

1 Corinthians

Bible Studies

DERAILED...
HOW NOT TO DO CHURCH



Chapters 1-9

About CoastEC Home Groups



The main purpose of our home groups is to help each other become more mature disciples of Jesus. As we do life together in the Word, we want to encourage and challenge each other grow in our knowledge of God, our love for Jesus, our likeness to Him, and our commitment to living for His glory

Some of the main ingredients of Home Groups are...

- **Bible Study** – discover more of God in His Word and how to live for Him
- **Prayer** – bring each others needs before the throne of grace
- **Fellowship** – enjoy& deepen friendships as brothers & sisters in Christ
- **Pastoral Care** – look after one another (and ‘adopt’ a few others)
- **Mission** – partner with each other in sharing the gospel with others

At the back of this booklet is space for you to write down the names of people your group will be ‘adopting’. There is also space to keep a ‘list’ of people that you and others in your group will be praying for opportunities to share the gospel with. Please take some time to fill them out and pray for them.

Intro to the studies

I've had lots of Christians tell me they wish the modern church was more like the early church. They obviously haven't ever read 1 Corinthians! This church was going off the rails big time. There was conflict and division; jealousy and pride over spiritual gifts; gross sexual immorality; Christians were taking each other to court and using their freedom in selfish and harmful ways, and lots of other crazy stuff.

Paul had planted the church at Corinth when he went there on mission and preached the gospel (Acts 18:1-18). Now he's heard some disturbing reports and received a letter from them asking lots of questions. So he writes them a letter to try and address the various issues (which are very much alive and kicking in the church today) and to untangle the mess.

As we study 1 Corinthians together for the first half of this year, it will probably raise some personal and theological issues that you feel strongly about. Let's have an honest look at ourselves and our beliefs in light of the Word of God – and let God have the final say. My prayer is that we'll all be humble enough to let God shape us as His Spirit opens our eyes to the truth, and that we'd be empowered to live more fully under the Lordship of Christ, to the glory of God.

Chris.

Study 1	1 Corinthians 1:1-16	Divided We Fall
Study 2	1 Corinthians 1:17 – 2:5	Foolish Wisdom
Study 3	1 Corinthians 2:6-16	Secret Wisdom
Study 4	1 Corinthians 3	God's Co-workers
Study 5	1 Corinthians 4	Scum Of The Earth
Study 6	1 Corinthians 5	Deal With It
Study 7	1 Corinthians 6	Bought At A Price
Study 8	1 Corinthians 7	Singleness & Marriage
Study 9	1 Corinthians 8	Freedom #1
Study 10	1 Corinthians 9	Freedom #2

* A big thanks to my friends Ash Hooker & Stephen Gibson for the use of their material for these studies.

Study #1 - 1 Corinthians 1:1-16 (Divided we Fall)

What's one crazy story you've heard about a church that was 'off the rails'?

How do you think that issue should be dealt with?

Bible Study

Read v1-3

Who is Paul writing to? Is it relevant to us?

Paul planted the church, but who does he say it belongs to?

What is God calling his church to be like?

What might that look like in practice?

Read v4-9

In light of how "off the rails" they are as a church, what is surprising about his tone with them and how he prays?

What great assurance does he give to Christians who are far from perfect?

How should this impact how we live now?

Read v10-16

What's the problem with their church? (v11-12)

How might that have developed?

How is it dangerous?

What does Paul want them to do about it? And why does he want it? (v10)

How does the same problem happen today among God's people?

How can modern Christians avoid falling into the same trap?

What can you personally do to stop this becoming an issue at CoastEC?

Pray

When you think about the church of God at CoastEC, what can you thank God for?

Memory verse

"He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful" (1 Cor 1:8-9)

Study #2 - 1 Corinthians 1:17–2:5 (Foolish Wisdom)

What's something you've done that you thought was wise at the time, but ended up being foolish?

What's hard about sharing 'the message of the cross' with unbelievers?

What have you found is hard for them to understand?

Bible Study

Read 1:17 and 2:1-5

What approach did Paul take when he told the message of Jesus to the Corinthians?

Why did he take this approach?

Do you think it's the best strategy?

Read 1:18-25

How does Paul describe the message of the cross, or the gospel?

What are the limitations of 'human wisdom'?

