

She told Jane that her mother had chided her for wearing a pink tissue tee to church. Some mothers thought that it was too tight and revealing, especially for a deacon's daughter. "I hate it! I wish they could just bite the dust!" cried Jennifer.

Question- Is there anything wrong with Jennifer's attitude or actions? If you were Jane, what would you say to Jennifer based on Romans 12:17-18, 14:13, and 14:21? (Jennifer is not aware that her choice of clothing may cause others to stumble. She has a very spiteful attitude as well. We could encourage her with:

1. Rom 12:17-18. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
2. Rom 14:13. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling blocks or obstacles in your brother's way.
3. Rom 14:21. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.)

REFLECTION & PRAYER



*Dear Lord Jesus,
Thank you for your sacrifice. Because you died on the cross in our place, we are able to be called righteous and escape condemnation for our sins. Indeed, Your grace is wonderful and marvelous. As we continue our journey of life, please strengthen our faith so we may trust in You as Abraham did. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and help us overcome the temptations of youth. Help us be holy and pure as living sacrifices so that we may show Your love to all those around us and attract them to the gospel of salvation. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.*

Lesson 2

1 Corinthians

Listed Scriptures

1 Corinthians

Lesson Aim

- 1) To encourage students to glorify God by living a life of purity.
- 2) To teach students the importance of having unity in the church.
- 3) To teach students to rely on spiritual wisdom and love when resolving conflicts in church.

Memory Verse

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor 6:19-20)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

1 Cor 1-16

BIBLE BACKGROUND



The city of Corinth was nearly destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC and rebuilt in 44 BC as a colony to house Rome's freed slaves and displaced peasants. Due to its strategic location in southern Greece, the city of Corinth quickly became a hub for commerce and one of the most prosperous cities in the Roman Empire. Although Corinth was known for its pursuit of knowledge and philosophy, it was also infamous for its sexual immorality. Its loose moral standards were greatly influenced by the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and the practice of religious prostitution.

Corinth was the first major urban area (besides Antioch) in which Paul preached to. Along with coworkers such as Timothy, Silas, Priscilla, Aquila, and Phoebe, Paul

organized and taught in various house-assemblies for eighteen months. The house-assemblies of Corinthians would periodically meet together as a complete congregation to partake of the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). After Paul moved across the Aegean Sea to work in Ephesus, Apollos also pastured the Corinthian church. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, circa 57 AD (Eph 16:8), is his response to a letter of questions from the Corinthians and news of conflict within the church. It was penned in Ephesus and hand-delivered by Timothy.

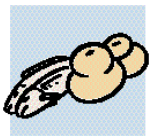
W A R M U P



What do we do when we encounter spiritual or biblical questions in our daily life? Although our friends can give us some answers, we usually like to ask a parent, a trusted R.E. teacher or a minister who has more spiritual wisdom and discernment. However, what do we do when they are not around? We could call or send them an e-mail.

The Corinthian church also encountered questions regarding spiritual gifts and resurrection. Being a fledgling church, they felt the best way to get answers was to write a letter to their preacher. In return, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to answer their questions. He also used the opportunity to give them additional instructions based on news he heard from Chloe's household (1:11). Through the letter, we can learn about some issues we may encounter today and how to deal with them in a godly way.

B I B L E S T U D Y



The Book of 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians begins with Paul's usual address, greeting, and thanksgiving. The body of the letter then addresses a series of key issues concerning the Corinthian believers.

The issues include:

- a. Church division (Ch 1-4)
- b. Moral issues (Ch 5-6)
- c. Marriage (Ch 7)

- d. Food (Ch 8-10)
- e. Disorderliness in church (Ch 11)
- f. Spiritual gifts (Ch 12-14)
- g. Resurrection (Ch 15)



A. Church Division (Ch 1-4)

Although the Corinthian church was richly blessed with spiritual gifts (1:7), it was full of division and strife because the believers:

A. Mistook spiritual wisdom as worldly wisdom (Ch 1-2)

The predominant Greek culture at that time involved the pursuit of knowledge and intense engagement in philosophic discussions (Acts 17:21). Some believers also viewed the gospel as worldly wisdom to pursue, boast about, and debate over. Here, Paul reminds them that "Our faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (2:5). Only those who pursue spiritual wisdom can understand the mysteries and grace of God.

