

## CALLED INTO FELLOWSHIP

The First Epistle to the Corinthians Full Evangelical Commentary Life Grow Ministries Complete Compiled Volume

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The First Epistle to the Corinthians Full Evangelical Commentary Life Grow Ministries STAGE 1 — INTRODUCTION & 1 CORINTHIANS 1

**INTRODUCTION — THE GOSPEL IN A FRACTURED CHURCH** First Corinthians addresses the gospel as it confronts division, immorality, confusion, and spiritual pride within the church. Written by the apostle Paul to believers in Corinth, this letter reveals how the saving work of Christ shapes not only personal faith but corporate life, ethics, worship, and witness. Corinth was a prosperous, cosmopolitan city marked by cultural pluralism, moral permissiveness, and social stratification. The church reflected much of this environment. Though gifted and enthusiastic, the Corinthians struggled to live out the implications of the gospel in unity and holiness. Paul writes not to introduce new doctrine, but to reapply the gospel they already received. At the heart of the letter is the conviction that the church belongs to God. Believers are called out of the world and into fellowship with Christ, yet they must learn how the cross reshapes wisdom, power, freedom, sexuality, worship, and love. **CHAPTER 1 — CALLED INTO UNITY BY THE WORD OF THE CROSS** Paul opens the letter by grounding his authority in the calling of God. He identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, emphasizing divine initiative rather than personal ambition. The church in Corinth is addressed as sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all who call upon the name of the Lord. Paul gives thanks for the grace given to the Corinthians in Christ Jesus. They are enriched in speech and knowledge, lacking in no spiritual gift as they await the revelation of the Lord. This thanksgiving reflects Paul's confidence that God is faithful and will sustain His people to the end. The first major issue Paul confronts is division within the church. Believers are aligning themselves around prominent leaders—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ—in ways that fracture fellowship. Such divisions reveal a misunderstanding of the gospel. Paul reframes leadership by pointing to the cross. Christ is not divided, nor was any human leader crucified for them. The gospel advances not through rhetorical brilliance but through Christ crucified. The message of the cross appears foolish to the world but is the power and wisdom of God to those who are being saved. God overturns human expectations by working through what the world despises. Paul reminds the Corinthians of their calling. Not many were wise, powerful, or noble by worldly standards. God chose the foolish and weak so that no one may boast before Him. Christ Himself has become wisdom from God—righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Therefore, the one who boasts must boast in the Lord.

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The First Epistle to the Corinthians Full Evangelical Commentary Life Grow Ministries STAGE 2 — 1  
CORINTHIANS 2–3

**CHAPTER 2 — THE WISDOM OF GOD REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT** In 1 Corinthians chapter 2, Paul continues to dismantle the Corinthian fascination with human wisdom by clarifying the nature of apostolic ministry and divine revelation. When Paul first came to Corinth, he did not rely on eloquence or philosophical display. His preaching centered decisively on Jesus Christ and Him crucified, a message that appeared unimpressive by worldly standards yet carried divine power. Paul's ministry was marked by weakness, fear, and trembling, not because of incompetence, but because his confidence rested entirely in God's power rather than human ability. Faith grounded in rhetorical skill is fragile; faith grounded in God's power endures. The Spirit's work ensures that belief rests on God Himself, not on persuasive technique. Paul affirms that the gospel is wisdom, but not the wisdom of this age or of its rulers. God's wisdom was decreed before the ages and revealed through the Spirit. Human rulers failed to recognize this wisdom, demonstrated by their role in crucifying the Lord of glory. Divine revelation alone grants true understanding. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. Just as only a person's own spirit knows their inner thoughts, so only the Spirit of God knows God's purposes. Believers have received the Spirit from God so that they may understand what God has freely given. The natural person cannot accept spiritual truths because they are spiritually discerned. By contrast, those who have the Spirit possess the mind of Christ—a transformed capacity to perceive reality through the lens of the cross.

**CHAPTER 3 — GOD'S FIELD, GOD'S BUILDING, GOD'S TEMPLE** In chapter 3, Paul applies the theology of wisdom directly to the Corinthians' divisions. Though spiritually gifted, the Corinthians remain immature, marked by jealousy and strife. Such behavior reflects worldly thinking rather than life shaped by the Spirit. Paul exposes the error of elevating human leaders. Apostles are servants through whom God works, not objects of allegiance. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God alone gives the growth. Spiritual progress depends on God's activity, not human effort. Using architectural imagery, Paul describes the church as God's building, founded on Jesus Christ. Each minister builds upon this foundation, but the quality of their work will be tested. Faithful labor will endure; careless work will be exposed. The chapter reaches its climax in the declaration that the church is God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells within it. Division threatens the integrity of what belongs to God. Holiness and unity are essential to the church's identity. Paul concludes by overturning worldly boasting. All things belong to believers because they belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. True wisdom recognizes that everything flows from God's grace.