Jews demand signs. Greeks seek wisdom. (1:22).

How do your non-believing family and friends assess the validity of religious claims?

Is there any place for philosophical debate and discussion in sharing the gospel?

The gospel was a 'stumbling block' to Jews and 'foolishness' to Gentiles. In what ways do people today consider the gospel foolish or offensive?

What challenges or encouragements are there in this passage for you as you talk to people about the message of the cross? Do you need to adjust your 'strategy' in any way?

Pray

- a) For confidence in 'the power of the foolish gospel' to save those who believe
- b) for courage to share that message with the 3 people on your 'list'.

Memory verse

"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" (1 Cor 1:18)

Study #3 - 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 (Secret Wisdom)

What's one of the best pieces of wisdom you've been given by someone you know?

Have you ever been unable to explain something to someone that you thought was easy, but they found hard to grasp? What was it about?

Bible Study

Read 1 Cor 2:6-16

How does Paul describe God's wisdom? (v6-7)

Who do you think Paul has in mind when he refers to the "rulers of this age"? (v6,8)

Who are the rulers of 'our' age?

What does the Holy Spirit do? (v10-13). Write this in your own words

How does the un-spiritual person respond the “things of the spirit of God”?
Why? (v14)

How smart do you have to be to understand God’s wisdom?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in evangelism?

How should that shape the way do evangelism?

Pray

- a) Thank God for his kindness to us (v9-10)
- b) Pray for the Spirit to be at work in the lives of the people on your ‘list’.

Memory verse

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2:9)

Study #4 - 1 Corinthians 3 (God's co-workers)

Do you consider yourself to be a 'practical, hands on' person, or not?

What's been your best effort at either gardening or building?

What do you think is the key to a successful garden or to building well?

Bible Study

Read 1 Cor 3:1-4

What problem does Paul identify in the church at Corinth? (see also 1:11-12, and for some background on Apollos, check out Acts 18:24-28)

Paul uses lots of different images to describe the church in this chapter – a garden, a building, a temple.

The garden (v5-9)

What point is he trying to make?

How should this affect the way we relate to our leaders? (see also v21)

The building site (v9-15)

What's the foundation?

What does it mean to build on the foundation?

Paul describes two types of building materials – those that survive the test on the last day, and those that don't. From what you've already seen in 1 Corinthians, what do they both represent?

How can we make sure that the building work done here at CoastEC will stand the test on the last day? What steps can you take to help make this happen?

The temple (v16-17)

How can someone 'destroy' God's temple? What is God's warning to them?

What encouragements and warnings are there for Christian workers in this chapter?

How are we to understand the "reward" Paul speaks about in verses 8 and 14?

Pray

- a) Thank God for those who have planted, watered and built into your life and CoastEC
- b) Pray for our work to stand the test on the last day

Memory verse

"Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow" (1 Cor 3:7)

Study #5 - 1 Corinthians 4 (Scum of the earth)

In Australia there are over 10,000 ministers across all denominations who have left full-time paid ministry. What factors do you think might be involved in this?

Have you ever been mocked for being into something that others thought was weird? How did you respond? Are you still into it?

Bible Study

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-7

How does Paul describe gospel workers? (v1-2)

Who is Paul accountable to? Who is he not? (v3-5)

The Corinthians may have been judging Paul because his preaching was plain and focussed on the cross. In what sense should Christian leaders not worry about how people judge them? Can they ignore every criticism, or does Paul mean something else?

What does Paul mean by “*Do not go beyond what is written*”, and how will this prevent the Corinthians taking pride in one leader over against another? (v6-7)

Read 1 Corinthians 4:8-21

Does Paul really think that the Corinthians are “rich”, “kings” and “wise”? (v8). See also 3:1-4. What point is Paul trying to make?

How is the lifestyle and reputation of Christian workers described? (v9-13)

Some people today want to claim that the Christian life is a life of triumph, glory, comfort and success. What would you say to them?

What kind of leader is worth imitating? (v14-21)

In light of this, what’s challenging about what Paul urges them to do? (v16)
What changes in your thinking and actions are needed?

If you’re in leadership, how does this passage challenge or encourage you?

