



## Getting started with 1 & 2 Corinthians

### The point of 1 Corinthians

What does it look like to be a holy community?

Paul wrote this letter to a group of disciples at a church he had helped to plant (Acts 18). Corinth sat well placed on sea trade routes, and so became a melting pot of cultures, religions and opinions.

Into this jumble came the unique message of salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus alone, and now there was a group of Christians living in Corinth.

But, church was as messy as the city; division caused by arrogance, sexual immorality, people insisting on exercising their own rights, moral impurity.

At the beginning of the book, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the importance of the cross (ch1v17-2v16). At the end he draws their attention to the resurrection (ch15v1-58).

Everything in between flows from these two crucial truths. Paul brings the gospel to bear on the issues that were ruining the church in Corinth, reminding the Corinthians that Christians are to be holy, homes of the Holy Spirit.

Paul is stern because he loves them and cares for the believers in Corinth. He reminds them that our goal as gathered believers is not about building myself up but rather about building the church up by helping other Christians grow to maturity and by reaching out to outsiders with the wonderful message of Jesus.

### Things to look out for as you read. .

- See how Paul uses the *gospel* to address the problems the in the church.
- Look for how God flips human thinking on its head.
- 1 Corinthians 13 is often used in the context of weddings – but the context of the book suggests a different way of understanding it!

## **Jesus in 1 Corinthians**

In 1 Corinthians, The Lord Jesus is mostly referred to as “Christ”, a title which emphasises His leadership and authority.

In a church where people were divided over leadership, and compromising on the implications of the gospel, Jesus is referred to as Christ, the King. He is the one leader we should all submit to. His authority is absolute, and therefore His commands about Christian living must be obeyed.

## **Gifts of the Spirit**

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are discussed, particularly in chapters 12 & 14.

Christians have differing views of how exactly to understand these chapters, and about how we should exercise the gifts of the Spirit today. However the main point in 1 Corinthians is very clear. Watch out for how the gifts of the Spirit all point to Jesus and further the proclamation of His Word. Paul’s concern is that whatever we do, it should be for the building up of the church to maturity in gospel truth. No matter how we apply these chapters for Christians today, that priority remains the same.

## The point of 2 Corinthians

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians about a year after 1 Corinthians.

While some of the Corinthians had repented in response to Paul's first letter, some were beginning to wonder whether Paul was the real deal. After all, he didn't look very impressive and the suffering he was going through made him seem weak.

In this letter, Paul defends his apostleship; not because he's proud, but because by defending his apostleship he's defending the gospel.

It's crucial that the Corinthians know Paul to be genuine, because then they can be confident that his message is genuine. If the Corinthians reject Paul and his message, they are rejecting Christ Himself.

Paul reminds his readers that apparent weakness is completely consistent with the gospel of a suffering Saviour; and that in weakness God works in strength.

Therefore, Paul and his message are not to be rejected, but rather imitated.

### Things to look out for as you read. . .

- Look for how a true understanding of the gospel leads to generosity.
- What does this book teach us about true weakness and strength?
- Watch out for how this book gives us confidence in the true gospel.



Here are some questions the Bible wants you to ask of itself. Use these to help you as you read your way through this month's book: (please don't feel like you have to fill in every question in loads of detail. These are a guide to help you learn from what you are reading.)

- What did you learn about Jesus and what it means to trust him? (Luke 24:45-47)
- What did you learn about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- How were you corrected or rebuked or equipped for every good work? (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- What did you learn from the book that will help you keep going as a follower of Jesus? (Romans 15:4)
- What did you learn that will help you serve and build up the church? (Eph 4:11-16)
- What have you learnt that helps you love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
- What has helped you love your neighbour as yourself? (Matt 22:37-40)

## Possible reading timetable:

01/07/2017	1 Corinthians	1v1-17,16v5-24
02/07/2017	1 Corinthians	1
03/07/2017	1 Corinthians	2
04/07/2017	1 Corinthians	3
05/07/2017	1 Corinthians	4
06/07/2017	1 Corinthians	5
07/07/2017	1 Corinthians	6
08/07/2017	1 Corinthians	7
09/07/2017	1 Corinthians	8
10/07/2017	1 Corinthians	9
11/07/2017	1 Corinthians	10
12/07/2017	1 Corinthians	11
13/07/2017	1 Corinthians	12
14/07/2017	1 Corinthians	13
15/07/2017	1 Corinthians	14
16/07/2017	1 Corinthians	15
17/07/2017	1 Corinthians	16
18/07/2017	2 Corinthians	1v1-11, ch13
19/07/2017	2 Corinthians	1
20/07/2017	2 Corinthians	2
21/07/2017	2 Corinthians	3
22/07/2017	2 Corinthians	4
23/07/2017	2 Corinthians	5
24/07/2017	2 Corinthians	6
25/07/2017	2 Corinthians	7
26/07/2017	2 Corinthians	8
27/07/2017	2 Corinthians	9
28/07/2017	2 Corinthians	10
29/07/2017	2 Corinthians	11
30/07/2017	2 Corinthians	12
31/07/2017	2 Corinthians	13

With New Testament letters, you can often get a clue for the content of the letter by looking at the beginning and the end.

My notes on 1 Corinthians:

# My notes on 2 Corinthians



g r o w  
g r o u p

## RBT Grow Group is on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July

Bring along some things from your reading of  
1&2 Corinthians to share with others.

### Some RBT reading ideas:

Why not meet up once a week to read it with a friend?

Why not listen online at [Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com)?

Why not write down a verse that struck you that day?