



LIVING FOR
GOD'S GLORY

1 CORINTHIANS

*growing
disciples*
sacrifice. serve. speak

L I V I N G F O R G O D ' S G L O R Y

The Corinthians are part of the fulfillment of God's plan to be worshipped among all the Gentiles and he wants them to help fulfil this worldwide eschatological vision by glorifying God.

OPENING

1v1-9

"To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours"

FLEE IMMORALITY

4v18-7v40

"You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies."

Freedom in the gospel does not mean freedom to pursue immorality, or any kind of evil. In the church, God's people should pursue the life they've been saved for.

TRUE WISDOM

1v10-4v17

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

The wisdom of the Cross and Spirit shape how people in the church think about themselves, each other and their leaders. Unity is not the goal. The Glory of God displayed in the church is what matters.

The wisdom of the Cross and the Spirit are the basis for fleeing immorality and idolatry so that we might live for the glory of God.

FLEE IDOLATRY

8v1-14v40

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved."

Freedom in the gospel does not mean pursuing our own rights, privileges or honours. In the church, God's people should pursue love and the good of others.

THE RESURRECTION

15v1-58

"Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain."

"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love."

16v1-24

CLOSE

As God's Holy Temple, His people must act in a manner appropriate to their status, by becoming unified, shunning pagan vices and glorifying God as they reflect the lordship of Jesus Christ.

LIVING FOR GOD'S GLORY

After Jesus' resurrection, churches began popping up all over the Roman world as the news about him spread. Many of them were formed as the apostle Paul traveled from city to city. After he moved on, Paul wrote letters to these Christians to teach, correct and encourage them. And some of these letters are preserved in our Bibles. 2000 years later, we can listen in on this conversation — but we only hear one side. We need to dig into Corinthian culture and church issues (ie reconstruct the other side of the conversation) before we think about what it means for us. So each week, our studies will have a 'Corinthian Culture Spot' to help us .

PAUL'S LETTER

Paul visited Corinth for 18 months where he was persecuted by many Jews and so, took the message to Gentiles or non-Jews (see Acts 18v1-18). Paul wrote several letters to this church and we have two of them in our Bibles. 1 Corinthians was his second letter to (5v9), which is in response to a letter they wrote him (7v1), as well as some verbal reports he's received (1v11). Paul writes to correct a number of errors in thought, attitude and action. At first glance, it may seem like a random collection of issues. But there is a bigger picture at play.

THE BIG PICTURE

Paul is concerned to see **God glorified** (1v31; 2v8; 6v20; 11v7; 14v25; 15v28, 57). The Corinthians are living in the culmination of the ages (10v11), fulfilling the Old Testament hopes of a day when all nations would worship Israel's God (eg Micah 4; Isaiah 11 & 66; Zechariah 8). The apostles have been sent to Israel and to the nations to gather all God's people to glorify God together. Paul sees that they have now entered this splendid age of salvation which has implications for every area of life, such as

- Wisdom, knowledge and boasting
- Status and hierarchy
- Gender and sexuality
- Pagan idolatry
- Relationships as God's people

THE WISDOM OF THE CROSS

Paul appeals to the wisdom of the cross. Not so much the historical event of Jesus' death, but the way of life that Paul also embodied (4v6-13). Wisdom means living 'foolishly' in struggle and disgrace like Jesus. There's a surprising **reversal from what the world values** to what is wise and powerful in God's kingdom. It means applying the wisdom of the cross to everyday life in **purity and the holiness** gifted by a Father, **empowered by his Spirit**. Having been **bought by Jesus and united to him**, Christians are united to one another as a temple. Christian relationships are characterised by **self-giving love**. And by faithfully serving the one God — **honouring him as Lord**. All of this is in view of the new age that has invaded the present. There's an urgency to choices, attitudes and ways of life, because **Jesus' resurrection heralds this new age**. What our physical bodies do now matters, because they belong to Jesus and they're destined for resurrection.

SO WHAT?

We can identify with many of the issues that the Corinthian church faced — status, envy, comparing preachers, marriage questions and wanting freedom. While others seem very distant to us — head coverings, temple prostitutes and idol-consecrated meat. The challenge for us is to see how the timeless truths of the gospel of the cross apply to us. What will it mean for us to glorify the Lord Jesus in Rockhampton and Gracemere in 2023?

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS SERIES COMPANION

ON YOUR OWN—Take your time reading through each of the passages. If you have time, work through the questions before your GROWTH GROUP so that you've started thinking about the topic before you arrive.

WITH YOUR GROWTH GROUP—Don't be afraid to stop and talk about things that grab your attention or raise questions for you.

ON SUNDAY—Make sure you bring your SERIES COMPANION along with you, so that you can keep track of any questions you have and record the way that God's Spirit is helping you to understand His Word and grow in your love for Jesus.

These series companions are designed to be used as either a print version, or interactively on a device. Use whichever method is most helpful for you.

*growing
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THE WISDOM OF GOD

1 CORINTHIANS 1-2

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

**GETTING STARTED**

In 1983, Howard Gardner (Harvard Psychologist), proposed that there are multiple types of intelligence. In which 2-3 do you think you are strongest?

By Sajaganesandip - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=45235609>

The apostle Paul visited the city of Corinth in his travels and spent 18 months there, preaching, evangelising and establishing a church (see Acts 18). He writes to them some time later.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1v1-9

1. What do we learn about who God is and what he has done/is doing for the Corinthians?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1v10-17

2. What seems to be dividing this church?

3. Why is unity important for those called into fellowship with Jesus?

CORINTHIAN CULTURE SPOT

Excerpt from: The Cross and the end of Wisdom by David Höhne, 4 March 2013

<https://moore.edu.au/resources/the-cross-and-the-end-of-wisdom/>

From an historical point of view, as far as we can tell, Corinth was an important Greek city in which the philosophy of the Sophists was extremely influential. The Sophists were a loose group of intellectuals who had been questioning anyone's claims to know the truth as far back as 500 BC. They were the original self-help gurus who sold their version of philosophy to rich families in Athens, especially their sons. For example, Protagoras (490-429 BC) famous saying was that human beliefs are their own invention relative to their own time and space. People do things out of self-preservation or expediency even in a democracy. Gorgias (483-375 BC) went even further stating not only that law and morality are merely human conventions, but also that the clever man should put himself above the law, be strong and dominate others in his search for self-gratification...

The cross was a stumbling block to the Jewish mindset that continuously sought some kind of spectacular divine intervention to substantiate the promises of God. Consider the events recorded in John 6. Just after Jesus has fed the 5000 men in the wilderness, he tells the crowd that in order to do the works of God the people must believe in the One whom God sent. Someone from the crowd responds with these extraordinary words: "What sign then are You going to do so we may see and believe You?" they asked. "What are You going to perform?" (John 6v30)...

