



**Ten segments from Paul's wisdom to the Church at Corinth.**

Written by Angela Chapman, Sue Haward & Johnny Douglas

**June – August 2022**

#### Quoteable Quotes

**“Let all you do be done in love!”** 1 Corinthians 16:14

“Love is the doorway through which the human soul passes  
from selfishness to service.” Jack Drummond

**“Though our feelings come and go, God's love for us does not!”** CS Lewis

“To love another person is to see the peace of God.” Victor Hugo

**God's supply of love and grace never will ever run dry...**

“His secret purpose framed from the very beginning  
is to bring us to our full glory!” 1 Corinthians 2:7



## Introduction to the book of 1 Corinthians

Corinth, a busy Mediterranean seaport, was notorious for its low morals and curious ways. Many of the Christians there had lived corrupt lives before they had been converted. With this kind of background and a far from helpful environment, it is no wonder that this church back then had its difficulties. Paul writes to them about a number of their errors, both in belief and behaviour, in a church which really **fundamentally lacked love**.

In his letter-writing Paul wanted to encourage the people of Corinth to refocus and rethink how they went about their everyday lives. He wanted them to see the world **through the lens of the gospel**. So, he taught them better ways for living their lives. He taught them the way through the cross, through the crucified Christ. He taught them how to love better.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul seeks to help the church to see and live out different experiences through the lens of the gospel message. He teaches that the followers of Jesus are held to a standard of integrity and morality as they seek to represent this newly found way of life to their communities.

This letter speaks to us today as Christians about the general decline of moral standards and doctrinal indifference in the **distracted world** we live in.

To **focus** means 'to pay particular attention to', or 'to have greater clarity on a subject'. Paul wanted this for the people of Corinth. *God wants our focus, love & trust everyday, and across a lifetime.*



**Week 1 – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2022**  
**Love is - Calling**  
**1 Corinthians 1: 1-9**

Paul begins this letter, as he always does, by giving thanks to God for the people of Corinth (1 Cor 1:4). Then he appeals to them to live in harmony because he fears for the divisions running throughout the church. He says, 'Let there be no divisions in your church but be of one mind, united in thought and purpose' (1 Cor 1:10).

Rival factions within the church are contradicting its nature as a 'united' body. Paul brings these 'rivalries' to the cross, to Jesus. He says that God uses weak people (like himself) to communicate this message to them. He says though, that the glory is 'all God's' and God's alone.

**Reflections and Questions**

1. Read the passage in two different versions of scripture. Why did Paul feel that he needed to address the complexity in the church? (1 Cor 1:1-9)
2. What three things strike you from this passage and the opening preach this weekend?
3. What do you make of the call to be blameless? What does it mean when applied?
4. Why is the mess of Corinth an encouragement for us?
5. What do you make of the language 'enriched and fortified' by faith?
6. What was God's will for them? And for you in the light of this opening chapter?
7. Change affects your heart: what does this mean for you?
8. What do you notice about Paul's attitude as one a leader? What can we learn from this?
9. God has united us with Christ Jesus – what is so significant for us about this?



**Week 2 - 19<sup>th</sup> June 2022**  
**Love is – Insight and Perception**  
**1 Corinthians 2: 1-5**

Paul says that he is bringing this gospel message of harmony, unity and healing to the people of Corinth, in reliance of God alone, and not in the strength of his own pride or self-confidence. He says that when he came to them, he did not come with his own eloquence or human wisdom as he proclaimed the gospel, but came in weakness, with great fear and trembling. He says, 'My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom but on God's power' (2: 4-5).

**Reflections and Questions**

1. Why is humility so important in this passage?
2. How does our Christian view of 'humility' differ from the worldly view.
3. Paul says he is 'resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified' - what does he mean by this?
4. Read The Message's version of these verses. How do they help our understanding of them?
5. Which do you tend to have more trust in; a polished and eloquent speaker, or one who appears nervous and hesitant?
6. It has been said that humble love gives us power. Does this ring true?
7. Can you think of an example of when your 'knowledge and learning' proved less useful than what you 'knew in your heart'?
8. How can we measure our 'worldly wisdom' against what Jesus would consider important?



