

1 Corinthians: The Absence of Spiritual Growth

Paul spoke many of his _____ words to the Corinthian church. The church faced issues relevant to churches in our day.

- _____ disagreement
- _____ infancy
- _____ division
- _____ behaviors
- _____ problems

What do we know about the _____ and _____ of Corinth? Corinth was a beautiful city, showcasing lovely palm trees and buildings. It was a resort city and the capital of pleasure for the Roman Empire. People in Corinth were known to pursue _____ and _____. Corinth was a Greek city. False worship characterized the city. A temple was in the city and was dedicated to the goddess of love, Aphrodite. Sexual pleasure was the god of the day. It was estimated that at least 10,000 prostitutes were attached to the temple.

As for _____, the Corinthians loved to gather and debate the ideas, doctrines, and philosophies of men. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had their _____ in the city. People possessed a love for wisdom. Does the way Corinth is described sound familiar to life in our day? Can you imagine trying to reach people for Christ and trying to plant a church in that kind of environment? That's the context for Paul's _____ and _____. Paul left Thessalonica under pressure. He spent time in Berea and Athens. God used Paul in Athens on Mars Hill. Paul left that area and entered Corinth. He stayed in Corinth for nearly two years, preaching the Gospel and making tents for a living.

In my pastoral ministry, and in consulting with pastor search committees, I've used Paul's words in 1 Cor. 1:1-9 to challenge _____ and _____. What do you need to look for in a _____?

1. _____ - "Paul"
2. _____ - "Paul called by"
3. _____ - "The will of God"
4. _____ - "Our brother Sosthenes"
5. _____ - "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

The church at Corinth was in _____. Paul called God's people to experience _____. Paul said, "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). The Lord's church can disagree about minor and secondary issues. However, it's imperative that God's

people agree about major and primary beliefs. As one might imagine, Paul never lost sight of the power and relevance of the _____. He said, "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). It's apparent in the biblical text that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, and it's verifiable that the Corinthians wrote to him. Paul said, "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote..." (1 Cor. 7:1). The Corinthians were concerned about several matters.

1. Is it right to _____?
2. Is possible to _____ God and a weaker brother or sister in Christ?
3. Is the Lord's Table an act of authentic _____?

Paul spent a great deal of time addressing issues related to _____. What's the divine purpose of spiritual gifts?

1. Verify One's _____
2. _____ God the Father
3. Strengthen the Lord's _____
4. Equips God's People for _____

Paul proclaimed _____ to the Corinthians that speak to life and ministry in our day. God's Word is living and active (Heb. 4:12); His Word is inspired and infallible (2 Tim. 3:16); and His Word is at work (Is. 55:10-11). Paul's heart must have hurt when he received news about the problems plaguing the Corinthian church. In my own life, I long to see churches that I've pastored be healthy and strong. It hurts to hear _____ reports about those churches. A careful study of 1 Corinthians positions the church to be all God desires. Paul's letter to the Corinthians reveals that it matters what we _____ and how we _____.

- Rely on the _____ (1 Cor. 2:12)
- Select _____ with discernment (1 Cor. 3:10-17)
- Run the race with the _____ in mind (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
- Handle _____ God's Way (1 Cor. 10:13)
- Live for God's _____ (1 Cor. 10:31)
- Discover the purpose of _____ (1 Cor. 12:1)
- Practice the power of _____ (1 Cor. 13:4-8)
- Learn to discern _____ (1 Cor. 14:33)
- Worship the Lord in an _____ manner (1 Cor. 14:40)
- Choose _____ (relationships) with caution (1 Cor. 15:33)
- Focus on what is _____ (1 Cor. 15:58)

What was missing in the Corinthian church? It's apparent that _____ was absent. Paul called God people to love the Lord, one another, and people outside the faith family. Our vision statement says, "FBC Clarksville exists to worship God, love people, share Jesus, and make disciples." That leads to a healthy church!

1 Corinthians: The Absence of Spiritual Growth

Paul spoke many of his **strongest** words to the Corinthian church. The church faced issues relevant to churches in our day.