As for the Greeks, especially if they were influenced by Sophism, the notion that someone might gain any kind of social capital or social advancement by dying a slave's death is either utter absurdity or totally offensive. Beyond this, from a Greek perspective (as we see in Acts 17 when Paul was in Athens) it is fundamentally paradoxical that the divine could somehow have taken form in the created world – let alone suffer death at the hands of corruptible creatures.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1v18-25

4. What is the message of the cross? (Try to express Paul's language and thoughts from what we've read so far in your own words)
5. When Paul preaches, how is the message of the cross perceived by non-believing Jews and Greeks? What about by those being saved?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1v26-2v5

6. What does God achieve by sending such a 'foolish' message to call such 'foolish' and 'lowly' people?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 2v6-16

7. What is the work of God's Spirit in those who love him?
8. How does this contrast with the rulers of this age and those who rely on human wisdom?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

Are you convinced that a crucified Christ is the power and wisdom of God? How does this lead you to boast only in him and rest your faith in his power?



SEEKING GOD

Do you need to win every argument or demonstrate your superior wisdom to others at church? How does the cross of Christ help you be united with others at **rockypc**?



COMMUNITY

Sometimes we find it hard to speak the message of the cross to friends and family because we're ashamed of its foolishness. At other times it's because we're worried that we won't have the most eloquent or persuasive words to answer their questions. How does this passage address our fears?

What light does this passage shed on why our loved ones think the gospel is foolish? How are you encouraged by knowing this?



MISSION

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that we are saved by the crucified Christ, who bore shame, humiliation and torture to bring us righteousness, holiness and redemption.
- Pray that we would see the wisdom and strength of the cross and boast in the Lord, resting our faith in his power.
- Confess when you've tried to be the smartest and wisest by winning arguments. Pray that we'd be united in mind and thought by Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Pray for friends and family who consider Jesus to be foolish and weak. Pray that we'd resolve to share a crucified saviour no matter how foolish and bumbling our words. Pray that God's Spirit would enable them to understand how glorious Jesus is.

FOOLS FOR CHRIST

1 CORINTHIANS 3-4

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

Name a leader you admire. A boss? Politician? Coach? Community leader? Share what you value about them.

In 1 Corinthians 1v10-12 we heard that the Corinthian church was divided over which leader to follow. Paul responded over the next two chapters by saying that he is the kind of leader that comes with the message of the cross. This message sounds foolish and weak to 1st Century ears, but God's Spirit reveals that it's really his wisdom and power to save. Paul then returns to talking about the church's division over leaders in Chapter 3.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3v1-4

1. How does Paul describe the Corinthians in their leader squabbles? (Apollos followed on from Paul in leading and preaching in Corinth — Acts 18v18-28)

Corinthian CULTURE SPOT

'After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change', Bruce Winter 2001, p36-38

Professional Competitiveness among Teachers

First century teachers competed among themselves for students. If they secured good numbers of disciples to train in their schools, they tapped a very lucrative market, for fees were exceedingly high. If their services were needed in the secular assembly, they could secure public honours for faithful service, which normally included at least a public inscription, if not a crown of gold and sometimes a statue...

Pupil's Loyalty to Their Teachers

...[Pupils] were encouraged to be extremely zealous in demonstrating their loyalty to their teacher, promoting his professional attributes as an orator and his educative prowess. At the same time they created strife by means of trenchant criticism of perceived deficiencies of other teachers... Philostratus records an extreme case of a pupil who heaped such ridicule upon another teacher that the latter's disciples ordered their slaves to thrash him, and they did so with such force that they accidentally killed him.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3v5-9

2. What are leaders' roles in growing God's people (his field)? What are God's roles?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3v10-15

3. Paul seems to switch metaphors from fields to buildings. What warning is here for leaders who build God's people? (We'll talk more about the reward later!)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3v16-17

It turns out that Paul hasn't been switching metaphors! He's been constructing his argument that God's people are like a temple-garden. Check out 1 Kings 6-7 to see the description of Solomon building the temple with gold, silver, dressed stone, wood and bronze — all decorated as an elaborate garden (like Eden). And then in 1 Kings 8v10-13, God gloriously fills the temple as he comes to dwell with his people.

4. Given this background, why do you think it's significant that the church collectively are God's temple?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3v18-23

5. What reasons does Paul give for his command to stop boasting about leaders?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4v1-5

6. Praise from God in v5 correlates with the reward in 3v14. How does the future Day of the Lord's coming affect Paul and other church leaders now?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4v8-13

7. How do the Corinthian Christians' lives contrast with the apostles'?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4v14-17

8. Why has Paul written all of this in his letter?

growing disciples

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Are we in danger of squabbling or boasting about church leaders? What do we need to remember from Paul's word to the Corinthians?



How does Paul's description of God's people change/challenge your view of church?



For those of us who are leaders, what do we need to change in view of our purpose/
task? The coming Day? The cross-shaped life of Jesus (and Paul)?

How can we all imitate Paul's way of life?



SERVE

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for building us to be his garden-temple — how precious that he dwells with us! Pray that we'd value his church in this way.
- Pray for our leaders to lead as God's servants, modeling a cross-shaped life, building carefully on the foundation of Jesus, remembering the coming Day of the Lord and seeking praise only from him.
- Pray that we'd not boast or quarrel over leaders. But instead we all would imitate Paul's way of life in Christ Jesus, and imitate leaders who may look foolish in the world's eyes, but are proclaiming the wisdom of God.

DO NOT TOLERATE

1 CORINTHIANS 5

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED



What is the message of our culture about 'judging'?

We've seen over the past two weeks that Paul is concerned that the Corinthian Christians are divided into factions over which leader they follow. He diagnoses their problem as valuing what looks wise and strong in the world's eyes and not understanding God's wisdom in Christ, a crucified, rejected Saviour. They've failed to see leaders as servants who build God's people into a temple where God dwells by his Spirit. He wants the Corinthians to imitate his cross-shaped life, knowing that the Lord will judge leaders when he comes.

But Paul then moves to a particular issue that needs judging in the present. And he is going to talk about it in terms of the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy — a book of law for the saved people of God.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4v18-5v5

1. What surprising report has Paul received? Why is he shocked? (see also Deuteronomy 22v30 & 2 Corinthians 7v10-11)

2. Where does Paul's confidence to pass judgment come from? (see 4v18-21 and 3v3-4)

3. What action should the Corinthians take? Why?

Hint: The NIV footnote on 'flesh' in verse 5 says: In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 5v6-8 & DEUTERONOMY 16v1-4

4. What do a sacrifice and bread without yeast remind Israel of?

Corinthian Culture Spot

When we read 'yeast in v6-8, we think of some dried flakes. Ciampa and Rosner suggest that a better word is 'leaven.' "Leaven" is a "little" portion of a previous week's "batch of dough" which has been allowed to ferment. When added to the next batch the leaven makes the bread rise... Each year the Israelites, in part perhaps as a health provision, had to cleanse their homes and the temple from all leaven.' The First Letter to the Corinthians (Pillar New Testament Commentary) 2010



5. How does Paul draw on the Passover imagery to motivate the Corinthians to action?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 5v9-13

6. What distinction does Paul make between those inside the church and those outside?

Paul seems to group together different kinds of sin that don't necessarily go together in our thinking. But again, he has Deuteronomy in mind. 'Expel the wicked person from among you' in v13 is referring to the seven times Moses says this in Deuteronomy. It is the right response for Israel to evil such as worshiping other gods, lying, being a gluttonous, drunk and rebellious son, promiscuity (or unfairly accusing your wife of it), and enslaving another Israelite.

