

Correction and Charisma in Corinth

Chapter 1

Audio Lesson: New Testament #44



Objective: To introduce and give an overview of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and understand its major themes.



You do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. I appeal to you, brothers, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

—1 Corinthians 1:7-10

The first letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians is typical of the pastoral letters Paul wrote to the churches he founded during his ministry. Like most of his inspired letters, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written to a church he knew very well, in order to correct problems and to instruct and encourage believers in their faith and ours.

The first eleven chapters of 1 Corinthians address the specific problems Paul understood to be festering within the church. These were inhibiting their spiritual growth and their witness, individually, and as a church in the city of Corinth. The last four chapters are the constructive section of this letter that offers solutions to the church's problems. By examining these problems and the solutions Paul prescribed, we can gain insight into how to address those same problems when they show up in our churches today.



1. True or false? When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he was writing to a church he had never visited.
2. True or false? The Corinthian church was one of the few churches in the New Testament that had almost no problems in it.
3. True or false? Paul's first letter to the Corinthians has a lot of pastoral concern and advice in it.
4. True or false? The kinds of problems we have in churches today are often not much different from the kinds of problems in the Corinthian church.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What kind of community was the Corinthian church?
 - a. A small group of nonbelievers who were investigating the gospel
 - b. Believers who met regularly in a household
 - c. A large congregation in a large building
 - d. A local organization with a strong hierarchy of leadership
6. How did Paul know about the issues in the Corinthian church?
 - a. He always listened to as much gossip as people would tell him.
 - b. The Holy Spirit showed him in a vision.
 - c. People from the Corinthian church shared their concerns with him.
 - d. He saw firsthand because he lived in Corinth.
7. What does it mean to be "sanctified"—the word Paul used to address the Corinthians?
 - a. To be sinless and perfect
 - b. To be more spiritual than average people
 - c. To be set apart for God's special use
 - d. To have gone through all the rituals of conversion
8. What problems did the Corinthians have? (choose all that apply)
 - a. They were divided into factions.
 - b. They had too many pastors.
 - c. They were very poor.
 - d. Some of them were openly immoral.
 - e. They were too harsh in dealing with sin.
 - f. They had legal disputes with each other.
 - g. They abused the Lord's Supper.
 - h. They were too modest to claim that they had any spiritual gifts.
 - i. They were proud of spiritual gifts and mishandled them.

9. What attitude did Paul say was more important than all others in exercising spiritual gifts?
- a. Zeal
 - b. Love
 - c. Discipline
 - d. Ambition

10. According to Paul, what power can solve problems in the church?
- a. The power of Jesus' resurrection, which enables us to live in a new way
 - b. The power of positive thinking
 - c. The power of the law God gave us in the Old Testament
 - d. The power of society's legal systems



Which of the Corinthians' spiritual problems can you relate to? How does our relationship with Jesus and His resurrection power help us overcome those problems?



Thank God that His Spirit has given us powerful and practical answers to the deepest needs of our hearts. Ask Him to fill you with His love and resurrection power as you trust Him and seek to follow Him daily. Pray that He would bless your study of His Word as you learn more about 1 and 2 Corinthians.



Going Deeper

1. Explain and apply the way Paul's inspired specific solutions for these problems in the Corinthian church gave us inspired masterpieces to use as a Pastoral Manual, as we address these problems in our churches today. _____

2. In addition to these specific solutions for individual problems, explain and apply the way love, as profiled in chapter 13, is a general solution for all of these problems. _____

3. Define and apply what Paul meant when he classified all of these problems as the carnal things in the Corinthian church, in chapter 12, he announces that he is then going to discuss with them the spiritual things in their church. _____

4. Explain and apply the spiritual things he addresses in this letter that are all part of the inspired general solutions that he prescribes for this church in this inspired pastoral corrective letter. _____

5. Explain and apply how resurrection power is part of the general solution to all of these specific problems. _____

6. After lifting us to the height of inspired eloquence in his discussion of resurrection in chapter 15, is he changing the subject abruptly or is he introducing another spiritual thing when he writes, "Now concerning the collection," in the first verse of chapter 16? Explain. _____

7. Explain and apply the bottom-line dynamic solution to the problem of the weaker brother and the issue of eating meat that had been offered in sacrifice to a pagan idol discussed in chapters 8-11. _____