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CORINTHIANS 4–6

**CHAPTER 4 — STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD** In 1 Corinthians chapter 4, Paul corrects the Corinthians' distorted view of leadership and judgment. Apostles are to be regarded as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Faithfulness, not public acclaim, is the defining measure of true ministry.

Ultimate evaluation belongs to the Lord, who will bring to light hidden motives and grant praise according to His judgment. Paul challenges the Corinthians' pride by reminding them that everything they possess is received by grace. Boasting in leaders exposes a misunderstanding of the gospel. The apostles' lives, marked by suffering and humiliation, reflect conformity to the crucified Christ rather than worldly success. Paul writes as a spiritual father, urging the Corinthians to imitate his Christ-shaped example. The kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power, revealed through transformed lives rather than empty rhetoric. **CHAPTER 5 — HOLINESS AND DISCIPLINE IN THE COMMUNITY** Chapter 5 addresses a grave moral failure tolerated within the Corinthian church. Paul rebukes the community for their pride and calls for decisive action to preserve holiness. Church discipline serves the redemptive purpose of restoring the sinner and protecting the integrity of the body. Using the imagery of leaven, Paul warns that unchecked sin corrupts the entire community. Christ, the Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed, calling believers to live in sincerity and truth rather than malice and evil. Holiness is inseparable from the church's identity. **CHAPTER 6 — REDEEMED BODIES AND THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST** In chapter 6, Paul confronts lawsuits among believers and sexual immorality justified by appeals to freedom. Believers are called to resolve disputes within the community, prioritizing unity and witness over personal rights. Paul reminds the Corinthians that their former patterns of life no longer define them. They have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Redemption transforms identity and behavior. The chapter culminates in a theology of the body. The body belongs to the Lord and is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Believers are not their own but were bought with a price. Therefore, they are called to glorify God in their bodies.

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The First Epistle to the Corinthians Full Evangelical Commentary Life Grow Ministries STAGE 4 — 1  
**CORINTHIANS 7–9**

**CHAPTER 7 — FAITHFULNESS TO CHRIST IN EVERY CALLING** In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, Paul responds to questions concerning marriage, singleness, sexuality, and daily life. He approaches these matters pastorally, grounding every state of life under the lordship of Christ rather than imposing a single pattern for all believers. Paul affirms marriage as a God-given context for mutual devotion and faithfulness, emphasizing reciprocal responsibility between husband and wife. Sexual intimacy within marriage is affirmed as good and protective against immorality. At the same time, Paul recognizes singleness as a gift that can enable undivided devotion to the Lord. Paul addresses mixed marriages, encouraging believers to remain faithful where possible, trusting God's grace at work within ordinary family life. Divorce is treated with sobriety, not legalism, and peace is emphasized where separation occurs. Throughout the chapter, Paul underscores a governing principle: believers are to live faithfully in the condition in which they were called. **CHAPTER 8 — LOVE, KNOWLEDGE, AND CHRISTIAN FREEDOM** In chapter 8, Paul addresses the issue of food offered to idols, exposing deeper questions about knowledge, freedom, and love. While theological knowledge affirms that idols are nothing, Paul warns that knowledge without love can damage the community. Love, not liberty, defines Christian maturity. Paul emphasizes concern for the weaker conscience. Exercising freedom without regard for

others may cause harm and constitutes sin against Christ. True freedom expresses itself through voluntary restraint for the good of others. **CHAPTER 9 — APOSTOLIC RIGHTS AND SELF-DENIAL FOR THE GOSPEL** Chapter 9 provides Paul’s personal example of the principles he teaches. Paul affirms his apostolic authority and his legitimate right to support, yet he willingly relinquishes these rights to avoid hindering the gospel. Paul describes his ministry as voluntary servanthood. He becomes all things to all people so that some may be saved. Using the metaphor of athletic discipline, Paul calls believers to self-control and perseverance, pursuing an imperishable crown. Christian freedom finds its highest expression in sacrificial faithfulness.

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The First Epistle to the Corinthians Full Evangelical Commentary Life Grow Ministries STAGE 5 — 1  
**CORINTHIANS 10–11**