READ DEUTERONOMY 22v22

7. Paul is going to address greed and sexual immorality further in the next chapter. Why do you think it's so important for the church to completely cut off someone who sins in this way?

As we've seen, Paul keeps drawing heavily on Deuteronomy to explain why the Corinthians need to act swiftly in judgment on this man. But he is not simply telling them to keep Old Testament laws. There are some similarities as well as some important differences for the people of God in the Old and New Testaments. Think these through together.

Similarities	Differences	
	Old Testament Israelites	New Testament Christians
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
	•	

growing disciples

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When are you tempted to not view sin too seriously? How has today's passage motivated you to live in sincerity and truth?



SEEKING GOD

Are you nervous about judging others within the church? What makes it hard for us?



COMMUNITY

Why is it so important not to tolerate sin amongst us?

How can we judge one another well? Have you seen good examples of this? Have you seen poor examples?



COMMUNITY

PRAYER IDEAS

- Confess when we've not taken sin seriously enough, when we've tolerated it instead of mourning it.
- Praise God for Christ, our Passover Lamb who makes us his holy people. Pray that we would live as we really are, in sincerity and truth.
- Pray that we would have wisdom and courage to judge those whose sins affect us all — so that, as a church, we might be holy and they might be brought to repentance.

NOT YOUR OWN

1 CORINTHIANS 6

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

Which rights do you think are most important in our culture? Why do we value them so much?

Last week we saw that Paul was dealing with a particular issue of sexual immorality in the Corinthian church and he was concerned that this one unrepentant sinner would taint the whole church. He implored them to judge him and expel him for everyone's good. But Paul grouped this sexual immorality with other sins such as greed and swindling. So he moves onto this issue next as another example of needing to judge matters within the church.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6v1-6

1. According to v1 & 6, what are the Corinthians doing to one another?

2. How does Paul look to the future to show their error?

(For more background info, see Deuteronomy 1v9-18 for the precedent of Moses appointing judges for the people of God; and Daniel 7v27 for the promise of God's people one day ruling in God's kingdom)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6v6-8

3. How does Paul describe those involved in the disputes in v6 & 8? How should this relationship affect their actions?

4. What will be the result for the church if their disputes and sins are aired in secular courts?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6v9-11

5. How does Paul contrast what the Corinthians *were* with who they *are*?

Verses 9-11 form a bridge with the next section. Paul moves from talking about greedy swindling back to sexual immorality which is also incongruous for God's holy people. As we discuss this topic, let's speak with gospel-hearted compassion for one another, and sensitivity to each other's stories of being sinners and being sinned against.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6v12-14

6. Paul quotes the Corinthians here (or perhaps popular wisdom) and then disagrees. Summarise the Corinthians' wrong thinking.
7. How does Paul respond to this?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6v15-17

All sexual immorality (ie any sexual activity outside heterosexual marriage) seems to be on view, but then Paul mentions prostitutes in particular.

Corinthian Culture Spot

Some people propose that Paul was talking about prostitution here as though believers were visiting temple prostitutes to gain an idol's favour. However Ciampa and Rosner say 'there is no solid evidence that sacred prostitution existed there in Paul's day.' They think it more likely that either Paul is addressing the practice of 'temple precincts host[ing] dinners after which prostitutes were on offer. In such cases the prostitution was a part of the festivity rather than having any ritual significance.' Or perhaps it was '*secular prostitution*', prostitution of an entirely non-religious nature.'

The First Letter to the Corinthians (Pillar New Testament Commentary) 2010

8. Regardless of how/why this is a practice among believers, Paul says there's something they've failed to understand. How does he apply marriage concepts from Genesis 2v24 to believers' relationship with Christ?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6v18-20

9. What further reasons does Paul give for fleeing sexual immorality (of all kinds)?

growing disciples

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How has God's word challenged/shaped your view of your rights to do what you want with your own body and its appetites?

SEEKING GOD

Spend a few minutes considering whether there are sins you need to flee.

If you feel comfortable, you can share this with the group (perhaps you will need to split into single gender groups). If you're not comfortable to share now, is this something you need to seek help and support with through a friend, a leader, a pastor or professional? You many also need to find help if today's study has raised issues for you about when you've been sinned against.



SEEKING GOD

How does the washing, sanctifying and justifying we receive in Jesus and his Spirit give you comfort and hope no matter what your sin?

How can you honour God with your body in holiness?



SEEKING GOD

What do you think it might look like at **rockypc** for us to settle disputes together or to choose to be wronged, rather than insisting on our rights?

How can viewing one another as family help?

Are there appropriate times when we need to seek outside judgment? When?



COMMUNITY

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that Jesus bought us with the price of his own body and blood. Praise him that we're united with Christ, now owned by him. Praise him that we used to live in all kinds of sinfulness, but we've been washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by his Spirit. Praise him that we can now inherit his kingdom as his holy people.
- Pray that we'd not wrong or cheat one another because we've been made family through Jesus. Ask that when we're wronged, we'd not open our family up to shame and defeat. Pray for wisdom to settle disputes together and grace to rather be cheated and wronged.
- Pray that we'd flee from sexual immorality as the Lord's holy people, his temple and his bride. Pray that we'd honour God with our bodies because we belong to him.

LIVING FOR GOD'S GLORY

1 CORINTHIANS 7

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

If you are married, share one great thing and one hard thing about being married. If you are single, share one great thing and one hard thing about being single.

Paul has been addressing reports of sexual immorality in the Corinthian church in chapters 5-6. And he ended the last chapter with a reminder that they've been bought by Jesus — they belong to him. After telling the Corinthians to flee sexual immorality, Paul moves into talking about how to honour God with their bodies, in a positive sense. He is addressing particular concerns that they've written to him about. Similarly to last week, when we're reading about and discussing sexuality, let's speak with gospel-hearted compassion for one another, and sensitivity to each other's stories of being sinners and being sinned against .

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7v1-7

Corinthian Culture Spot

Understanding What the Corinthians are asking in v1

v1 has been translated for us as though some in the Corinthian church thought it was better not to have sex/be married. Ciampa says that this is unlikely to have been their issue. He says that 'arguments in favour of complete sexual abstinence were rather rare — certainly not a dominant viewpoint in the Roman world. The running debate in the Roman world was over whether sex was to be engaged in for pleasure. Even those who agreed that it was not wrong to engage in sex for pleasure — recreational sex rather than procreational sex — usually thought of marital sex as being engaged in primarily for the purposes of procreation (establishing legal heirs). Recreational sex, sex for pleasure, was usually sought outside the marriage.'

Ciampa and Rosner propose that a better translation for the euphemism in v1 of 'touching a woman', would be 'It is good for a man not to use a woman for sexual gratification.'

