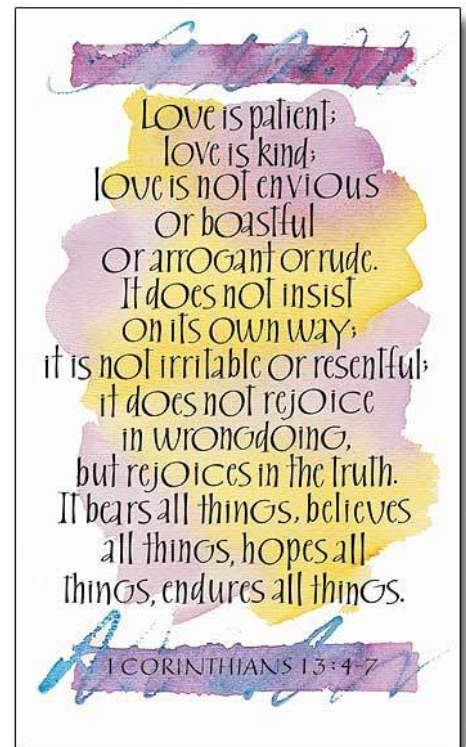


## 46 - 1 Corinthians: Correction to a Carnal Church

- Written from Ephesus around A.D. 55-57. Corinth was located about 40 miles west of Athens; it was a great commercial center, also **center of sin and carnal lifestyle**, the vices of the world collected there. About 400,000 people lived there. Their religion and philosophy was debased, given over to drunkenness, pleasure and licentiousness. A word coined there meant "*corinthianize*," or to go to the limit in sin. Corinthians were known for their extreme sinfulness.
- Unlike in other letters, **Paul does not commend the believers in the Church at Corinth**. These people had some major problems that needed to be corrected. Like the worldly people in Corinth, the people in the church had worldly thinking, worldly values, and worldly behavior. They were full of pride and concerned mostly about social status. They needed quick correction and a permanent solution to their problems.
- Paul wrote to correct errors in the church**. They had written Paul questions about political issues, religion, domestic issues, paganism, morality. There is reference made to a previous letter which we don't have. This first letter was actually the 2nd or 3rd to this fledgling, struggling church group. Paul preached the supremacy of Jesus, and His lordship. He is the answer to every problem. This letter also presents the doctrine of the resurrection, making this book very important to Christian understanding of life after death.
- Paul points out that the world's wisdom is foolishness**. A key verse is presented immediately in the first chapter: "*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. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."*" (1:18-19) This is critical for us to understand. Worldly wisdom leads to destruction.



### Highlights

Introduction and Correction for Errors Chapters 1-6	Answers to Their Questions Chapters 7-11	Spiritual Gifts Chap 12-14	Resurrection 101 Chapter 15	Conclusion And Benediction Chapter 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction (<i>grateful for grace and their use of spiritual gifts, but doesn't commend them for much else</i>) 1:1-9</li> <li>Reproof of Sin: divisions in the Church 1:10-4:21</li> <li>The problem, divisions, self righteousness 1:10-17</li> <li>Reasons for the problem 1:18-2:16 (focused on worldly rather than Godly things)</li> <li>Results of the Problem</li> <li>Immaturity, stunted spiritual growth 3:1-9</li> <li>Their behavior causes loss of rewards 3:10-23</li> <li>Judging, comparing others 4:3</li> <li>Stewardship, accountability, authority, human wisdom vs. divine wisdom (solutions to their problems) 4:1-21</li> <li>Discipline of Sinners in the Church 5:1-13</li> <li>Disputes and Settlements in the Church 6:1-8</li> <li>Immoral Living, Living for Christ 6:9-20</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerning Marriage 7:1-40</li> <li>Celibacy 7:1-9, 25-40</li> <li>Divorce 7:10-24</li> <li>Meat Sacrificed to Idols 8:1-11:1</li> <li>Public Worship 11:2-34</li> <li>The Role of Women 11:2-16</li> <li>The Lord's Supper 11:17-34</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct use of Spiritual Gifts, 12:1-14:40</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proofs of resurrection, 15:1-58</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offerings for the church in Jerusalem 16:2</li> <li>Treatment of Timothy and Apollos 16:10-12</li> <li>Greetings and Benediction 16:13-24</li> </ul>

- **The Corinthians placed their trust in worldly thinking**, but Paul immediately points out that worldly thinking leads to destruction. To the world the saving message of the Gospel is foolishness, but those of us who are being saved by it, it is everything. The last half of chapter 1 is dedicated to making this point first (before dealing with all the other issues), as the Corinthians way of thinking was mired in the world. They needed to rely on the wisdom of God alone.
- **Chapters 1-6 deal mostly with a statement of their problems, and the solution to them** – the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Paul ticks off their problems one by one (church divisions, lack of church discipline, internal lawsuits, abuse of Christian freedoms, immaturity, lack of stewardship and accountability, self-righteousness, immoral living, and the subsequent lack of rewards for such behavior.
- **Chapters 7-11 deals with some questions** they had apparently asked Paul about, such as certain issues regarding marriage, celibacy, divorce, meat sacrificed to idols, unbecoming behavior during worship, the role of women, and other issues. He answers their questions in these chapters.
- **Chapters 12-14 are important chapters for all Spirit-filled believers regarding the role and use of the Spiritual gifts.** This church placed far too much emphasis on speaking in tongues. While it is a Spiritual gift, it is not to be abused at the expense of the other gifts. This section lays out the manner in which the gifts are to be used within the Body of Christ.
- In the middle of two chapters dealing with the gifts, Paul diverts slightly to present the **well-known “love chapter” 13.** Paul details that while the gifts are important, love is the chief component of a believer’s life and behavior. Love is put on above the gifts, and therefore dictates their use. If the gifts are used without love, then they become a noisy distraction, not what God intended. He begins this amazing chapter, so often quoted at weddings, with the warning: *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.”* (13:1) He reminds them that they should not be acting like children anymore, and should be growing mature in their faith. He ends the chapter with a reminder of what is most important: *“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”* (13:13)
- **Chapter 15 can be called “the Resurrection Chapter.”** It opens with a very precise description of exactly what the Gospel is (this should be a good reference point for us!): *“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,…”* (15:1-4)
- This chapter 15 continues with one of the most important **teachings on the resurrection of the dead**, our incorrupt bodies, our victory over death and life with God forever. It is a passage of scripture that should be read and understood by all Christians. The truths here will change lives, and will change how we live as Christians. Paul was correcting some misunderstandings (*some did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, the sect of the Sadducees in particular*), but in so doing, provided us some very amazing truths to trust. Paul doesn’t mention the teachings of Jesus. That is not the Gospel. The Gospel is the good news that Jesus died for our sins, and lives today so that we can live with Him forever. It’s that simple.
- **The letter summarized:** Paul first rebukes the church for their divisions (they had formed into sort of “fan clubs” following various human leaders, rather than one divine God), and chastises them for accepting the wisdom and philosophy of men (contrasted to divine revelation) which corrupted the simplicity of the Gospel. He condemns their conduct regarding an incest within the group, and urges them to cast out the sinner, and shames them about going to pagan authorities to settle their differences with each other. He rebukes about fornication, answers several questions, discusses cases involving marriage, talks about things offered to idols, discusses the care of their pastors, warns about idolatry, and points out very un-Christ-like behavior at the Lord’s Supper. He spends three chapters on the spiritual gifts, but warns of division over them and urges love above all. He corrects some errors about the gifts, proves the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (some had denied this), encourages them to take an offering for the poor believers.

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? 3:16