Pray

- a) For Christian leaders and teachers to be faithful servants (v1-2) who seek to please God not men (v3-5), who set an example worth imitating (v16-17), and who persevere through their trials.
- b) For power to follow godly examples and to humbly respond to godly leadership

Memory verse(s)

*“We are fools for Christ...the scum of the earth” (1 Cor 4:10,13) or
“When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;
when we are slandered, we answer kindly” (1 Cor 4:12-13)*

Study #6 - 1 Corinthians 5 (Deal with it)

Sometimes the behaviour of Christians and churches is a turn-off to those outside the church. And it's not just the sin itself (which many label as hypocrisy), it's also the way the sin is dealt with that (either too harshly, or covered up and swept under the rug, or not addressed at all).

In 1 Corinthians 5 and 6, Paul addresses the issue of sin in the church community, and how the church as a community should deal with it.

Bible Study

Sin IN the church

Read 1 Corinthians 5

What is going on in the Corinthian church and how have they responded to it? (v1-2)

According to Paul how should they deal with people who call themselves Christians and are part their church, who won't repent of their sin? Why?

"Handing the man over to Satan" sounds both severe and spooky. But what does Paul actually mean them to do? (See v 2, 7 and 11).

Is this how we are to treat every Christian who struggles with sin? (v11)

How would you react if you heard that someone had been asked not to come to CoastEC, or the home group, because of their immoral living? Why?

Can you think of any situations today where we might need to put someone out of our fellowship?

How practically would we go about doing this? (Who would be responsible for implementing it?)

What things might make us reluctant to do it?

Have you ever seen church discipline done well?

A happy ending?

In 2 Corinthians 2, Paul talks about restoring to fellowship a brother who has sinned and been removed from the church (possibly the same person mentioned here in 1 Corinthians 5). Paul says, “Now... you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.” (2 Cor 2:7-8).

Sin OUTSIDE the church

Read v9-13

How are the Corinthians to respond to those outside the church who are sinning? (v9-13)

From this passage what place, if any, do Christians have in speaking against the sin of non-Christians? Why?

Pray

- a) For us to take our own sin seriously and to repent of it
- b) For us to take others sin seriously (those who call themselves believers but who won't repent) and deal with it in a biblical way.
- c) For us to respond rightly to those who call us to godliness.

Memory verse(s)

“Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?” (1 Cor 5:6) or

“What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church?” (1 Cor 5:12)

Study #7 - 1 Corinthians 6 (Bought at a price)

This study continues the theme from last week. In 1 Corinthians 5 and 6, Paul is addressing the issue of sin in the church community, and how the church as a community should deal with it.

Bible Study

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

What is going on in the church, and why is it wrong?

According to Paul why is it a problem when Christians take each other to court?

How should Christians handle disputes with each other?

“Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?” (v7). When do you find it difficult to not cling to your rights?

Do you have any unresolved disputes with other Christians you need to deal with?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

What has God done for the Corinthians? (6:11,20)

Why does Paul remind them of this transformation?

“Everything is permissible for me” (v12) seems to be a quote from some Corinthians who felt they were above the moral rules and that what they did with their bodies had nothing to do with being a Christian. How does Paul address this?

Why is sexual immorality, and other kinds of sin, inappropriate for God’s people?

“Flee from sexual immorality” (v18). What does it look like in everyday life to do that? How are you going with that?

Is there any other wrong-doing mentioned in this chapter that you need to turn from? What practical steps will you take to deal with it?

Pray

Thank God that in Christ, we aren’t what we used to be.

Ask God to help you to turn from sin and to glorify Him with your body.

Memory verse

“You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.” (1 Cor 6:19-20)

Study #8 - 1 Corinthians 7 (Is it better to be single?)

What are some reasons you've heard people give when they are deciding if they should stay single or get married?

Bible Study

Read 1 Corinthians 7 :1-40

What commands or advice does Paul give to the various groups in chapter 7? What reasons (if any) does he give for the command/advice?

Who?	Command/Advice	Reasons
Married people (v3-5,10-17,39)		
Single people (v8,9,32-35)		
Separated people (v10-11)		
Widows (v8,9,32-35,39,40)		
Circumcised (v18-20)		
Uncircumcised (v18-20)		
Slaves (v20-24)		
Engaged / "virgins" (v25,26,36-38)		

Why do you think Paul says people should “remain as they are” in 7:24, 26?
See 7:27-31

In Chapter 7 what is Paul’s overriding concern for the Corinthians?

