

Christ and Culture in Conflict...

Paul's letters to the

Corinthians

Part 1 – First Corinthians

Study Series prepared by Graeme Offer

Foreword

The Corinthian letters provide great insight into a church that was battling with a local culture that was at odds with God. Unlike parts of the Roman letter, the doctrine is not *hard to understand* (1 Pet 3:15-16), although the *applications* that it requires have and will bring many to quite a few sleepless nights.

This study is not intended to present a scholarly approach to the book – in fact on the contrary, it is intended to enable the readers to understand and comprehend the message – just as the readers in the first century church at Corinth would have understood it. I am *not* against a scholarly approach to bible study, but the purpose of this study is to give an *ordinary bible reader*, a broader understanding of the letter.

A note on "convention". I plan to study the two Corinthian letters as two parts of one extended study. Therefore whenever I have referenced a scripture passage as 1:3:1 or 2:3:1 being the first verse of the third chapter of the first and second letter respectively.

Throughout the studies, I have mostly quoted from the New International Version (NIV), and have attributed the quotations accordingly. Occasionally, I have used the New King James Version (NKJV) and sometimes used a word or two from the King James Version (KJV) where that version (in my opinion) better describes the point the author is trying to get across. On occasions where quotations appear that are not referenced, they are my paraphrase of what the verse says, and may or may not bear similarity to recognized translations.

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My usual teaching style is to hand out the outline for each lesson at the start of the lesson. I will often discuss last week's homework, or the background / introduction section as a way of getting the class "into gear" in the process. The questions on the outline are designed to help us come to a grasp of the main issues that Paul wants the readers to understand, and to form an outline of the class. They are not designed to identify the micro-issues, although the class discussion may get into some of these. I hand out the notes at the end of the class. They are designed to answer all of the questions that were raised in the outline sheet – often in more detail than that covered in the class. I almost never hand out the notes at the start of the class. I have found that where I have done that it always results in people reading what is on the page and feeding that back during the class without really thinking about or sometimes even comprehending what is there. The notes also serve the very useful purposes of allowing those who may miss one of the classes to *catch up*, as well as providing a review of the material covered for those who were present. It is almost inevitable that some areas in the notes will not be discussed during the class, and that many issues will come to light during the class discussions that are not in the notes. The notes therefore provide a *compliment* to the class discussions.

I **always** set homework, and that includes a few thought-provoking questions that go beyond the things that we have covered in the class.

My prayer is that those who use this material will find it exciting, edifying, encouraging, and relevant to our present situation as together we consider some of the practicalities of the gospel and the implications and relevance of God's power and grace to our walk with God and our daily struggles to live the christian life.

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This study series was initially prepared for the Cairns church of Christ, beginning in January 2005.

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