

Corinthians: More Resources

Megathemes in 1 Corinthians*

MORE RESOURCES FOR 1 CORINTHIANS

Theme	Explanation	Importance
Loyalties	The Corinthians were rallying around various church leaders and teachers—Peter, Paul, and Apollos. These loyalties led to intellectual pride and created a spirit of division in the church.	Our loyalty to human leaders or human wisdom must never divide Christians into camps. We must care for our fellow believers, not fight with them. Your allegiance must be to Christ. Let Him lead you.
Immorality	Paul received a report of uncorrected sexual sin in the church at Corinth. The people had grown indifferent to immorality. Others had misconceptions about marriage. We are to live morally, keeping our bodies for God's service at all times.	Christians must never compromise with sinful ideas and practices. We should not blend in with people around us. You must live up to God's standard of morality and not condone immoral behavior, even if society accepts it.
Freedom	Paul taught freedom of choice on practices not expressly forbidden in Scripture. Some believers felt certain actions—like eating the meat of animals used in pagan rituals—were corrupt by association. Others felt free to participate in such actions without feeling that they had sinned.	We are free in Christ, yet we must not abuse our Christian freedom by being inconsiderate and insensitive to others. We must never encourage others to do something they feel is wrong just because we have done it. Let love guide your behavior.
Worship	Paul addressed disorder in worship. People were taking the Lord's Supper without first confessing sin. There was misuse of spiritual gifts and confusion over women's roles in the church.	Worship must be carried out properly and in an orderly manner. Everything we do to worship God should be done in a manner worthy of his high honor. Make sure that worship is harmonious, useful, and edifying to all believers.
Resurrection	Some people denied that Christ rose from the dead. Others felt that people would not physically be resurrected. Christ's resurrection assures us that we will have new, living bodies after we die. The hope of the resurrection forms the secret of Christian confidence.	Since we will be raised again to life after we die, our life is not in vain. We must stay faithful to God in our morality and our service. We are to live today knowing we will spend eternity with Christ.

MORE RESOURCES FOR 1 CORINTHIANS

Highlights of 1 Corinthians*

The Meaning of the Cross Be considerate of one another because of what Christ has (1:18-2:16) done for us. There is no place for pride or a know-it-all attitude. We are to have the mind of Christ.

The Story of the Last Supper The Last Supper is a time of reflection on Christ's final (11:23-29) words to His disciples before He died on the cross; believers must celebrate this in an orderly and correct manner.

The Poem of Love Love is to guide all that believers do. Christians have (13:1-13) different gifts, abilities, likes, dislikes—but they are called, without exception, to love.

The Christian's Destiny Christ, who died for sins, promised that just as He had (15:42-58) come back to life after death, so believers' perishable bodies will be exchanged for heavenly bodies. They will live and reign with Christ.

The Right Way to Make Choices

Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church contains several verses that can help us make the right choice whenever we are faced with a certain situation or decision. Many choices—like what color socks should you wear today (if you wear socks)—don't require deep thought. But others require us to ask key questions.

So, when faced with a decision on an important issue, ask yourself one or more of the following questions related to 1 Corinthians:

- Does it help my witness for Christ? (9:19-22)
- Am I motivated by a desire to help others to know Christ? (9:23; 10:33)
- Does it help me do my best? (9:25)
- Is it against a specific command in Scripture and would therefore cause me to sin? (10:12)
- Is it the best and most beneficial course of action? (10:23; 33)
- Am I thinking only of myself, or do I truly care about the other person? (10:24)
- Am I acting lovingly or selfishly? (10:28-31)
- Will it cause someone else to sin? (10:32)
- Does it glorify God? (10:31)

Why Believe in the Resurrection?

In the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul makes it clear that the resurrection of Jesus Christ really happened. In fact, he goes even farther and says that if Christ were not raised from the dead, then “we have hope in Christ only for this life [and] we are the most miserable people in the world” (15:19).

“But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead,” Paul continues. “He has become the first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again” (15:20).