**Week 3 – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**Love is - Relationship and Responsibility**

**1 Corinthians 4: 1-7**

Paul talks about men and women being natural (not knowing God), spiritual (having the understanding of God) and carnal (fleshy). He says that God's truth is revealed to 'spiritual' men (2: 6-13) and that natural-men don't understand it (2: 14-16). Disharmony is clear evidence, he says, of carnality (3: 5-11). Paul emphasizes the importance of harmony and teamwork in Christian service, and presents vivid images and metaphors to bring out the nature of his work (gardener, builder, slave etc).

Paul talks here about the Corinthians effectively declaring themselves judges without being given this job by the Lord and without being qualified to do so. He teaches them (and us now) that every good thing that we have is a gift from God, including every talent and personality trait, because of our relationship with Him.

### **Reflections and Questions**

1. What strikes you from this passage? And the talk or recording from Sunday?
2. Paul and Apollos were stewards for God as detailed here? What does this mean for us to be 'stewards of the mysteries of God'?
3. Verse 3 reflects that Paul didn't consider human opinions to be very important! What do you make of this...?
4. How does Paul handle a critical spirit as seen in the Corinthian church?
5. What was the examination Paul cared about?
6. In verse 5 we learn the attitude we should have toward others. What is it?
7. What is the "these things" in verse 6?
8. In verse 7, what reason does Paul give for them to be humble?



**Week 4 – 3rd July 2022**  
**Love is – Intentional and Pure**  
**1 Corinthians 7: 32-35**

This section concerns more specific and particular relationships. Chapter 5 deals with a serious moral offence (5: 1) to which the church has been carelessly indifferent. The mis-doings can infect the entire church (5: 6-8). They must be prepared to take disciplinary action and not resort to legal-aid from the world (6: 1-8). The church needs to maintain its purity (6: 9-14) because the believers of the church (the body) are ‘temples’ of the Holy Spirit (6: 15-20). In chapter seven Paul defends celibacy more than he reprimands marriage.

Paul encourages us to be free from the concerns of this life and how we would live our days best to serve the Lord, without any worldly distractions (7: 32-35).

**Reflections and Questions**

1. What are the main points from this section of Scripture? Why does it matter and how might it translate to life in 2022?
2. What is this passage saying in general and specific?
3. How is verse 32 to ‘be free from concern’ possible in the complexity of life?
4. What makes marriage and relationships so complex in this world...?
5. This passage speaks to devotion, desires and discernment. What do you think the Holy Spirit might want to bring your attention to in this...
6. It is easier to look away from passages like this in the bible: yet God’s word is inspired and speaks to all of life. 2 Timothy 3:16 “All of scripture is inspired and useful for life... .” What is God nudging you about through His word at the moment?
7. V35 is really ronseal-clear: What does it mean to ‘live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.’
8. What three principles may flow and what application is there for your life?



**Week 5 – 10th July 2022**  
**Love is – Service and Freedom**  
**1 Corinthians 10: 14-33**

Here, another issue is discussed – the eating of meat that has been offered (sacrificed) to idols. There are a mix of feelings whether this is ok or not. Paul says ‘if it causes a brother to stumble’ it may be better to refrain (8: 9-13). He goes on to talk about the principle of voluntary ‘self-denial’. He seeks every possible opportunity to win others for Christ (9: 20-27). In Chapter 10 he talks about the seriousness of Christian life and service, and it gives an example here saying that in Old Testament times people were banned if they weren’t right with God. These Old Testament events were reminders to believers of the effects on them, that these idolatry practices will have. In other words, all behaviour must glorify God.

**Reflections and Questions**

1. What is the big picture of this passage?
2. How does it relate to the previous section?
3. Define “idolatry” and what do you think Paul referring to?
4. What do you think might be an “idol” in your life, whether known or unknown?
5. What is the cup of blessing?
6. What is the basic teaching in these verses?
7. What is the chief principle that needs to govern all of our actions including in grey areas?
8. What are the ways you live out a life guided by God?
9. Share your collective wisdom in the group about how to hear & respond to God?
10. Pray for increasing attentiveness to God’s will and way...