So the Corinthians are really saying 'Paul, we know you want us not to seek sexual pleasure outside marriage, but surely there shouldn't be sexual pleasure inside our marriages — isn't sex just for making babies?'

Understanding the Roman power dynamic in sexuality

We live in a culture that has been shaped by a variety of ideologies over the last 60 years such as feminism and equal rights, including in the bedroom. But Roman culture was much more patriarchal. As Ciampa writes 'Slaves and wives were understood to be the property of paterfamilias — the all-powerful head of the household. Wives were not free to have sex with anyone other than their husbands. Slaves could enjoy only whatever sexual life their masters permitted (and often had to endure their master's sexual domination [both male and female slaves]). Free male heads of households were thought to have enormous sexual freedom precisely because they did not belong to anyone who had authority over their sexual behaviour.'

Ciampa, 2011 *The Wisdom of the Cross: Exploring 1 Corinthians*, Rosner ed

Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary) 2010

1. How does Paul transform the Corinthians' view of marital sex, authority and priorities?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7v8-9

2. What two good options does Paul give unmarried people and why?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7v10-11

3. How does Paul echo Jesus' command? See Mark 10v2-12 and Luke 16v18

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7v12-16

Paul makes it clear that he's now talking as an apostle (with Jesus' authority — 1v1), rather than quoting Jesus. The Corinthians seem to be concerned that an unbelieving spouse would make the believer unholy, so perhaps they should seek a divorce.

4. Does Paul agree, why/why not?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7v17-24

These verses seem to break the flow of Paul's argument. But they're actually the centre of what he wants the Corinthians to know about marriage and singleness. Paul gives the examples of circumcision and slavery which, along with marriage, were signs of high or low status in society.

5. How does the repetition in these verses help us to know what is important about marriage and singleness for God's people?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7v25-35

6. Paul gives 3 reasons why he recommends (not commands) that single people remain single. What are they?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7v36-38

7. What is Paul's instruction to an engaged man?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7v39-40

8. Who can a widow marry (if she wants)?

9. In 1 sentence, summarise Paul's message to married people.

10. In 1 sentence, summarise Paul's message to single people

growing disciples

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How has Jesus captured your heart?

Spend a few minutes writing down your thoughts to these questions: What would it look like to be devoted to Jesus, living out your calling as his possession, in light of your marital status? What steps can you take towards this goal?



SEEKING GOD

How can we help one another to hold on to the Bible's pattern of the goodness of sexual delight being expressed only in marriage?

Does **rockypc** reflect Paul's emphasis on the goodness of singleness? How can we change the way we speak and act to better care for brothers and sisters who are unmarried? If you're single, and you feel comfortable, please share what's been helpful and unhelpful to you.



COMMUNITY



COMMUNITY

In this chapter, Paul sets out the ideal for marriage and singleness, but he is also aware that we're often not living in the ideal situation. He gently and pastorally addresses a number of different scenarios for the Corinthians, to show that they can still honour Jesus, even when things aren't ideal. Maybe this is your situation too and it's been hard to read God's word today. How can we love one another at **rockypc** — those of us who are struggling in their marriages? Have been through divorce? Are struggling with their sexual desires (perhaps pornography or same-sex attractions)? Living with an unbelieving spouse? Grieving the death of a spouse? Some other situation?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he has bought us through Jesus' precious blood and called us to honour him whatever our circumstances are. Pray that we would do this — in marriage or in singleness. Pray that we'd be his holy people, devoted to him, knowing that this world is passing away.
- Pray that we'd help one another to hold to the goodness of sexual delight in marriage. That our marriages would be strong and putting the others' needs first. Pray that those who are single would be a vital part of a warm and loving church community.
- Pray that **rockypc** would love one another as brothers and sisters, even when life is not ideal. That we'd care for one another when our marriages are struggling, when we're experiencing the pain of divorce, when it's hard to stay sexually pure and self-controlled, when our spouse is an unbeliever, when we're grieving the death of a spouse. Pray we'd be compassionate, caring and faithful.

FREE SLAVES

1 CORINTHIANS 8v1-9v23

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

If you could choose your last meal, what would it be?

As we saw in 1 Corinthians 5v9-11 & 6v9-10, sexual immorality and idolatry are closely linked. Paul addressed sexual immorality in Ch 5-7 and now he turns to idolatry in Ch 8-10.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 8v1-6

1. What is the contrast between love and knowledge in v1-3?

READ DEUTERONOMY 6v4-5

2. v4 is known as the *Shema* and it became a creed for the Jewish people to repeat twice a day. How does Paul tease out the implications of this creed for the Corinthians?

Corinthian Culture Spot

'The food that raised such concerns consisted of portions of animal or other sacrifices that had been offered to a god but then removed for consumption either in the god's temple, or in the home of one of those participating in the offering, or for sale in the meat/food market. In some cases a portion of the food would also have been placed on the hands or knees of the god's image or on a table in front of the god's image, either in his temple or in a private home. Most of the meat sold in the market would have been previously offered in such sacrifices but evidently one would often not know for sure unless one enquired.'

Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary) 2010

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 8v7-13

3. How are those who are accustomed to idols described?
4. What reasons does Paul give for **not** exercising the right to eat food sacrificed to idols?

Paul seems to move from idolatry in Ch 8, and go onto a tangent in Ch 9 before returning to the issue of idols in Ch 10. But he's actually using a sandwich technique, with his own example in the centre. As he says in 11v1 'Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.' So as you read Ch 9, look for the big point he's making from his own life, to understand the implications for the Corinthian's approach to idol's food.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 9v1-6

5. What are Paul's rights as an apostle?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 9v7-14

Paul uses lots of rhetorical questions here! How does he develop an argument for his rights?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 9v15-18

6. Having established that Paul does have the right to be supported by those he serves, why doesn't he exercise this right? (see also v12b)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 9v19-23

7. How does Paul use his freedom as slavery?

8. What is his goal?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD**, **SEEKING GOD**, on **MISSION**, as we **SERVE** in **COMMUNITY** together.

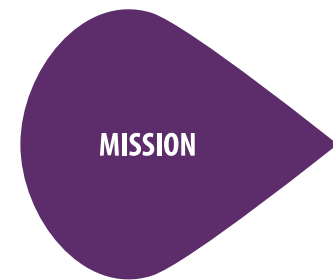


Are you convinced that there is no God but one? What can you praise him for as Father and Lord?



What rights might you have to give up in order to not cause a brother or sister to stumble/fall/be destroyed?

How can you build others up in love, rather than being puffed up in knowledge?



What rights might you have to give up in order to win your not-yet-believing friends and family? How do you need to change for the sake of the gospel?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise the one and only God, the Father from whom all things came and for whom we live, and the Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. Praise him that he knows us and we love him.
- Pray that we would love one another and build each other up, rather than being puffed up in knowledge. Pray that we'd give up our rights in order not to lead a brother or sister to fall.
- Ask that we'd also give up our rights in order to win others with the gospel. Pray that we'd understand their world and love them.

