

1 Corinthians – Lesson 2

Introductory Material:

Written by the apostle Paul to the church of God at Corinth approximately 55-57 A.D. from Ephesus.

Simple Outline:

Division (chapters 1-4)	
Incest (5)	
Lawsuits/Prostitutes (6)	
*Sex and Marriage (7)	“Now concerning”
*Idol meat (8-10)	“Now concerning”
Veils/Abuse of the Lord’s Supper (11)	
*Spiritual Gifts (12-14)	“Now concerning”
Resurrection (15)	
*Contribution/Conclusion (16)	“Now concerning”
(* – Asked by the Corinthians)	

Detailed Outline:

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1–9)

A. Salutation (1:1–3)

B. Thanksgiving (1:4–9)

II. IN RESPONSE TO REPORTS (1:10–6:20)

A. A Church Divided—Internally and Against Paul (1:10–4:21)

1. The Problem—Division over Leaders in the Name of Wisdom (1:10–17)

2. The Gospel—a Contradiction to Wisdom (1:18–2:5)

a. God’s folly—a crucified Messiah (1:18–25)

b. God’s folly—the Corinthian believers (1:26–31)

c. God’s folly—Paul’s preaching (2:1–5)

3. God’s Wisdom—Revealed by the Spirit (2:6–16)

4. On Being Spiritual and Divided (3:1–4)

5. Correcting a False View of Church and Ministry (3:5–17)

a. Leaders are merely servants (3:5–9)

b. The church must be built with care (3:10–15)

c. Warning to those who would destroy the church, God’s temple in Corinth (3:16–17)

6. Conclusion of the Matter—All are Christ’s (3:18–23)

7. The Corinthians and Their Apostle (4:1–21)

a. On being a servant and being judged (4:1–5)

b. The marks of true apostleship (4:6–13)

c. Appeal and exhortation (4:14–21)

B. Immorality and Litigation: Test Cases of the Crisis of Authority and Gospel (5:1–6:20)

1. The Case of the Incestuous Man (5:1–13)

a. Paul’s judgment—he must be expelled (5:1–5)

b. Argument by analogy—the Passover (5:6–8)

c. Correcting a “misunderstanding” (5:9–13)

2. A Case of Litigation (6:1–11)
 - a. Shame on the church (6:1–6)
 - b. Shame on the plaintiff and warning against the wrongdoer (6:7–11)
3. On Going to the Prostitutes (6:12–20)¹

Typical Pauline letter:

1. Greeting
Sender – recipient – greeting
2. Prayer
Thanksgiving/petition
3. Body
Normally, theological then ethical
4. Conclusion

¹ Paul, **called** (κλητός) **to be an apostle** (ἀπόστολος) of Jesus Christ **through** (διά) the will of God, and Sosthenes **our** brother, ² **To the church** (ἐκκλησία = ἐκ + καλέω) of God which is at Corinth, to those who are **sanctified** (ἀγιάζω) in Christ Jesus, **called** (κλητός) **to be saints** (ἅγιος), with all who in every place **call on** (ἐπικαλέω) the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: ³ **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1:1 – Paul’s apostleship was by divine calling (*Romans 1:1, 5; Galatians 1:1*) – “**through**” or “**by means of**” (διά) **the will of God**; ἀπόστολος – “one sent” (*Matthew 10:1-5; Acts 22:21; 26:17*); Barnabas and Saul – *Acts 13:1-2; 14:14* (ἀπόστολοι); see also *Acts 1:15-26*. **Sosthenes – the (ὁ) brother** – same as *Acts 18:17*? Very probably Sosthenes was Paul’s amanuensis or secretary in this instance – *1 Cor. 16:21*.

1:2 – **To the ἐκκλησία (“called out”)** – the church, congregation, gathering, assembly (*Acts 19:32-41*) – **of God in Corinth** (*2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1*). **Sanctified** (ἀγιάζω) – consecrated, dedicated, set apart for God’s service – **made and kept holy**. **Called** (κλητός) **to be saints** (ἅγιος) – dedicated to God, holy, sacred, i.e. reserved or set apart for God’s service – believers, loyal followers or Christians consecrated to God. The church in Corinth was composed of those who had been sanctified (or saints) just as the church in every place is composed of those who also call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (or the saved) – *Acts 2:21; 22:16; Romans 10:12-13*. The same Lord is Savior of both the church at Corinth and the saints everywhere (*Eph. 4:4-6*).

1:3 – **Grace** (Χάρις) **to you and peace** (εἰρήνη) – a combined Greek and Hebrew greeting. The Jews would greet one another with *shalom* or peace while the traditional Hellenistic greeting was “**Greetings!**” (Χαίρειν) – *Acts 15:23* and *James 1:1*. Except for a few manuscript differences (e.g., *1 Thessalonians* and *Colossians*), Paul always includes the source of this grace and peace: **from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

¹ Fee, G. D. (1987). *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (21–22). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.