Throughout 1 Corinthians 15, Paul backs up his claim by giving several reasons why we can believe in the resurrection of Christ:

- The Resurrection is the central theme of the gospel message (2-4)
- The Resurrection is a fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament (3-4)
- The Resurrection was attested to by many eyewitnesses (5-8)
- If there is no such thing as resurrection, then Christ could not have been raised (13,16)
- If Christians will not one day be resurrected, their faith is useless (14,17)
- If there is no Resurrection, then the apostles were all liars (15)
- The resurrection of Christ is a factual, historical event (20)

Paul also gives us some clues as to what the resurrection of all believers is all about:

- The resurrection of all believers is a factual event to occur when Christ returns (23)
- Resurrection includes a resurrection of physical bodies, not just spirits (35-49)
- Resurrected bodies will live for eternity, never to die again (50; 53-56)
- Because of the promised resurrection, nothing done for Christ is done in vain (58)

MORE RESOURCES FOR 2 CORINTHIANS

Megathemes in 2 Corinthians*

Theme	Explanation	Importance
Trials	Paul experienced great suffering, persecution, and opposition in his ministry. He even struggled with a personal weakness—a “thorn” in the flesh. Through it all, Paul affirmed God’s faithfulness.	God is faithful. His strength is sufficient for any trial. When trials come, they keep us from pride and teach us dependence on God. He comforts us so we can comfort others.
Church Discipline	Paul defends his role in church discipline. Neither immorality nor false teaching could be ignored. The church was to be neither too lax nor too severe in administering discipline. The church was to restore the corrected person when he or she repented.	The goal of all discipline in the church should be correction, not vengeance. For churches to be effective, they must confront and solve problems, not ignore them. In everything, we must act in love.
Hope	To encourage the Corinthians as they faced trials, Paul reminded them that they would receive new bodies in heaven. This would be a great victory in contrast to their present suffering.	To know we will receive new bodies offers us hope. No matter what adversity we face, we can keep going. Our faithful service will result in triumph.
Giving	Paul organized a collection of funds for the poor in the Jerusalem church. Many of the Asian churches gave money. Paul explains and defends his beliefs about giving, and he urges the Corinthians to follow through on their previous commitment.	Like the Corinthians, we should follow through on our financial commitments. Our giving must be generous, sacrificial, well planned, and based on need. Our generosity not only helps those in need but enables them to thank God.
Sound Doctrine	False teachers were challenging Paul’s ministry and authority as an apostle. Paul asserts his authority in order to preserve correct Christian doctrine. His sincerity, his love for Christ, and his concern for the people were his defense.	We should share Paul’s concern for correct teaching in our churches. But in so doing, we must share his motivation—love for Christ and people—and his sincerity.

Differences between 1 and 2 Corinthians*

The two letters in the Bible to the Corinthian church are very different. Here are a few:

1 Corinthians is *Practical*

- Focuses on the character of the Corinthian church
- Deals with questions on marriage, freedom, spiritual gifts, and order in the church
- Paul instructs in matters concerning the church's well-being
- Contains advice to help the church combat the pagan influences in the wicked city of Corinth

2 Corinthians is *Personal*

- Focuses on Paul as he bares his soul and tells of his love for the Corinthian church
- Deals with the problem of false teachers, whereby Paul defends his authority and the truth of the message
- Paul give his testimony because he knows that acceptance of his advice is vital to the church's well-being
- Contains testimony to help the church combat the havoc caused by false teachers

How to Please God*

In 2 Corinthians 5:9, Paul writes: "So our aim is to please him always, whether we are in this body or away from this body." Our goal should always be to please God. Here are some other verses in the New Testament that affirm this principle:

John 8:29

Galatians 6:8

Colossians 1:9-10

1 Thessalonians 2:4

1 Thessalonians 4:1

Hebrews 11:6

1 John 3:22

Principles of Confrontation in 2 Corinthians*

There is a proper way to confront another person, but confrontation must be used with caution. The purpose of any rebuke, confrontation, or discipline should always be to help people, not hurt them. Here are some verses from 2 Corinthians that offer guidelines:

- Be firm and bold (7:9; 10:2)
- Affirm all you see that is good (7:4)
- Be accurate and honest (7:14; 8:21)
- Know the facts (11:22-27)
- Follow up after the confrontation (7:13; 12:14)
- Be gentle after being firm (7:15; 13:11-13)
- Speak words that reflect Christ's message, not your own ideas (10:3; 10:12-13; 12:19)
- Use discipline only when all else fails (13:2)

**Resources taken from the Tyndale Handbook of Bible Charts and Maps*