B. Followed the wrong leader (Ch 3)

The Corinthians misunderstood the role of human messengers such as Paul, Apollos and Peter. They aligned themselves to the workers and argued among themselves as to which "leader" was the best. As fellow workers of God, there should be nothing to argue or boast about. Whether planting or watering, it is God who makes things grow. Our Lord Jesus Christ is our one leader. We are merely working with Him toward the same goal (3:7).

C. Were wise in their own eyes (Ch 4)

Some believers were wise in their own eyes and boasted of their spiritual talents and gifts (4:7-8). The Corinthians' spiritual wealth even caused them to be proud and despise others. To warn them of the severity of this mistake, Paul uses many comparisons to show how true stewards of God do not pursue worldly honor or glory. They labor, work, bless, and endure for Christ's sake but are seen as "fools and spectacles" (v. 10). Thus, we should imitate God's workers and treat them with respect.



B. Moral Issues (Ch 5-6)

A. Sexual Immorality-Incest (Ch 5-6)

- a. Purging for purity

The church is a sacred organization that cannot tolerate the filth of sexual immorality, covetousness, idolatry, reviling, drunkenness, and extortion (5:10). When told that a Corinthian believer was having incestuous relations with his stepmother, Paul used the analogy of yeast. To prevent the church from being defiled and puffed up, the members were told to “purge out the old leaven” and “deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh” (5:5).

b. Glorifying God with our bodies (6:12f)

Some Corinthians thought of their bodies only in biological terms—that sex was made for the body and the body made for sex. The Hedonists of that day even believed that to get rid of fleshly desires, one should try anything to satisfy them. To correct this distorted view, Paul taught that bodily actions also affect one’s spiritual life. After a spiritual union with God, our bodies become a temple of the Holy Spirit. It no longer belongs to us, because we were bought at a price. Therefore, we must glorify God in both our bodies and our spirit (6:19, 20).

Teacher’s Note: “A right thing at the wrong place and the wrong time is the wrong thing.” Sex is a good thing created by God for the enjoyment of man and wife within the boundaries of marriage. Nonetheless, when a good thing is taken out of context and used “illegally,” it becomes immoral and wrong. The term “sexual immorality” (5:1) is from the Greek word *porneia*. *Porneia* is a general word for unlawful sexual behavior ranging from pre-marital sex to adultery. It is the Greek root from which we derive the English word pornography. The best way to escape from such unrighteousness is to “flee sexual immorality” (6:18).

B. Lawsuits within church (6:1-8)

a. Settle disputes within church

The Corinthians could not forgive one another and dragged their church brethren to court to be judged before non-believers. Such actions not only hurt the church but also brought shame to the name of God. Paul suggests in 6:1-6 that Christians should not sue their brothers but turn to the church to settle small matters.

b. Forgiveness is the key

As believers in Christ, we must treat each other with love and forgiveness. Disunity and strife can be avoided if everyone is willing to forgive one another when they are wronged (6:7). If God is able to wash away and forgive condemned sinners—the fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, the covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortionists (6:9-10)—and sanctify

them through baptism, then how much more should we forgive a brother’s offense?

Teacher’s Note: Exercising “complaint cautiousness.” Today, we also ought to be cautious about complaining to our non-believing church friends about our church matters. After all, who would want to join a group that is constantly fighting and bickering? Instead, we should try to reconcile with one another and attract people to church with our love.

 **C. Marriage (Ch 7)**

A. Husbands and wives (7:1-5)

While sexual immorality dominated the cultural landscape, there were some believers who considered sexual intimacy to be detestable, even in marriage. Paul responds by teaching that marriage is a sacred institution established by God. It is pleasing to God and a blessing for a man and woman to be united within the Lord. Each partner within the marriage should treat the other with respect. After marriage, one should not withhold oneself from the other unless for prayer for a short time.

B. Singleness (7:6-9)

Single men and women can concentrate on serving the Lord when those who are married are preoccupied with familial responsibilities. However, Paul does not demand others to follow his example of lifelong single-hood and emphasizes that the gift of celibacy must be given by God (cf. Mt 19:10-11).

