



MID-WEEK  
TEACHING SESSION 01



Let Your rain fall upon me  
Let Your rain fall upon me

# Overview On 1 Corinthians

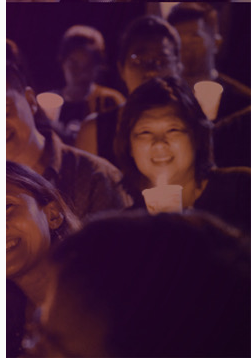
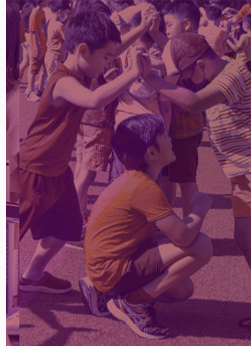
03 August 2023 | 8-9.30pm  
Join us: [wesley.sg/1cor](https://wesley.sg/1cor)



# Uniqueness

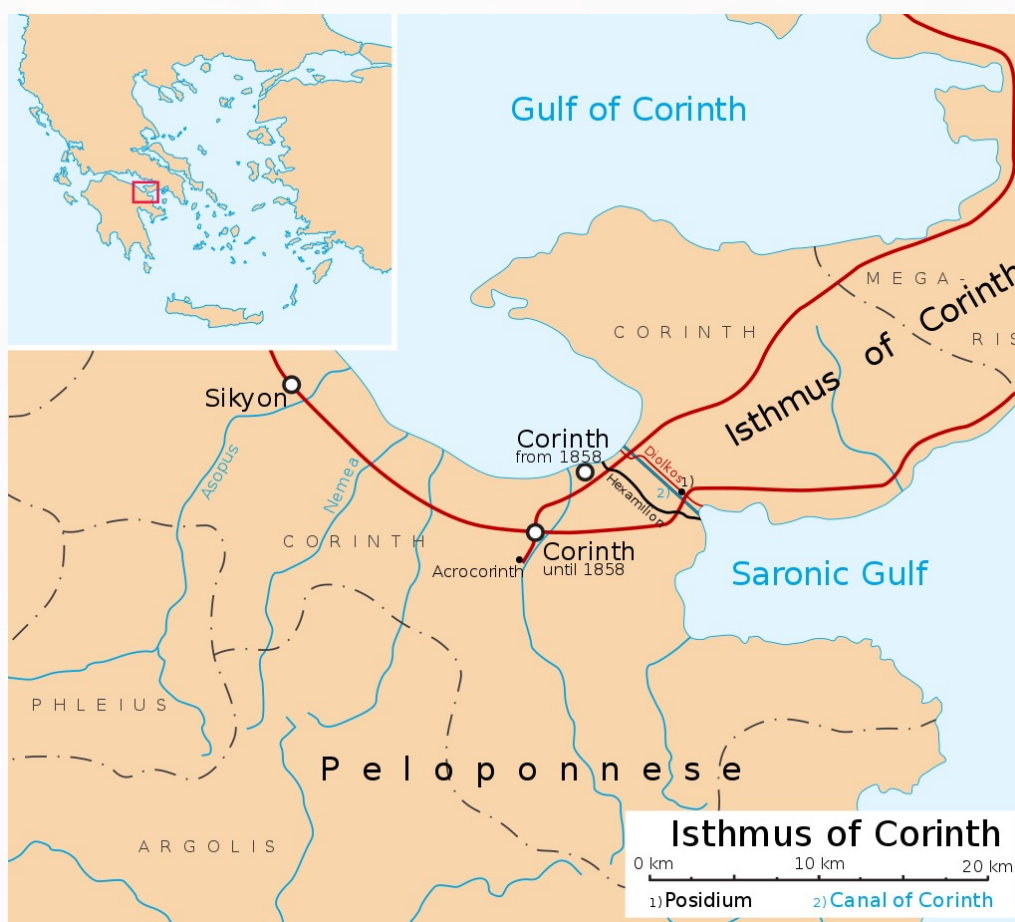
Quoted more often by the early church fathers than any of the writings of Paul.

It is the most wide-ranging and complete letter.



# Ancient Corinth





# Ancient Corinth

Strategic location  
Commercial hub  
Cultural Centre



# Ancient Corinth

Cosmopolitan  
Morally corrupt  
Pagan & Idolatrous

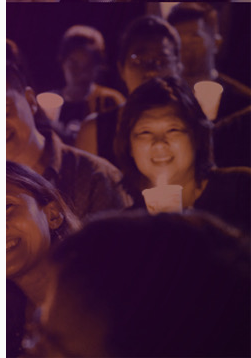
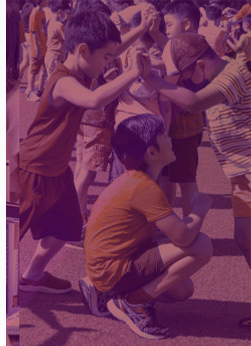


# Ancient Corinth

In 146 B.C, Corinth revolted against the Roman empire and was destroyed.

It was rebuilt in about 48 B.C. and became the most prosperous city.

200 in the church in a city of 40 to 60 thousand.