**Week 6 – 17th July 2022**  
**Love is – Obedience and Purpose**  
**1 Corinthians 11: 23-34**

‘Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ’ (11: 1).

Further situations are mentioned here where the teachings were not being observed well: public prayers, conduct at the Lord’s supper and spiritual gifts. It is a young church in Corinth and has many questions to ask, especially about prayer. Jews and Romans covered their heads in church but the Greeks did not. Paul instructs them to cover their heads (11: 1-16).

‘The Lord’s Supper’ has become meaningless and sacrilegious because of their un-Christian behaviour in Corinth (11: 18-34). They are not aligned with God’s purpose and Paul tells them that this will provoke God’s judgement. Jesus teaches about the communion with bread (His body) and wine (His blood) when he says, ‘Do this in remembrance of me’ (11: 23-26).

**Reflections and Questions**

1. What is the main point of Paul’s teaching in this latter half of chapter 11?
2. What caused Paul to decide to write to the Corinthians about the Lord’s Supper?
3. Do you remember what Paul taught before on divisions in the church? What does he mean in verse 19 that there must be factions among them?
4. What is the bread? What does it mean that this is His body? Why do we take it? What is the cup? What does it mean that it is His blood? Why do we take it?
5. What is the new covenant? From what festival did the Lord’s Supper originate and what is the connection between the two?
6. Define “unworthy manner” and it’s implications?
7. What is the purpose of discipline? And how can we live out its good fruit?





**Week 7 – 24th July 2022**  
**Love is – Desiring and Receiving Spiritual Gifts**  
**1 Corinthians 12: 1-11**

The exercise of 'Spiritual gifts' is addressed here. Paul tells the people of Corinth that these gifts from the Holy Spirit are given to edify the church as a whole (12: 14-27). Spiritual gifts have been described as 'gracious endowments', leading to miraculous results – and these all come by the extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit. These people were given a reminder (that is good for us also now) – that maybe we can be ignorant of things regarding Spiritual Gifts, and we should not be. Paul, in his letters, names three things that he does not want Christians to be ignorant of:

- God's plan for Israel (Romans 11:25)
- The Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1)
- The second coming of Jesus and the eternal state (1 Thessalonians 4:13)

Paul lays down a broad principle here for discerning matters regarding Spiritual Gifts – judge things by how they relate to Jesus Christ. Jesus made it plain, saying that when the Holy Spirit would come, He will testify of Me (John 15:26), and He will glorify Me.

### **Reflections and Questions**

1. In this passage Paul tells us that he wants us to be 'informed', so that we are not misled by 'mute idols'. What does he mean?
2. V3 tells us that "no-one can say Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. Discuss.
3. Read The Message version of these verses and compare them to the KJV version. Which do you prefer?
4. Paul says clearly that all gifts of the Spirit are for the 'common good'. Do we always see it that way?
5. How do we avoid 'gift envy'?
6. Compare the Gifts of the Spirit with the Fruits. Do they always work hand in hand? What happens if we use one without the other?
7. Look at verses 21 -26. How do they help us understand the importance of the Gifts?
8. Can you think of an example of a time when you felt the Spirit working through you for the good of the church body as a whole? How did it make you feel?
9. Summarise the gist of this passage & big idea today?



**Week 8 – 31st July 2022**  
**Love is – Enduring and Forever**  
**1 Corinthians 13: 1-13**

‘Love’ is the best gift (1 Corinthians 12:13). 1 Corinthians chapter 13 presents us with majestic language and a persistent challenge. Love alone counts, it costs and it endures (13: 7-13). This explains the connection of our Spiritual Gifts with the love of God, and our relationship with Him. Love is not arrogant (convinced of one’s superiority over others). Love is not rude, meaning that it never acts indecently, by sinning or breaking cultural norms. Paul begins this chapter by describing how useless, even destructive, spiritual gifts are when not applied from the standpoint of love.