C. Divorce (7:10-24)

If one has a non-believing spouse, a believer cannot leave him or her. Instead, the believer should use love to lead the spouse to the Lord. A believer can only divorce his or her spouse when the other party commits adultery. Yet, it is better to stay together for the sake of the children. If divorce occurs, the woman cannot marry until her ex-husband is deceased.

D. Remarriage (7:25-40)

Paul felt it was lawful for widows to remarry as long as they marry in the Lord. Still, it is a greater blessing to remain a widow.

Teacher’s Note: Preparing for Marriage: J2 students can begin preparing for a godly marriage by storing up biblical concepts/truths on marriage, keeping themselves sexually pure for their future spouse, and devoting their precious time of single hood to the work of God.



D. Food Sacrificed to Idols (Ch 8–10)

A. Having no part with demons

Idol-worship was rampant in the city of Corinth, and animals were offered as sacrifices in pagan temples. The unused portions of meat were either sold in the markets or served as food in public feasts or in restaurants adjacent to the temples. Some Corinthian believers who boasted to have knowledge (8:1) thought that it was harmless to consume meat that had been offered to idols because 1) they didn't believe in idols and 2) Paul had agreed that the idols were not real gods (8:4). However, if eating food sacrificed to idols causes us to fellowship with demons (8:20), we should avoid it at all costs.

B. Being considerate to weaker members

The early church had already instructed believers to refrain from things offered to idols (Acts 15:29). If weaker members saw stronger believers eating at pagan temples, the former could be wounded in their conscience. Therefore, Paul asks the Corinthians to exercise loving restraint in their pursuit of rights and freedoms.



E. Disorderliness in Church (Ch 11)

A. Head covering (11:1-16)

A woman's propriety in the time 1 Corinthians was written, it was a Greek custom for respectable women to cover their heads (the adulteress was marked by shaving of her hair). Therefore, Paul encouraged women to keep long hair as their glory. While it is not necessary to literally keep long hair today, sisters should still observe the same spirit of propriety, humility and obedience in the church and home.

B. The Lord's Supper—sharing & reverence (11:17-34)

a. Sharing during meals


In the early church, Christians would gather for fellowship meals that concluded with the Holy Communion. A problem at Corinth was the unequal distribution of food during communal meals. Some ate lavishly while others went hungry (v. 22). No one waited for others, either (v. 21). Paul was not pleased with such conduct and reminded them that the purpose of the fellowship meal was to promote brotherly love.

b. Irreverence during Holy Communion

The Holy Communion was also taken in an irreverent, chaotic manner.

Therefore, Paul warned the believers to consider one another during fellowship meals and reverently partake of the body and blood of Christ, lest they eat and drink their own sin.

Teacher's Note: More than a fashion statement back in apostolic times, women would keep their hair long and cover it as a sign of propriety. Even if a woman did edifying acts such as praying and prophesying (speaking sermons), an uncovered head would bring shame upon her (11:6). This teaches us the importance of being properly adorned when we worship in the house of God. Although inner reverence is the most important, we should also take care of our outer appearance. We don't want our hair/clothes/accessories to scream for attention and cause second glances. Instead, we should take care that our dress is neat, clean, and proper so that we can bring glory to God from the inside out.



F. Spiritual Gifts (Ch 12–14)

A. Many gifts for one body (Ch 12)

The church in Corinth was blessed with many spiritual gifts (such as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophesying, discerning spirits and tongues v. 14-16). Unfortunately, some members tried to compare and outdo one another in their gifts. Paul corrects this by using the analogy of a body. In a body, there is no greater or smaller body parts, because the body depends on each one to function. Likewise, there is no greater or smaller spiritual gift. We need to utilize the gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit to work together so the body of Christ may prosper and be glorified.

B. The greatest gift of love (Ch 13)

The Corinthian church was richly gifted, but the lack of love drove the believers to divisions and factions. Here, Paul reminds them that love is the greatest gift. It is greater than any knowledge, faith, or deed. It is self-sacrificing and perfect. It can overcome the jealousy, pride, and boasting caused by unequal allocations of talent. Only through love can all our spiritual gifts, deeds, and church responsibilities have value.