WHATEVER YOU DO

1 CORINTHIANS 9v24-11v1

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

Tell us about a time you should have heeded a warning, but didn't.

In Chapter 8, Paul began addressing the issue of whether the Corinthian Christians should eat food sacrificed to pagan idols. He wanted them to consider the impact they were having on one another. Were they being careful not to cause a brother or sister to stumble over this issue? In Chapter 9, he uses himself as an example of giving up his rights in order that others may be saved. Then he uses himself as an example in a different way.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 9v24-27

1. Is Paul in favour of self-harm? How might controlling his body like a slave master help him gain a prize/lasting crown? (remember what we've seen in Ch 8-9 and see also 6v12-14)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10v1-5

2. What united Israel? (see Exodus 14v19-28; 16v1-4 and 17v3-6)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10v6-11

3. In contrast to Paul, the Israelites didn't exercise self-control over their bodies. Some gave in to bodily cravings and were disqualified for the prize. Fill in the table to see what evil the people (that God had saved and provided for) had set their hearts on, and its consequences.

1 COR 10	OLD TESTAMENT	EVIL CRAVING	CONSEQUENCE
v7	EXODUS 32v1-6; 27-28		
v8	NUMBERS 25v1-9		
v9	NUMBERS 21v4-6		
v10	NUMBERS 14v26-32		

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10v11-14

4. Testing (translated 'temptation here) is not a sinful object/desire, nor an exam set by a malicious God. God tests Israel to reveal what's truly in their hearts, eg Deuteronomy 8v2-3. As all God's plans and purposes culminate with the Corinthians (and us), Paul says that we experience God's testing too. What do we learn about his character as he tests us?
5. What does Paul exhort his beloved Corinthians to do, in order to heed his warning from Israel's story of self-gratification? (v14)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10v15-17

6. Israel were united in the Exodus salvation, symbolised by the Passover meal. What unites God's people now?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10v18-22

7. What do we learn about pagan idols?
8. Why should the Corinthians flee idols and their food?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10v23-11v1

9. Paul returns to the Corinthian saying that he discussed in 6v12. There, he plead with them to flee sexual immorality (6v18), instead of asserting their rights to sexual expression. Now, he pleads with them to flee idolatry. What should they seek (instead of their right to eat whatever they want)?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10v25-30

Paul discusses two situations where the Corinthians may eat meat without knowing its origin.

Corinthian Culture Spot

'The market to which Paul refers would have been a meat market "that sold other food provisions as well." Paul's statement makes sense on the assumption that much of the food sold there (especially the meat) would have been previously offered to one god or another but that the possible religious history of any particular piece of meat or other food would not be immediately apparent to the shopper...

The second most common and innocent way of coming into contact with idol food (after visiting the local meat market) would be that of accepting an invitation to a dinner hosted by a non-Christian friend, neighbor or patron. Such dinners were extremely common and served as a key to establishing the social and political network that was essential to advancement and even social survival (for free people) in that society. Any respectable person would hope to be receiving invitations to dinners in the homes of others or hosted in other facilities, including the dining facilities which were incorporated into the precincts of some idol temples.'

Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary) 2010

10. Why would they choose to eat or not eat? (see also Psalm 24)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10v31-11v1

11. How does Paul summarise what is important in deciding how Christians should use their rights/bodily desires?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY** together.

In Western cultures, fewer of us are tempted to worship pagan idols, compared with Paul's day. However, this might be your story, particularly if your family don't belong to Jesus. If so, consider sharing with the group what this looks like for you (eg ancestor worship, another religion, or some expressions of Catholicism)

SEEKING GOD



SEEKING GOD

In what other (less religious) ways can our bodily appetites for food and drink lead us to sin, through lack of self-control? Or contribute to others' sin? eg drinking alcohol/ drunkenness, greed/gluttony/grumbling

How can you make decisions about what you eat and drink through Paul's example, rather than the Israelites?



SEEKING GOD

As you've read this passage, how do God's character and promises motivate you to flee idolatry and glorify him?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God as the maker of all. Give thanks to him and pray that we'd glorify him in all we do.
- Pray for those who struggle to resist pagan idols. Ask that God would grant wisdom and strength to flee idolatry.
- Pray for the ways that we're all tempted to sin through food and drink. Pray that we'd remember Israel's example and the judgment they suffered. Pray that as people who participate in the body and blood of Christ, that we'd heed the warning and turn away from evil desires. Pray that we'd be single-minded in pursuing the prize of a lasting crown.
- Ask forgiveness for when we've led others to sin also. Pray that, like Paul and Christ, we'd be thankful for his provision for us. And not seek our own good, but the good of others, so they may be saved.
- Praise God that he is faithful to help us endure temptation. Pray that in his strength, we'd exercise self-control.

WHEN YOU GATHER

1 CORINTHIANS 11v2-34

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

Are you a person who likes traditions? Which ones do you love to follow? Which do you love to break?

Paul is moving from talking about false worship in idolatry in Chapters 8-10, to talking about true worship for the saved people of God in Chapters 11-14. Today's passage contains some challenging ideas, because they are so different from our culture. But as we read, we're going to look for timeless truths about God and humanity. And just as Paul applies them to his culture, we can apply them to ours.

A note on prophecy:

Paul mentions it here, along with prayer, as something that both men and women will do when God's people gather. He is possibly using 'pray and prophesy' as a summary activity for church gatherings. But he returns to the idea of prophecy in Chapter 14. So we will think more about what it is, and its role for us when we get to Chapter 14.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 11v2

1. Paul praises the Corinthians for keeping received traditions. How are these traditions different from putting up a Christmas tree on December 1 or standing up to sing or sitting to pray at church? (See 1 Corinthians 7v17, 11v23, 15v3-5)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 11v3

2. How are men and women patterned on (and reflecting) God's nature?

3. Does this imply different dignity or worth between men and women? Why/why not?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 11v4-6

4. How are men and women in Corinth subverting the order of v3?

Corinthian culture spot

'...identify[ing] the head covering. There are three possibilities: a garment (a veil, shawl or cloak); an attitude of mind; or a hairstyle. You will find older books expending a great amount of ink defending one or other of these. But in recent years there has been a breakthrough in ancient history research that suggests the head covering in question was most likely a veil worn by married women. This veil symbolised a husband's authority within marriage.'

Claire Smith 2019, *God's Good Design: What the Bible Really Says About Men and Women* 2nd ed

Paul is talking about a cultural practice in Corinth for women to cover their heads. When they don't, or when men do, there is disgrace and humiliation. But this disgrace isn't like wearing the wrong clothes to a party, it's humiliating yourself, others and even God.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 11v7-12

5. Paul says that the order and authority in male/female relationships comes from creation.

READ GENESIS 1v26-28

6. What do we learn about men and women in creation?

Returning to 1 Corinthians 7v7, Paul cannot mean that women are not made in God's image. Rather, he is emphasising the way glory or honour work in relationships (as opposed to the humiliation of blurring the genders in v4-6). His reasoning for this comes in v8 as he reflects on Genesis 2.

