



EPISODE 4: I CORINTHIANS FEBRUARY 7/8

I. CONTEXT (FROM THE ESV STUDY BIBLE)

| <u>Book</u> | <u>Author</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Recipients</u> | <u>Place of Writing</u> |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Corinthians | Paul | 53–55 | Church in Corinth | Ephesus |

II. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

- a. The Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to help the first generation of Christians figure out how to live as followers of Jesus Christ in a culture that believed such devotion was “foolishness.” He wrote to address various issues and conflicts within the Corinthian church. Paul felt compelled to write a substantial letter to Corinth, making the case that much of their conduct was out of step with the gospel.¹ His purpose was to provide guidance on matters such as moral conduct, unity, and doctrinal concerns, aiming to strengthen the Christian community in Corinth and foster a more faithful and harmonious congregation.

III. WHAT IS PERSONAL?

- a. **Division from Rivalry (I Corinthians 1:10-13)**
 - i. ¹⁰ *I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. ¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹² What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” ¹³ Is Christ divided?*
- b. **Paul Rights and Authority (I Corinthians 9)**
 - i. ⁸ *Do I say these things on human authority?* (1 Co. 9:8-23)

IV. WHAT IS POWERFUL (DOCTRINE)?

- a. **THE GOSPEL: I COR 15:1-8** ³ *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that*

¹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 2188). Crossway Bibles.

he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

I CORINTHIANS

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| Since the church is the dwelling place of God's Spirit, the people who make up the church should work for unity by building each other up. | 1:10–4:21 (esp. 3:10–16; 14:12) |
| Christians should build up the church in four practical ways: | |
| a. they should be sensitive to those of fragile faith. | 8:1–9:18; 10:28, 33 |
| b. they should win unbelievers through culturally sensitive evangelism. | 9:19–23; 10:27, 32–33 |
| c. they should conduct worship services in such a way that unbelievers present might come to faith. | 14:16, 23–25 |
| d. their corporate worship should use spiritual gifts not for personal display, or evaluating who has a better gift, but to build up the church. | 11:2–16; 12:12–30; 14:1–35 |
| Sexual relations form a union between man and woman as profound as the union of the believer with Christ, and so sexual activity should be confined to marriage. | 5:1–13; 6:12–20; 7:5, 9, 36 |
| Baptism and the Lord's Supper are important, but both are subordinate to personal trust in the gospel and to living in the way that God commands. | 1:14–17; 10:1–5; 11:17–34; 15:29–34 |
| The bodily resurrection of Jesus (and of his followers) from the dead is a critical component of Christian faith and practice. | 6:14; 15:1–58 |

V. WHAT IS PROBLEMATIC (CONTROVERSIAL)?

a. MARRIAGE (I COR 7:25-27)

- i. ²⁵ Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. ²⁶ I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. ²⁷ Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

b. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR (I CORINTHIANS 6:16-20)

- i. ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

c. SPIRITUAL GIFTS (PROPHECY AND TONGUES): I COR 14:6-9)

- i. ⁶ Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? ⁷ If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? ⁸ And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? ⁹ So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air.

d. HEAD COVERINGS (I COR 11)

e. DECORUM IN WORSHIP (I COR 14:26-33)

²⁶ What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. ²⁷ If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. ²⁸ But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰ If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, ³² and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

f. WOMEN IN CHURCH (14:33-40)

As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴ the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. ³⁵ If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. ³⁶ Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? ³⁷ If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. ³⁸ If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. ³⁹ So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But all things should be done decently and in order.

G. FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS—ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD

- i. Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. ² If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. ³ But if anyone loves God, he is known by God. ... ⁸ Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹ But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? ¹¹ And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. ¹² Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. (I Corinthians 8:1-13)

- ii. ³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³ just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. (I Co. 10:31-33)

VI. WHAT IS POETIC (THE RHETORICIAN-- JUST BEAUTIFUL)?

a. I Corinthians 13 (Love Chapter)

b. I Corinthians 15:51-58 (Mystery and Victory)

⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

VII. WHAT IS PRACTICAL?

a. Travel Plans and Issues—I Cor. 16:5-11

VIII. WHAT IS PRAYERFUL (THE PART HE PRAYS TO GOD)?

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. ¹ (I Co 1:4-9).

(This is interesting that at the beginning of a "chastising" letter, Paul is confirming and encouraging the Corinthians. In spite of all their problems, he is saying "God still loves you." Even though they have failed in so many ways, Christ will preserve them.)

IX. PASTORAL SUMMARY

a. UNITY (I COR 12:14-18)

- i. ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

b. THE LORD’S SUPPER—COMMUNION (I COR 11:23-27)

- i. ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance

of me.”²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

- c.** ¹³ *Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.* ¹⁴ *Let all that you do be done in love. (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)*