C. Edification by spiritual gifts (Ch 14)

- a. Paul mentions two types of tongues: speaking in tongues (14:2), which is evidence of the Holy Spirit, and prophesying in tongues (14:3), which is the gift of sermon delivery in tongues.
- b. Many believers in the Corinthian church were blessed with the gift of prophesying in tongues. Some believers were able to preach in tongues and did this without restraint or interpretation. This caused chaos during service.

- c. We should worship God with a quiet heart. Whether singing hymns or testifying, everything should be done in an orderly way and for mutual edification.

G. Resurrection (Ch 15)

In the Corinthian church, there were many heresies and cultural beliefs that challenged the truth of Christ's resurrection.

Paul's defense:

- Jesus Christ's resurrection was a proven, witnessed event.
- Christ's death and resurrection is the foundation of our faith, the central teaching of the gospel and the basis of our salvation.
- If we deny the reality of Christ's resurrection, our faith will become an empty shell.

After addressing the seven key categories, Paul offers his final encouragement and instructions. He urges the Corinthian believers to bond in fellowship, love each other, and care for the workers of God. In conclusion, he encourages them to "watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong" (16:13) and do everything in love.

Teacher's Note: Resurrection: It is important for us to understand that Jesus was the first human being ever to be resurrected from the dead. Lazarus and other Old Testament people were raised from the dead, but none had been resurrected. In Christ's resurrection, Jesus did not come back to the same life the same way as He left. Rather, his body was transformed into a spiritual body no longer belonging to this world. When the Bible uses the term "resurrection," it always refers to the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection awaiting us when Christ comes again.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



- 1 What two things prompted Paul to write his first letter to the Corinthian church?
- 2 What are the seven issues that Paul covers in this letter?
- 3 Why was the Corinthian Church divided?

- 4 What were the two big moral issues within the Corinthian church? What did Paul recommend doing about them?
- 5 According to 1 Corinthians 5-7 when is sexual intimacy a good thing? When is it a bad thing?
- 6 If idols are false gods, why can't we eat food sacrificed to idols?
- 7 What kind of disorderliness occurred during services at Corinth? What were the root causes of such disorder?
- 8 According to 1 Corinthians 12, why do people receive different spiritual gifts?
- 9 Why is it important that we believe in the resurrection of Christ?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Part A: Corinthian Issues in Today's Times

The following scenarios each describe a major issue that the Corinthian church faced.

- Read the scenarios and the corresponding issues in the Corinthian church.
- Briefly summarize what happened in the Corinthian church and Paul's advice.
- Give your modern day solution to the problem based on 1 Corinthians' teachings.

Scenario 1

"I love spaghetti!" exclaimed Jerry. Both he and Mark knew it was the fourth week at church and spaghetti was always served. They made sure they were at the front of the lunch line. When it was their turn, they each piled up a full plate of noodles and an extra plate of meatballs. Happily, they went to the classroom to eat. Twenty minutes later, Larissa came in with a small plate of noodles and sauce. "Are you dieting?" mocked Jerry. "No," Larissa replied. "There wasn't much left by the time I got to the food."

Corresponding issue in the Corinthian Church—Disorderliness (Ch 11)
During the Lord's Supper, the members didn't have any concern for one another.

No one waited for others. Some ate in abundance while others went hungry. Paul advised the church to consider one another and show brotherly love during meals.

Scenario 2

Danny had always been a believer in TJC and knew in his heart that God had created the world. However, as he learned about human physiology in biology class, he began wondering whether or not a person who had been dead for thousands of years could really regain his flesh and bones and be transformed into a spiritual body.

Corresponding issue in the Corinthian Church—Resurrection (Ch 15–16)

Because of popular Greek culture and heresies, some Corinthian believers had a hard time believing the resurrection of Christ. Paul reaffirms the validity, importance, and hope of Christ's resurrection and second coming.

Scenario 3

Shannon and Karen were good friends both at church and at school. Together, they were also friends with Trisha. Trisha was not a believer but had been invited to church on numerous occasions. One day, Shannon and Karen got into an argument. Wanting to vent, Shannon called up Trisha and began talking about Karen's stubborn personality. Soon, both of them were listing Karen's faults and gossiping about her character.

Corresponding issue in the Corinthian Church—Moral issues (Ch 5–6)

The Corinthians couldn't forgive one another. They sued each other and brought their disputes to be judged by a third party after church. Doing so not only hurts our brethren but also brings shame upon God and the house of God. It can also hinder our preaching of the gospel.

