



# GROWING A SPIRIT FILLED COMMUNITY

*A Survey in  
1 Corinthians*



**EVER BEEN  
SURPRISED BY  
WHAT  
SOMEONE  
SAID TO YOU?**



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## 1 Cor 1:2

*“I am writing to God’s church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours”*

*“Called to be saints” (NKJV)*



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- Written to a church community Paul knew really well. (background in Acts 18)
- Corinth was a major port city in the ancient world and had lots of temples to Greek and Roman gods.
- It was a big economic centre and so strategic (AD 51–52).
- New York/Los Angeles/Las Vegas of the ancient world with London & Brighton in the mix!!



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# UNDERSTANDING & INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

*“Whether one likes it or not, every reader is at the same time an interpreter...we bring to the text all that we are, with all of our experiences, culture, and prior understandings of words and ideas. Sometimes what we bring to the text causes us to read all kinds of foreign ideas into the text.”*

— Gordon D. Fee, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth



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# UNDERSTANDING & INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

*Golden rule for Bible interpretation:*

*A TEXT CAN'T MEAN WHAT IT  
NEVER MEANT FOR ITS ORIGINAL  
READERS/HEARERS.*



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- Mormons' baptizing for the dead on the basis of 1 Corinthians 15:29
- Jehovah's Witnesses' rejection of the deity of Christ from John 1:1
- Snake handlers' use of Mark 16:18

**ALL SUBJECTIVE - ALL STARTED WITH THE HERE AND NOW  
AND THEN READ INTO THE TEXTS MEANINGS THAT WERE  
NOT ORIGINALLY THERE!**



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# WHAT WAS THE ROOT OF THESE PROBLEMS?

It seems that some of Paul's teaching had been misunderstood.

- **INDULGENCE/HEDONISM** — they could do what they liked with their bodies, only a "container" for the soul  
1 Cor 6:12-15,19-20
- **ASCETICISM/STRICT SELF-DENIAL** — Often a backlash promoting celibacy, disbelief in bodily resurrection. Eastern religions today such as Hinduism and Buddhism promote the idea that release from the body is the ultimate good. 1 Cor 7:3-6



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- **INDULGENCE/HEDONISM** - 1 Cor 6:12-15,19-20
- **ASCETICISM/STRICT SELF-DENIAL** - 1 Cor 7:3-6
- **EVERYTHING OF THE KINGDOM NOW!!** - 1 Cor 4:8-9

The theological term for this is 'over-realised eschatology'.  
(Phil 3:12-14 *not already achieved perfection*)



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# OVERVIEW OF 1 Corinthians

## CHAPTERS 1-4

The problem is that there are  
**DIVISIONS** in the church.

1 Cor 3:4-8



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# OVERVIEW OF 1 Corinthians

## CHAPTERS 5-7

Paul addresses some problems  
**RELATED TO SEXUALITY**

1 Cor 5:1-2



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- Paul also reminds them that just as Jesus was physically raised from the dead, so our bodies will be raised from the dead.
- If your body is being redeemed by Jesus now and in the future, then what you do with your body matters.
- It matters a lot - it's not yours to do whatever you want with.



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# OVERVIEW OF 1 Corinthians

## IN CHAPTERS 8-10

The issues are about items of  
**CULTURE and FREEDOM**

1 Cor 10:23-24



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- You're free as a new human in Christ to follow your conscience in these kind of debatable matters.
- So what makes it ok in one situation to eat but not in the other?
- The core principle is LOVE.  
Love will deny itself and look out for the well-being of other people when expressing freedom.



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# OVERVIEW OF 1 Corinthians

## IN CHAPTERS 11-14

Paul addresses problems in their  
weekly **WORSHIP GATHERING.**

1 Cor 14:12



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- There were some people who were having really powerful spiritual experiences but not aware of others present.
- Others might start sharing a teaching or a word from God and then someone would get up and interrupt them because they wanted to share.
- CHAOTIC and DISTRACTING - especially visitors detracted from hearing the Good News about Jesus.



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- LOVE is the key word – it compels each person in the gathering to use their role to serve and seek the well-being of others.
- Some people think the purpose of the gathering is to have intense spiritual experiences or get a chance to speak their mind.

**THE GATHERING AROUND JESUS SHOULD BE ORDERLY SO EVERYBODY CAN LEARN AND SING AND WORSHIP AND HEAR GOD SPEAKING TO THEM.**



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# OVERVIEW OF 1 Corinthians

## IN CHAPTER 15

Paul addresses problems in their  
**UNDERSTANDING OF THE RESURRECTION**

1 Cor 15:12-14



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# Paul is very clear and brings a strong reaction to this:

- The **BODILY RESURRECTION** of Jesus is essential to the message.

*(We believe in it because of the hundreds of eye witnesses that saw Jesus alive in a physical body after being publicly executed by the Romans.)*

- If no resurrection Jesus death was meaningless, we are still lost, we should just stop being followers of Jesus.
- The resurrection was Jesus' victory over death and evil, a source of life and *power for the present* and a *promise of future hope*



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- The gospel message is NOT just moral advice or a recipe for private spirituality.
- It's an announcement about Jesus that opens up a whole new reality, a whole new humanity, a whole new identity, a whole new community.



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# CONCLUSION:

**WHERE DOES THIS MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL TRUTH  
NEED TO IMPACT**

- *our thinking,*
- *our responses and*
- *our daily living this week?*



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