READ GENESIS 2v15-25

7. How did woman come *from* man?

8. How was woman *for* man?

9. How are men and women *interdependent* rather than *independent*?

10. Drawing all this together, what does creation teach us about honour and order between genders?

1 Corinthians 7v10 reads as though 'the angels' are Paul's knock-down argument, without any further explanation. Paul says these heavenly beings watch on as witnesses to what happens on earth. See 1 Corinthians 4v9 (and also 1 Peter 1v12, Ephesians 3v10 and Psalm 8). Paul may be making the case that ordered relationships amongst God's people reflect his glory in the heavenly realms. God's reputation before the heavenly host is at stake when we meet as his people.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 11v13-16

11. What further 2 reasons does Paul give for following the conventions of head coverings? (v14 & 16)

Paul moves to another aspect of their gatherings, but there's no praise here.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 11v17-22

12. Who is being humiliated and how?

In the first half of the chapter, Paul deals with a difference of gender, which is rooted in God's nature and creation as humans. Now he is discussing another difference amongst God's people — wealth vs poverty, which is leading to humiliation in a different way. Having spent much of Chapters 8-10 correcting their dining habits, Paul now sets out how God's people *should* eat and drink.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 11v23-26

13. How should Jesus be remembered by believers? (see also Exodus 24v8 and Jeremiah 31v31)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 11v27-34

14. How should they approach this meal? Why?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY** together.

How has this passage challenged you? What are the issues you're struggling with? What would be a next step for you? ie to ask some more questions, to read further, to pray or something else?



In Corinth, women covering their heads (and men not) symbolised a respect for ordered relationships and ultimately God himself. Head coverings don't mean this in our 21st Century Western country. Women don't need to read this passage and start wearing a veil to church and men don't need to take off their hats. But there must be ways that we can honour God as male and female together.

Brainstorm together: in our context, how can we show a delight in our gender as given by God?

How can we show ordered, interdependent relationships as a reflection of God's nature?



COMMUNITY

Are there times we humiliate those who are less wealthy at **rockypc**? If Paul were here, what would he say to us?



COMMUNITY

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he's made us male and female, in his image, equal in worth and dignity. And yet he's made us different, in a beautiful order of leading and helping that reflects his own nature.
- Pray that our gatherings at **rockypc** would bring honour to one another and praise to God as we live out his order. Pray for wisdom and humility in this.
- Pray that we'd remember Jesus' death together until he comes. That we'd celebrate a body broken and blood shed to make us his people in a new covenant.
- Pray that as we do, we would examine our hearts, confessing pride and greed. Pray that we'd treat each other with dignity and respect, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY

1 CORINTHIANS 12-13

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

Imagine yourself as a body part, which would you be and why: ie are you a hand because you get stuff done; a foot, because you go the extra mile; or, something else?

Last week, we saw Paul begin a discussion about difference among God's people and how we can honour God and each other in them. Paul continues this thought in Chapters 12-13.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12v1-3

1. What is the main role of the Spirit in a Christian's life? (remember 1 Corinthians 2v9-16)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12v4-11

2. How does our unity-in-difference spring from God's nature?

3. What is the Spirit's purpose in giving us such a variety of gifts?

Note: We're going to think more about tongues and prophecy next week

'The best way to discover your gift, then, is not by taking a test. They didn't have such instruments in the early church, and people discovered and used their gifts just fine! Rather, if you get involved in the lives of others in your church and love as Jesus commanded, then you will discover your gift.

Some might say they still don't know their gift. But knowing your spiritual gift isn't as important as exercising your spiritual gift. Surely many believers in history didn't know their spiritual gifts or think much about them, and yet they exercised those gifts in powerful ways. If you aren't sure what your spiritual gifts are, I wouldn't worry about it. If you give yourself to other believers in the church, you will inevitably be using your gifts.'

Thomas Schreiner, July 6 2018, *How (Not) to Discover Your Spiritual Gifts*
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-not-discover-spiritual-gifts/>

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12v12-31a

4. What differences threaten to divide the Corinthian church in v13?

5. How does Paul use the image of a body to help us think about unity and diversity?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12v31b-13v3

6. What danger do the gifted Corinthians face?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13v4-7

7. What strikes you about this description of love?

Note: This is in the context of church relationships, not marriage (although if you are married, you should love your spouse like this too!)

8. In 1 Corinthians 11v1, Paul told them to follow him as he follows Christ. How have Paul and Christ demonstrated this love? (think about what we've been learning throughout 1 Corinthians)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13v8-13

9. Paul gives the Corinthians an eternal perspective on what matters. What belongs to 'now'?

10. What will 'then' be like?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY** together.

What have you learned today about what God is like and how his Spirit is at work?

How does an eternal perspective help you view God, yourself and others rightly?



SEEKING GOD



In what ways have you've noticed yourself falling short of the description of love towards others at **rockypc**?

How can you show unfailing love to others as you use your gifts at church?



How can we demonstrate how much we need each other as God's people?

What do you need to change in order to honour those 'weaker' than you?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God, Lord and Spirit — the one God in three persons. Declare that Jesus is Lord!
- Praise him for making us into the one body, by his Spirit. Pray that we would be united together, knowing that we all belong and we all need each other. Confess when we've not honoured others who are weaker than us or when we've competed with each other in pride.
- Praise God for giving gifts to each of us by, his Spirit, in his good plan so that we can build each other up in love. Pray that we'd use our gifts with love. Ask that our love for one another would grow — suffering and rejoicing together, patiently, kindly and humbly persevering.
- Praise God that one day, we will see him face to face and know him fully. Pray that we'd remember that faith, hope and love are what lasts into eternity and that we'd pursue these.

THE WAY OF LOVE

1 CORINTHIANS 14

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

How many languages can you speak? (to hold a conversation, not just count to 10!)

Last week we read that God’s Spirit gives us each different gifts so that we’re like a body with many parts. Each part belongs and is needed. And we must all use our gifts in faithful, humble love.

In today’s section, Paul continues talking about the loving way to use our Spirit-given gifts by focussing on 2 particular gifts of speech — tongues and prophecy. These are gifts that have generated a lot of hype and controversy in more modern church history. It is difficult to define each, as Paul doesn’t do so specifically (and neither does the rest of the New Testament). But there is a lot we can glean about them here. So as we read, we are going to try not to let modern ideas dominate our thinking. Instead, let’s listen carefully to God’s word and see what we can figure out as we read.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14v1-5

1. What is the goal of both gifts?

‘Edified’ can be a vague, Christian word that might mean positive and cheerful encouragement. But when Paul uses it, he just means ‘build’, remembering that we are God’s building and temple (1 Corinthians 3v9-17).

2. Fill in the table below

Verse	Gift	Who is being addressed?	Who is built up?	How are they built up?
2, 4a				
3, 4b				

It is unclear whether the tongues Paul refers to are human languages or if there is a heavenly language also. It is not babble, it’s just that not everyone understands the content. See Acts 2v1-11 for an example of the Spirit enabling people to speak in human languages that they’d never learned.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14v6-19

3. How does Paul illustrate the disadvantages of speaking in tongues in church?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14v20-25

Paul quotes Isaiah 28 here to remind the Corinthians of a time in Israel’s story when they ignored God’s word, and so in judgment, God spoke to them in the foreign languages of conquering nations taking them into exile. God’s beloved people became foreigners to him.