Scenario 4

It was the first week of November and Debby went to her friend Grace's house to finish up their group project. As they were working, Grace suddenly pulled out a giant bag of candy. "Want some?" she offered. "I went trick-or-treating with my little brother this year."

Corresponding issue in the Corinthian Church—Food sacrificed to idols (Ch 8–10)

Some Corinthians believed that food sacrificed to idols was harmless as long as they didn't believe in idols. However, Paul tells us that we should refrain from such food so we don't cause others to fall and don't have fellowship with demons.

Scenario 5

Pastor Terrance was one of David's favorite pastors. His sermons were touching and full of biblical insight. After spending a whole week with the pastor at a youth retreat, David decided to begin a private collection of Pastor T's sermons. Excitedly, David shared his idea with his buddy Sean. However, Sean didn't share the enthusiasm. "Are you kidding?" he replied. "I think he's boring. You should listen to more of Pastor Leonard's sermons. He's much better in my opinion."

Corresponding issue in the Corinthian Church—Church division (Ch 1–4)

A big problem in the Corinthian church was division over human leaders. The believers misunderstood the roles of God's workers and aligned themselves with their favorite pastors. Paul reminds the believers that all ministers are only workers working for the same God. Every member should appreciate various gifts from different workers.

Scenario 6

Things began changing in Megan's junior year, when all of her friends suddenly began dating. They had less time for her and were constantly on the phone. As they gushed about how great it was to "be in love," Megan began to lose her determination to serve God. Instead, more and more, she felt the desire to also have a special someone in her life.

Corresponding issue in the Corinthian Church—Marriage (Ch 7)

Sexual immorality was a problem in the Corinthian church. Thus, Paul writes to teach them not only about sexual immorality but also about marriage and singleness. Paul urges those who are single to serve God in their youth, before they are burdened by familial responsibilities. They can also serve God more effectively.

Scenario 7

It was the third week in a row that Kevin had to play piano on both Friday and Saturday. "Why can't anyone step up to the plate and do something around here?" he thought. "Why is it always me? Other people my age just get to sit around."

Corresponding issue in the Corinthian Church—Spiritual Gifts (Ch 12–14)

Members in the Corinthian church were blessed with all kinds of spiritual gifts. Yet, they became proud and compared their gifts. Paul teaches that the church is a body with many parts. All parts have different gifts and functions so we may collectively serve and glorify God.

Questions to think about:

Modern day solutions to the problems (based on 1 Corinthian teachings):

1. What advice would you give Jerry and Mark?
2. What advice would you give Danny?
3. What advice would you give Shannon?
4. What advice would you give Debby?
5. What advice would you give David and Sean?
6. What advice would you give Megan?
7. What advice would you give Kevin?

Part B: What is True Love?

Throughout human history, people have tried to define love. Countless poets, authors, musicians, and philosophers have attempted to express their thoughts about love in all types of media. Love has been compared to a mountain, an ocean, a sigh, an act of selfless sacrifice, etc. What exactly is God’s definition of love, though? Paul tells us the answer in 1 Corinthians 13. In this activity, let us ponder God’s definition of true love and think about how we can also share this love with those in our lives (see table to the right).

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



It's easy to imagine how exasperating it must have been for Paul to deal with all of the Corinthian church's complicated problems and questions. In many ways, the Corinthian church was like a teenager—young, extremely gifted, hotheaded, confused at times, and constantly tempted by a sexually immoral environment. To help the church, Paul very systematically, sternly, patiently, and lovingly answered their questions and pointed them to the right way. The result was a millennia—old real-life survival guide that still pertains to our lives today. As J2 teachers, let us learn from Paul's parenting techniques toward the Corinthians. Let us be genuinely concerned about our students' spiritual lives, offer them biblical answers to their real-life questions, and build up a relationship based on the greatest gift of God's love.

According to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8...	...how has God loved me?	...how can I love my family?	...how can I love my friends?	...how can I love my church?	...how can I love my enemies?	...how can I love my future spouse/family?
Love is patient, love is kind.						
It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.						
It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.						
Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.						
It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.						
Love never fails.						