**CHAPTER 10 — WARNING, WORSHIP, AND THE GLORY OF GOD** In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, Paul turns to Israel’s history to warn the Corinthian believers against spiritual presumption and idolatry. He reminds them that Israel experienced genuine redemptive privileges—deliverance, guidance, and provision—yet many fell through disobedience. These events were recorded as warnings for God’s people living in the present age. Paul cautions believers against overconfidence, urging vigilance and humility. At the same time, he offers assurance of God’s faithfulness in temptation, affirming that God provides a way of endurance. Christian freedom must therefore be exercised with reverence and self-awareness. Paul draws a sharp boundary around idolatry. Participation in pagan worship is incompatible with loyalty to Christ. The Lord’s Supper signifies participation in Christ, making divided allegiance impossible. Believers are called to flee idolatry and live in exclusive devotion to the Lord. Practical guidance follows concerning food and conscience. Freedom is real, but it is governed by love and the pursuit of God’s glory. Believers are to seek the good of others and the honor of God in all things. **CHAPTER 11 — ORDER AND REMEMBRANCE IN THE WORSHIPING COMMUNITY** In chapter 11, Paul addresses matters of order and reverence in corporate worship. He affirms the importance of honoring God’s design in relationships while maintaining humility and mutual dependence within the body of Christ. Paul confronts abuses of the Lord’s Supper that undermine its meaning. What should proclaim Christ’s sacrificial death has become an occasion for division and self-indulgence. Paul recalls the tradition received from the Lord, emphasizing that the Supper proclaims the Lord’s death until He comes. The chapter closes with a solemn call to self-examination and discernment. Proper participation in the Lord’s Supper fosters unity, reverence, and spiritual health within the church.

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**CORINTHIANS 12–14**

**CHAPTER 12 — ONE SPIRIT, ONE BODY, MANY MEMBERS** In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul addresses confusion and rivalry surrounding spiritual gifts by grounding them in the work of the one Holy Spirit and the unity of the body of Christ. He reminds the Corinthians that their former pagan experiences were often marked by deception and disorder, whereas true spirituality is defined by confession of Jesus as Lord. Paul emphasizes that there are different kinds of gifts, ministries, and workings, but the same God empowers them all. Spiritual gifts are not earned or indicators of status; they are gracious endowments given for the common good. The Spirit distributes gifts according to divine wisdom, ensuring diversity within unity. Using the metaphor of the human body, Paul explains that the church is one body with many members. Each part has a distinct function, and no member is unnecessary. God has arranged the body so that there may be no division, but mutual care and honor among its members.

**CHAPTER 13 — LOVE AS THE SUPREME WAY** Chapter 13 stands at the heart of Paul’s argument. Love is not an optional virtue but the essential context in which all spiritual gifts must operate. Without love, even the most extraordinary gifts lose their value. Paul describes love through concrete actions and attitudes. Love is patient and kind, not envious or arrogant. It seeks the good of others and rejoices in truth. This portrait reveals the character of Christ and exposes the Corinthians’ need for transformation. Paul contrasts the temporary nature of gifts with the permanence of love. Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will pass away, but love endures forever. Love belongs to the age to come and marks true maturity.

**CHAPTER 14 — ORDER AND EDIFICATION IN WORSHIP** In chapter 14, Paul applies the primacy of love to corporate worship. Spiritual gifts are to be exercised in ways that build up the church. Intelligibility and order are essential for edification and witness. Paul affirms the value of tongues and prophecy but insists that worship must engage both mind and spirit. Uninterpreted speech produces confusion, while clear proclamation strengthens the congregation. Paul provides practical guidelines for orderly participation in worship, emphasizing self-control and mutual consideration. God is not a God of confusion but of peace, and worship should reflect His character.

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The First Epistle to the Corinthians Full Evangelical Commentary Life Grow Ministries STAGE 7 — 1  
**CORINTHIANS 15–16**

**CHAPTER 15 — THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND THE HOPE OF GLORY** In 1 Corinthians chapter 15, Paul addresses a denial of the resurrection circulating within the Corinthian church. He begins by reminding the believers of the gospel they received and in which they stand. This gospel centers on Christ’s death for sins, His burial, and His resurrection on the third day according to the Scriptures. Paul supports the truth of the resurrection with eyewitness testimony, listing appearances of the risen Christ to the apostles and many others. The resurrection is not a private vision but a historical reality central to the Christian faith. Paul demonstrates the devastating consequences of denying the resurrection. If Christ has not been raised, faith is futile, sins remain unforgiven, and Christian hope collapses. By contrast, Christ’s resurrection guarantees the resurrection of those who belong to Him. As death came through Adam, life comes through Christ. Paul explains the nature of the resurrection body using the image of a seed. What is sown perishable is raised

imperishable. The resurrection involves transformation, not replacement. Believers will bear the image of the heavenly man. The chapter culminates in victory over death. Death is swallowed up in triumph through Christ. Because resurrection is certain, believers are called to steadfast and faithful service, knowing their labor in the Lord is not in vain. **CHAPTER 16 — THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND FINAL EXHORTATIONS** In chapter 16, Paul brings theological instruction into practical expression. He gives directions for a collection to support believers in Jerusalem, emphasizing generosity, planning, and unity across the churches. Paul shares his travel plans and commends fellow workers, highlighting the relational nature of gospel ministry. Leadership in the church is marked by service and devotion rather than status. The letter concludes with exhortations to love, watchfulness, and steadfast faith. Paul closes with a prayer for the Lord's coming and a final reminder that grace sustains the church. Love for Christ remains the defining mark of those who belong to Him.