1 Corinthians 13 is one of the main points of the entire letter. In a church that is divided and competitive, Paul reminds them of their call to love one another and does so by giving them a detailed description of what this love looks like. They can have spiritual gifts, knowledge, powerful actions and incredible generosity but unless it is motivated by love, and empowered by Christ’s transforming love, it is nothing.

**Reflections and Questions**

1. Apart from being a wedding ceremony reading, what strikes you when you hear this passage? Which part are you drawn too most?
2. Paul could have put this description somewhere else in the letter, why do you think it is situated in this part of 1 Corinthians and how does it relate to spiritual gifts?
3. Because love is key... Where might you receive, live & share more of the love of God?
4. Are actions of generosity and sacrifice “love” in and of themselves? How can someone “give up their body to be burned” and do so without it being motivated by love?
5. Compare and contrast the definition we’re given for love in verses 4-8 to how the world thinks about love.
6. What are some ways you can specifically grow in your love for others in the body of Christ based on this definition? As a group spend time praying for one another and those areas.
7. How does patience in love fit in with not tolerating sin? Does patience (even God’s patience) have a limit?
8. Love does not get provoked and yet God gets angry at our sin. How do you reconcile this? Is it wrong to get provoked about someone else’s choices?
9. Love always trusts. But is it loving to trust a person who has repeatedly violated our trust? Where do you draw the line?
10. What would you say to someone who said, “Love is more important than doctrinal purity”? Can we love apart from truth?
11. What is the simple one sentence summary and takeaway?



**Week 9 – 7th August 2022**  
**Love is – The Good News of the Resurrection**  
**1 Corinthians 15: 1-11**

This shows the Corinth church to be uncertain, or at times confused. Its members were not always loyal to the truths of the gospel message, the ‘good news’, which Paul has told them about (15: 1-8). Some people here appear not to believe in the idea of the resurrection of the dead (15:12). Paul points out that you cannot ‘pick and mix’ Christian doctrine (15: 13-19). This chapter begins with Christ’s resurrection (15:1) and ends with our own future (15: 51-57) but Paul also includes the present (15: 58). He includes in it a practical note about ‘stand firm and work hard’, always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

Because God so loved the world that He gave His only son (John 3:16) - how remarkable is that? That is love at its finest. It is very, very ‘Good News’.

**Reflections and Questions**

1. What is the theme in this chapter?
2. What is Paul reminding them of in the first two verses?
3. What is the central point of the gospel?
4. What are the implications for us of Jesus’ resurrection?
5. Why did Paul call himself the least of the apostles?
6. What’s the connection between the resurrection of the dead and the resurrection of Christ?
7. Life goes on and on in God. What is your comfort and confidence because of living faith in Jesus?
8. How do you define the good news of life with Jesus?
9. In what ways will you live this out...?



**Week 10 – 14th August 2022**  
**Love is – An Action not just a word**  
**1 Corinthians 16: 1-4**

Just before Paul gives his final greetings (16: 19-24) this letter gives some instructions regarding a collection for the needs of the poor, in Jerusalem church (16: 1-4). 'Love' is more beautiful than just a word but an 'act' or an 'action'. It is compassionate (16:1), systematic (16:2), proportionate (16:2), generous (2 Cor 8: 2) and eager (1 Cor 9: 2).

Generally, Christians have worked hard in these efforts of practical ministry – the Red Cross was named as such because it started as a Christian organisation. In 1 Timothy 5, Paul speaks about the responsibility of the church to honour widows, and to consider ministers of the gospel worthy of double honour – these things are stated as more worthy even than giving to the poor. Paul wanted all to give. Every Christian should be a giver because God is the ultimate giver (John 3: 16).

**Reflections and Questions**

1. How would you finish this sentence: "Love is a...?"
2. What is God teaching you about love-applied through Corinthians?
3. What struck you from Sunday's talk?
4. What is significant in this passage about the "first day of the week"?
5. What is the biblical principle on giving? And what attitude should we have in our giving?
6. What attitude should we have towards our Christian leaders? Why is this the case?
7. What final instructions does Paul give to the church?
8. How will you summarise 1 Corinthians 13 and the takeaways for your life with Jesus?
9. What three things might you do with this to live it out?