4. What will tongues do for unbelievers?

5. How will prophecy benefit unbelievers?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14v26-28

The Corinthians abound in gifts of the Spirit (See 1 Corinthians 1v4-7). But Paul says in order to build up the church, they need to develop some order in their gatherings.

6. What will good order look like in church? Who should be silent?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14v29-33

7. What will good order look like? Who should be silent?

8. Why should their congregations follow this pattern?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14v34-35

9. What will good order look like? Who should be silent?

At first glance, Paul seems to be contradicting his own words from a few pages earlier in Chapter 11 where women can pray and prophecy in church, while demonstrating gendered order in relationships. So is he now saying they shouldn't speak at all?

- Notice that women are the third group who are told to remain silent in some circumstances of the church gathering (see v28, 30 where the same word is used)
- Church is not a place where everyone has the right to self-expression whenever they want. Rather, we use self-control in love, in order to build others up (see also 1 Corinthians 9v19-23; 10v23-24)
- Paul has a concern to distinguish between what happens at home and in the church (see 11v22, 34; 14v18-19)
- So when we decide what to do when we gather, we're asking 'Is this something I could/should do at home instead?'
- Women can discuss at home with their husband (or father — the Greek word means man or husband). They are still encouraged to think, learn and have opinions. However, this is to be done in a way that respects the authority of male leaders in church and husbands/fathers at home.
- When talking about women, Paul is still in the middle of discussing the weighing of prophecy to discern whether the words are from God's Spirit (see v29 and v37)
- So, putting together Chapter 11 and Chapter 14, Paul is saying that women should be silent in the **weighing of prophecies** as a further way of demonstrating their gendered role. As he did in Chapter 11, Paul reflects again on Genesis 1-2 to say that both God and his people are honoured in the church, as men lead and women submit.
- This is not all Paul has to say about men's and women's roles in church, see 1 Timothy 2-3 & Titus 2 for example.
 - This is a beautiful way that men and women can complement one another in church and home — let's see how it is a delight and joy, not a burdensome restriction.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14v36-40

1. What is the criteria for weighing prophecies?
(see also 1 Corinthians 12v10; 1 Thessalonians 5v19-23; 1 John 4v1-6)

When Jesus came as the final word from God (Hebrews 1v1-2), he brings in a new age. Prophecy in the New Testament is not the same as the Old.

Old Testament prophets spoke authoritatively so that disobeying them was disobeying God (Deuteronomy 18v17-19), while a false prophet was put to death (Deuteronomy 18v20). But in the New, a true prophecy can potentially be disregarded (Acts 21v4-5), and a prophet evaluated to be false is left to God's judgment (1 Corinthians 14v38).

Another difference is that much Old Testament prophecy is *foretelling* or predicting future events that prove the prophecy when it occurs (Jeremiah 28v9). On the other hand, in the New Testament, most prophecy is *forthtelling* (proclaiming God's deeds and applying to a certain situation) which can be evaluated then and there, without the test of time (as in 1 Corinthians 14v29).

2. From what we've read today, in 1 sentence, summarise what you think speaking in tongues is.
3. In 1 sentence, summarise what you think prophecy is.

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY** together.

Is it more spiritual/Spirit-filled to be ecstatic, spontaneous and chaotic? How can our church gatherings reflect God's character?

SEEKING GOD

Are there things you do at church that you could/should do at home?

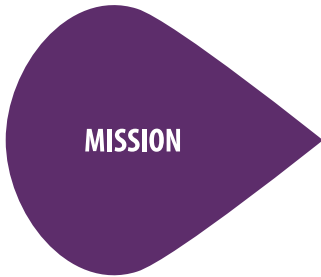
How does your attitude to church need to change? Giving up your rights to speak/self expression? Doing everything to build others up? Leading or submitting for the sake of an order that honours God and one another? Something else?

COMMUNITY



What place might speaking in tongues have at **rockypc**?

As the greater gift, brainstorm some ways that we can prophesy to one another at **rockypc** (in line with Jesus' words, passed on by his apostles).



Paul expects that unbelievers will be a normal part of our gatherings. Who are you praying will come to church with you?

How can we make our gatherings more understandable and welcoming to those inquiring about Jesus, so that they are convicted of sin and might know he's really among us?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that his Spirit gives us gifts to build his church. Confess when we've had an attitude of standing on our rights, of demanding self-expression, or of disrespecting the order and authority God has given us as men and women. Pray that we would have self-control and humility to seek the good of others. Pray that, in love, we would speak at times and stay silent at others, so that others might hear and believe. Pray that our church gatherings would be orderly and fitting, to reflect God's character.
- Thank God that he has gifted us to speak his words to each other in a variety of ways. Pray that **rockypc** would value prophecy as we strengthen, encourage and comfort one another in many ways. Pray that our words would be in line with Jesus' words, as passed on by the apostles.
- Thank God for the unbelievers who join us for church every week. Pray that this group would grow as we speak, pray and invite our friends to come to hear about Jesus. Pray that we would work hard to welcome those investigating. Pray that our meetings would be understandable to them. Pray that they would be convicted of their sin and see that God really is among us. Pray that God would be using us to bring more and more people to Jesus. Keep asking that God would give 8000 new people to Jesus in our region, just for a start.

RESURRECTION GLORY

1 CORINTHIANS 15

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

Do your not-yet-Christian friends believe in life after death? What do they imagine it will be like?

Throughout his letter, Paul's demonstrated the power of Jesus' death and resurrection for our lives now, even when we look weak and foolish. How we work to build God's people, what we do with our bodies, how we worship, and how we treat one another are all viewed in the light of Jesus' return as king and our resurrection with him. (eg 1v7-8; 2v6; 3v12-15; 4v5; 5v13; 6v14; 7v29-30; 9v24-27; 11v26; 13v12-13) Paul comes to a crescendo in Chapter 15 as he emphasises the truth, beauty and importance of the resurrection for believers.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15v1-11

1. What is the gospel that Paul passed on?

Jesus' resurrection was announced ahead of time in the Old Testament scriptures (eg Psalm 16v9-11; Hosea 6v2)

2. How has God's grace worked in Paul as the last of the apostles, who all carry the same gospel message?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15v12-19

Corinthian Culture Spot

'Corinthian skepticism concerning the place of the body in the afterlife is perfectly understandable in a Graeco-Roman setting since his Gentile contemporaries had no notion of bodily resurrection. As Wright puts it "Christianity was born into a world where its central claim was known to be false. Many believed the dead were non-existent; outside Judaism, nobody believed in a resurrection" In the Roman world, "everybody knew dead people didn't and couldn't come back to bodily life."

Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary) 2010

3. If there is no resurrection, what are the implications for Christ, the apostles, and all Christians?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15v20-28

4. What do you think it means that Christ is the 'firstfruits'?

5. How is Jesus like a general sent to defeat those rebelling against the emperor? (see also Daniel 7; Psalms 8 & 110)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15v29-34

At first reading, Paul seems to be referring to a practice of living people being baptised for the salvation of those who have already died. Some churches (eg Catholic) have adopted the practice on this basis. But there is no evidence to suggest that this was happening in Paul's day. And it is also out of step with the way Paul talks about baptism elsewhere (Romans 6v1-4; Galatians 3v27; Colossians 2v12). It is more likely that Paul is referring to those who are brought into the people of God, and are baptised, because they've been influenced by the message of the resurrection of the dead. Ciampa and Rosner suggest a better paraphrase would be 'Now if there is no resurrection, what will be accomplished by those who get baptised because of what they have heard about how our dead will be raised? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people undergoing baptism on account of them?'

Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary) 2010

6. How do Paul's life and motives contrast with ignorant, so-called Christians?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15v35-49

7. How is the resurrection body like a plant?

8. From v39-41, Paul draws on the creation account. How does Paul contrast different kinds of bodies to explain what the resurrection body will be like?

Fill in the table below.

Note that 'natural' vs 'spiritual' body does not mean flesh vs soul. It is the contrast of 'created' vs 'spirit-filled'

First Adam	Last Adam
Living being	
Natural	
	Second Man
	Of heaven
Earthly man	

9. Remembering v21-22, what has changed/will change for those who are looking forward to the resurrection?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15v50-57

1. Why do our bodies need to undergo a change?
2. What will that day be like? (see also Malachi 3v1; Joel 2v1)

In v54-55, Paul refers to Old Testament promises of restoration for Israel, that will come true when that trumpet sounds (Isaiah 25v6-8; Hosea 13v14). But this moment of victory encompasses all of human history as the curses brought on Adam (and all humanity) are undone. Adam broke God's law, sinned and was sentenced to death (Genesis 3v17-19).

3. How is the curse broken?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15v58

Paul has been focused on the future and the moment when our bodies will be raised glorious and immortal. But the resurrection has implications for life *now*.

4. How should we respond to the resurrection? (remember v1-2; 10-11 & v30-32)

Hint: 'Work of the Lord' or 'labour in the Lord' is anything we undertake for Jesus' sake, particularly in sharing the gospel and building God's church (3v8,13-15; 9v1; 16v10; see also 2 Corinthians 10v15-16; 11v23, 27; 1 Thessalonians 1v3; 3v5)

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD**, **SEEKING GOD**, on **MISSION**, as we **SERVE** in **COMMUNITY** together.

How convinced are you of the reality of bodily resurrection for those who have faith in Jesus' victory? What questions do you still have?

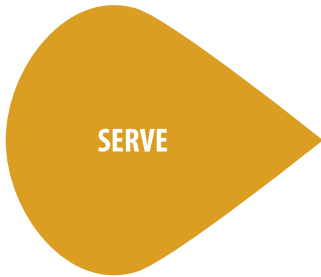
What do you want to thank God for, as you've read this part of God's Word today? Which truth is precious to you?

SEEKING GOD



Do you sometimes worry that faith in Jesus is futile? How does the resurrection give you purpose and meaning in this life?

How can you know, stand firm and be unmoved in the apostolic message of the gospel?



How are you giving yourself fully to the work/labour of the Lord? How could you grow in this area?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for Jesus Christ our Lord, who defeated all his enemies even death as he rose from death in victory. Praise him as the Lord over all powers, over sin and death. Pray that we might glorify God as all in all.
- Praise God that because Jesus rose as the firstfruits, we can be certain that we will rise. Praise him that we will rise with immortal, imperishable, glorious, spirit-filled bodies in the image of the heavenly man, Christ.
- Pray that we will stand firm in this truth, unmoved from the gospel handed down by the apostles. Pray that we'd see how the resurrection gives us a future hope and a meaning and purpose now. Pray that we would be convinced that our faith in Jesus is not in vain.
- Ask that we'd give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord. That we'd labour to share the gospel and to see God's people grow. Pray that we would persevere, like Paul, when this is a struggle, and when there's opposition and persecution, knowing that this work is not in vain.

TOGETHER FOR GOD'S GLORY

1 CORINTHIANS 16

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GETTING STARTED

What do you think makes a good co-worker? Who have you most enjoyed working alongside?

Paul's letter to the Corinthian church has had a crescendo in the importance of the resurrection as our future hope in Chapter 15. But the future breaks into the now. The resurrection means:

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15v58

As Paul wraps up his letter, he reminds these Christians in the city of Corinth of their connections to the rest of the Lord's people who are also labouring in the Lord.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 16v1-4

Paul talks about a collection for the church in Jerusalem in a number of other New Testament passages (2 Corinthians 8-9, Romans 15v25-32 and Acts 24v17). Paul asks other churches to support the Christians there who are suffering in a famine. This collection serves as 'a symbol of the unity of the Church. The collection was meant to represent, primarily to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, the unity of both gentile and Jew in Christ, and thereby to be a means of reconciling the Jewish and gentile branches of the Church.'

Jervis, Contribution for the Saints, cited in

Ciampa and Rosner, The First Letter to the Corinthians (Pillar New Testament Commentary) 2010

1. What does Paul want the Corinthians to do in response to the need of the Lord's people in Jerusalem?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 16v5-9

2. What are Paul's reasons for not going to Corinth straight away?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 16v10-12

3. How should they treat Timothy? What reasons does he give?

4. How is this different from the way they have been operating? (see 1v11-12 & 3v1-5)

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 16v13-14

5. In what do you think they need to stand firm? (see 15v1-2; 58 also)

6. How is v14 a summary of what Paul has been saying throughout the letter?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 16v15-18

7. How should those who join in the work and labour of the Lord be treated?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 16v19-24

8. Describe the relationships Paul mentions here.

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY** together.

When do you struggle to stand firm in the gospel?

How has reading 1 Corinthians encouraged you to be courageous and loving?



SEEKING GOD

How should we view other churches and gospel workers who are joining us in labouring for the Lord?

How is **rockypc** working with other churches and ministries? How can we do this better?



COMMUNITY

Are you generous with what God's given you — helping brothers and sisters in need? How can you be intentional about this (in accordance with your income)?



SERVE

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for all we've learned this term from the letter of 1 Corinthians. Praise him as the God who redeems us with the blood of his precious Son, so that we belong to the risen Jesus now. Pray that we'd be on our guard; standing firm in this faith; courageous and strong. Pray that we would honour and glorify God in every aspect of our lives. Ask that our love for each other would grow and that we'd look to build each other up in Jesus, as we look forward to seeing him face to face.
- Praise God that he has joined us to Jesus as well as to one another, and to all those who belong to him. Pray that we would find ways to care for other churches and other gospel workers. Ask God's help to labour in the Lord together and to give generously to those in need. Praise God for our mission partners - Keith and Elspeth Campbell in PNG, RI teachers in Rockhampton and Gracemere, and Peter Groom at the Correctional Centre. Pray that we would support them in growing disciples where they are.