# Paul in Corinth

**Paul came to  
Corinth on March 50  
A.D. and stayed till  
September 51 A.D.  
(Acts 18:1-21)**





# Paul in Corinth

**Paul found Aquila and Priscilla who were fellow tent-makers and co-workers with him.**



# Paul in Corinth

Many believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8).  
Paul left Corinth after 18 months with Aquila  
and Priscila.

He later heard of issues in the church when he  
was in Ephesus and this was when he wrote  
the letter to the church in Corinth.



# The Letters of Paul

Book	Date (A.D.)	Place of Writing	Relation to Acts
Galatians	48	Syrian Antioch	Acts 14:28; 15:2
1 Thessalonians	50	Corinth	Acts 18:5
2 Thessalonians	50	Corinth	
1 Corinthians	<b>53</b>	<b>Ephesus</b>	<b>Acts 19:20</b>
2 Corinthians	56	Macedonia	Acts 20:2
Romans	57	Corinth	Acts 20:3
Prison Letters			
a. Colossians	early 60's	Rome	
b. Philemon	early 60's	Rome	
c. Ephesians	early 60's	Rome	
d. Philippians	late 62-63	Rome	Acts 28:30-31
4 <sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey			
a. 1 Timothy	63 (or later,	Macedonia	
b. Titus	63 but before		
c. 2 Timothy	64 A.D. 68)	Rome	



# The Church in Corinth

Mostly Gentiles (past pagan backgrounds)

Majority tradesmen, workers, converted slaves

Minority elite and patrons



# The Purpose of the Letter

Paul heard of the issues in the church in Corinth from oral reports and written questions from the church.

The letter was to address these issues.



# The Purpose of the Letter

Issues addressed:

1. Division in the church
2. Church Discipline
3. Sexual Immorality
4. Idolatry
5. Marriage & Singleness
6. Order in worship
7. Spiritual Gifts
8. Resurrection





# Outline and Issues

## A. Introduction (1:1-9)


### 1. Greeting (1:1-3)

### 2. Thanksgiving (1:4-9)



# Outline and Issues

## B. Paul responds to the problems (1:10 – 6:20)

1. Divisions in the church (1:10 – 4:21)
    - a. Rival Factions (1:10-17)
    - b. The Cross as the Centre (1:18 – 2:5)
    - c. Christian wisdom as given by the Spirit is necessary for growth (2:6 – 3:23)
    - d. The right attitude towards apostles (4:1 – 21)
- 



# Outline and Issues

## Issues:

Factions and Division

The foolishness of the gospel (Christ crucified) and yet its necessity for unity


Criteria for judging success in ministry





# Outline and Issues

## **B. Paul responds to the problems (1:10 – 6:20)**

2. A case of incest and immorality revealed (5:1-13)
  3. Lawsuits between believers (6:1-11)
  4. The seriousness of sexual immorality (6:12-20)
- 

# Outline and Issues

## Issues:

Attitude towards those living in sin: tolerance or expulsion?

Litigation between Christians, is it ever allowed?





# Outline and Issues

## C. Paul responds to the issues raised in the letter from the Corinthians (7:1 – 16:4)

### 1. Concerning marriage (7:1-40)

a. To those currently or previously married (7:1-16)

b. Analogies with circumcision and slavery (7:17 - 24)

c. To those never married or contemplating marriage (7:25-40)



# Outline and Issues

## Issues:

Mutual consent when sex is withheld in marriage.

Singleness and its blessing.

Divorce and remarriage – is it not allowed? (v 10-11)

Priority and urgency of discipleship.





# Outline and Issues


**C. Paul responds to the issues raised in the letter from the Corinthians (7:1 – 16:4)**

**2. Concerning idolatrous culture and Christian freedom (8:1 – 11:1)**

a. Tempering knowledge with love (8:1-13)

b. An application to money for ministry (9:1-18)

c. The underlying motive of saving as many as possible (9:19-27)





# Outline and Issues

## C. Paul responds to the issues raised in the letter from the Corinthians (7:1 – 16:4)

### 2. Concerning idolatrous culture and Christian freedom (8:1 – 11:1)

d. The danger of licentiousness: idolatry (10:1-22)

e. Balancing freedom and restraint (10:23 – 11:1)



# Outline and Issues

## Issues:

Love others by not exercising our rights so as not to stumble them. The motivation to do this is to save many more.

Warning against allowing freedom to lead to temptation and idolatry.

We have a right to do anything, but not everything is beneficial.







# Outline and Issues

**C. Paul responds to the issues raised in the letter from the Corinthians (7:1 – 16:4)**

**3. Concerning worship (11:2 – 14:40)**

a. Head-coverings (11:2-16)

b. The Lord's supper (11:17-34)



# Outline and Issues

## Issues:

The importance of order for worship so others are not distracted or stumbled.

The importance of unity, charity and kindness when we gather for the Lord's supper.



