angels"? (1 Tim 5:21)

8. If woman is not independent of man, nor man of woman, what is the point Paul is making?

9. Keeping the last several verses and answers in mind, why would it be a disgrace for a man to have long hair?

10. In verse 16, Paul reveals what the real issue he has been addressing is. What is this issue? What does it mean? How does this apply today?

11. What was the second concern that Paul addressed?

12. Why would God allow for there to be divisions, factions or controversies within the Church?

13. What was happening when the Corinthian believers/church came together?

14. What had Paul received and delivered to the Corinthians?

15. What are we to do every time that we take the bread and drink from the cup at the Lord's Supper?

16. What does Paul really mean when he says, "you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes"?

17. Verses 27-31 are loaded and must be dealt with carefully. What is Paul's first warning?

18. What is Paul's advice concerning this potential problem?

19. How are we to do this?

20. What happens if we don't do this?

21. What happens if we do this properly or "truly"?

22. How had God's judgment been revealed to them?

23. Why did God do this?

24. What was Paul's final instructions concerning the Lord's Supper.

Summary:

When we come to the Lord's Supper we come together in unity. Therefore, if you are upset with a member of God's family, be reconciled first and then come in unity. Before we come to the Lord's Supper we should "truly" examine ourselves, "discerning the body." This is tricky but the answer to what this means is found in the consequence, "drinks judgment on himself." This is a reference or phrase that means the person is condemned! What is a person ultimately condemned for? Whenever someone blasphemes God they fall under His judgment. If we truly examine ourselves, we are looking inside ourselves and asking, "Do I truly believe this?" What is it we are to believe? The discernment of the body. To discern is to perceive or recognize something. What are we to perceive or recognize? The Body and Blood of Christ. This is why the Catholic Church and early Church believed the bread and wine were actually changed into Christ's body and blood. We know it isn't, but we also know that God has a history of coming to His people by using physical elements such as a cloud, a pillar of cloud or pillar of fire. God was in these physical objects showing that He was physically present with us; not just watching from heaven. When we examine ourselves, we are to come away saying, "I truly believe that:

- A. Christ is physically present through the elements of Holy Communion.
- B. Christ is the only Son of God who died, giving His body and shedding His blood to pay the price of our sin and atone for us.
- C. Christ rose from the dead, conquering death.
- D. Christ ascended into heaven, where He is preparing a place for us.
- E. Christ will return on the last day to take us home to be with Him and He will judge all those who have not put their faith in Him.