- **Doctrinal** disagreement
- **Spiritual** infancy
- **Relational** division
- **Ungodly** behaviors
- **Worship** problems

What do we know about the **city** and **people** of Corinth? Corinth was a beautiful city, showcasing lovely palm trees and buildings. It was a resort city and the capital of pleasure for the Roman Empire. People in Corinth were known to pursue **pleasure** and **wisdom**. Corinth was a Greek city. False worship characterized the city. A temple was in the city and was dedicated to the goddess of love, Aphrodite. Sexual pleasure was the god of the day. It was estimated that at least 10,000 prostitutes were attached to the temple.

As for **wisdom**, the Corinthians loved to gather and debate the ideas, doctrines, and philosophies of men. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had their **followers** in the city. People possessed a love for wisdom. Does the way Corinth is described sound familiar to life in our day? Can you imagine trying to reach people for Christ and trying to plant a church in that kind of environment? That's the context for Paul's **call** and **ministry**. Paul left Thessalonica under pressure. He spent time in Berea and Athens. God used Paul in Athens on Mars Hill. Paul left that area and entered Corinth. He stayed in Corinth for nearly two years, preaching the Gospel and making tents for a living.

In my pastoral ministry, and in consulting with pastor search committees, I've used Paul's words in 1 Cor. 1:1-9 to challenge **churches** and **committees**. What do you need to look for in a **pastor**?

1. **Converted** – "Paul"
2. **Called** – "Paul called by"
3. **Committed** – "The will of God"
4. **Connected** – "Our brother Sosthenes"
5. **Convicted** – "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

The church at Corinth was in **trouble**. Paul called God's people to experience **unity**. Paul said, "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). The Lord's church can disagree about minor and secondary issues. However, it's imperative that God's people agree

about major and primary beliefs. As one might imagine, Paul never lost sight of the power and relevance of the **cross**. He said, *“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”* (1 Cor. 1:18). It’s apparent in the biblical text that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, and it’s verifiable that the Corinthians wrote to him. Paul said, *“Now concerning the matters about which you wrote”* (1 Cor. 7:1). The Corinthians were concerned about several matters.

1. Is it right to **marry**?
2. Is possible to **offend** God and a weaker brother or sister in Christ?
3. Is the Lord’s Table an act of authentic **worship**?

Paul spent a great deal of time addressing issues related to **spiritual gifts**. What’s the divine purpose of spiritual gifts?

1. Verify One’s **Salvation**.
2. **Glorify** God the Father.
3. Strengthen the Lord’s **Church**.
4. Equips God’s People for **Ministry**.

Paul proclaimed **principles** to the Corinthians that speak to life and ministry in our day. God’s Word is living and active (Heb. 4:12); His Word is inspired and infallible (2 Tim. 3:16); and His Word is at work (Is. 55:10-11). Paul’s heart must have hurt when he received news about the problems plaguing the Corinthian church. In my own life, I long to see churches that I’ve pastored be healthy and strong. It hurts to hear **negative** reports about those churches. A careful study of 1 Corinthians positions the church to be all God desires. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians reveals that it matters what we **believe** and how we **behave**.

- Rely on the **Holy Spirit** (1 Cor. 2:12)
- Select **building materials** with discernment (1 Cor. 3:10-17)
- Run the race with the **end** in mind (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
- Handle **temptation** God’s Way (1 Cor. 10:13)
- Live for God’s **glory** (1 Cor. 10:31)
- Discover the purpose of **spiritual gifts** (1 Cor. 12:1)
- Practice the power of **love** (1 Cor. 13:4-8)
- Learn to discern **God’s will** (1 Cor. 14:33)
- Worship the Lord in an **orderly** manner (1 Cor. 14:40)
- Choose **friends** (relationships) with caution (1 Cor. 15:33)
- Focus on what is **eternal** (1 Cor. 15:58)

What was missing in the Corinthian church? It’s apparent that **love** was absent. Paul called God people to love the Lord, one another, and people outside the faith family. Our vision statement says, “FBC Clarksville exists to worship God, love people, share Jesus, and make disciples.” That leads to a healthy church!