# Outline and Issues

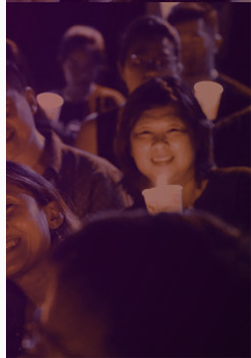
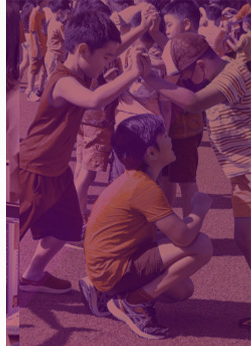
## C. Paul responds to the issues raised in the letter from the Corinthians (7:1 – 16:4)

### 3. Concerning worship (11:2 – 14:40)

#### c. Spiritual gifts (12:1-14:40)

- Diversity but in unity (12:1-31a)
- The pre-eminence of love (12:31b – 13:13)
- Prophecy and tongues: intelligibility preferred (14:1-25)
- Prophecy and tongues: The priority of order (14:26 –

40)



# Outline and Issues

## Issues:

Unity in diversity for spiritual gifts.

Unity in the Body of Christ, every part honoured.

Follow the most excellent way of love (*agape*).

Excel in the gifts that edify through intelligibility of words (tongues vs prophecy).

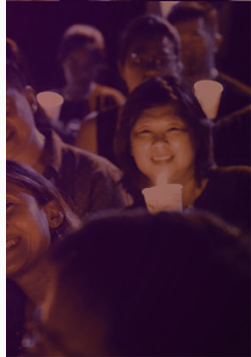


# Outline and Issues

## Issues:

Interpretation of tongues and taking turns with prophecies are part of orderly worship which reflects a God of order.

For good order, women should follow the process as laid down by the cultural norms then in order to speak.





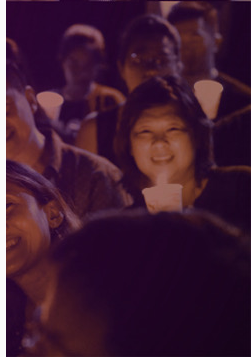
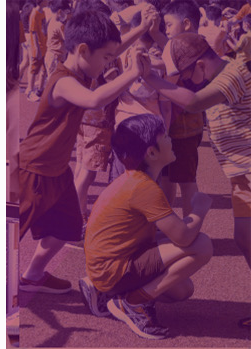
# Outline and Issues

**C. Paul responds to the issues raised in the letter from the Corinthians (7:1 – 16:4)**

**4. Concerning resurrection (15:1 – 58)**

**a. The certainty of resurrection (15:1-34)**

**b. The nature of resurrection (15:35 – 58)**





# Outline and Issues

**C. Paul responds to the issues raised in the letter from the Corinthians (7:1 – 16:4)**


**5. Concerning the collection for Jerusalem (16:1-4)**





# Outline and Issues

## D. Conclusion: Travel Plans and Final Greetings (16:5 – 24)

1. Travel plans of Paul and his co-workers (16:5 – 12)
  2. The formal closing (16:13 – 24)
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# Approaches to study

1. Dismissive of the letter as containing teachings not applicable to us today.
2. Literal (e.g. Christians not taking each other to court, head-covering, woman not being allowed to speak)



# Approaches to study

**3. Discern and apply principled truth drawn from the text.**

**Draw out applicable principles, having examined the contexts of the text.**



# Approaches to study

Apply the principles in *contemporary* contexts:

- a. Personal
- b. Workplace
- c. Family
- d. Community (e.g. church)
- e. Nation(s)



# Core Issues

## 1. **Worldly vs Godly ways**

*Secular* ways, culture and leadership methods have impacted the church.

Different factions, litigation, sexual immorality permitted, comparison of spiritual gifts etc.



# Core Issues

## 2. Freedom vs Love

The surrender of the right to do what you want in order to love someone by not stumbling them.



# Core Issues

## 3. Dualism between the material and spiritual

*Hedonism* - Sexual immorality (chap 5; 6:12-20), eating food offered to idols (chap 8 – 10), drunkenness at the Lord's table (11:17-34) all indulge bodily appetites.



# Core Issues

## 3. Dualism between the material and spiritual

*Asceticism* – claims to special knowledge and wisdom (divisions in chap 1- 4), deprivation of sexual fulfillment in marriage (chap 7) and disbelief in the bodily resurrection (chap 15), deny the goodness of the body and its desires.



# Core Issues

## 3. Dualism between the material and spiritual

Be careful not to embrace this dualistic view. Recognize the goodness of bodily desires but let them be spiritually consecrated.





# Conclusion

"It is vital that we think about grace, talk about grace, but sometimes **we just need to see grace**. Sometimes we need to see an exasperated apostle taking to a rebellious and divisive church with tenderness and affection and with a faith that believes in the **transformation that can only come from the power of the Spirit, the example of Christ and the faithfulness of God.**"

*Andrew Wilson, 1 Corinthians for you*



# References

*1 Corinthians for you* by Andrew Wilson

*The Message of 1 Corinthians* by David Prior

*1 Corinthians* (The NIV Application Commentary)

*First Epistle to 1 Corinthians* by Gordon Fee

*How to read the Bible for all its worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/1-corinthians/>