How are Paul’s views on sex, marriage, singleness and divorce different to the views expressed by people in our culture?

What principals are there in chapter 7 for us in deciding whether to marry or remain single?

What advice does Paul give about choosing a partner (39)?

In your current situation, what encouragement or challenges are there for you in 1 Corinthians 7?

Pray

For each other to “live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord” (v35)

Memory verse

Which verse in chapter 7 is the most applicable to you to memorise?

Study #9 - 1 Corinthians 8 (Free to eat...or not)

What's your favourite food? How often do you enjoy it?

Do you know of any religions that have special dietary regulations?

Bible Study

In first century Corinth, most meat sold in the marketplace had been slaughtered at pagan religious ceremonies in nearby temples. The “god” or idol was offered a portion, the priests and temple assistants took some for themselves, and the left overs were sold at the local butchers to the public. It was also a common social practice to share a meal with a friend down at one of the local temples or places associated with the idol – so the issue of ‘idol meat’ was a tricky one for the Christians. Some had no worries about eating it, but others thought it was sinful. This might seem totally irrelevant to your life (but if you lived in some parts of Asia, South America or Africa you'd be dealing with the same thing). For us, there are some key principles about our Christian freedom, conscience and our concern for other believers that are extremely relevant today.

Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-8

In v4-6, what is Paul establishing?

So why is eating meat offered to idols not wrong, in and of itself?

In v7 he talks about it being wrong for one group of people to eat it.

How does he describe their conscience?

What makes it wrong for them, and is there a general the principle there?

Read 1 Corinthians 8:9-13

In v9-13 he talks about it being wrong for another group to eat it.

What reasons does he give, and what's general the principle for them?

Who are they ultimately sinning against?

What “knowledge” do they have?

What is better than having this knowledge? (v1-2)

So what kind of “freedom” do they have?

(If you have time, read Romans 14:1-15:2. Are there any other principles we should be taking into account?)

What are some issues today that might not be wrong in themselves for a Christian to do, but could lead other believers with weaker consciences to stumble?

How have you seen those with “knowledge” use their freedom to love those with a “weak conscience”? Ever done it yourself?

Are there any areas in your life where you need to change the way you’re “exercising your freedom / rights” because they’re unhelpful to others?

Pray

For members of CoastEC to exercise their knowledge and freedom with sensitivity and love, for the good of others with weaker consciences.

Memory verse

“Be careful that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak”. (1 Cor 8:9)

Study #10 - 1 Corinthians 9 (Free...to be a slave)

We live in a culture that encourages us to demand our rights and to live our lives in the way that pleases us most. Can you think of any situations where it's better to forfeit your rights rather than to insist on them?

Have you ever personally done that? Was it worth it?

Bible Study

Some of the Corinthians didn't think Paul was a 'real' apostle because he didn't seem that impressive. But instead of claiming his rights, he explains to them why he's conducted his ministry in the way he has.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-14

What rights can Paul claim as an apostle? (v4-6)

Why does he have these rights? (v7-12a)

What is the obligation of a church to those who preach the gospel? (v12b-14)

What do you think would be a fair way of determining appropriate support for them?

A large part of CoastEC's budget goes to supporting those who teach the gospel amongst us. What process or principles have you used to decide upon your financial contribution to CoastEC?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:15-23

Instead of claiming his rights, what does Paul do? (v15-18). Why does he do that? What's his motivation and reward?

In v19-23, Paul explains how he uses his freedom. How would you describe

a) his big goal in living the way he does?

b) His strategy?

What would it look like to personally apply that goal and strategy to your life, especially among those who are on 'the list' at the back of this booklet?
What 'rights' might you need to set aside for the sake of the gospel?

The banner under the screen at CoastEC reads: "reaching as many as possible...by all means possible...for the sake of the gospel". How can we better adopt this goal and strategy as a church?

What do you think Paul is getting at in v24-27?

Pray

For members of CoastEC to be generous in their support of gospel work and for our Admin Committee to be good stewards.

For those on our 'list' to turn to Christ, and for wisdom and courage for us to "become all things" to them "to win as many as possible".

Memory verse

"I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel". (1 Cor 9:22-23)

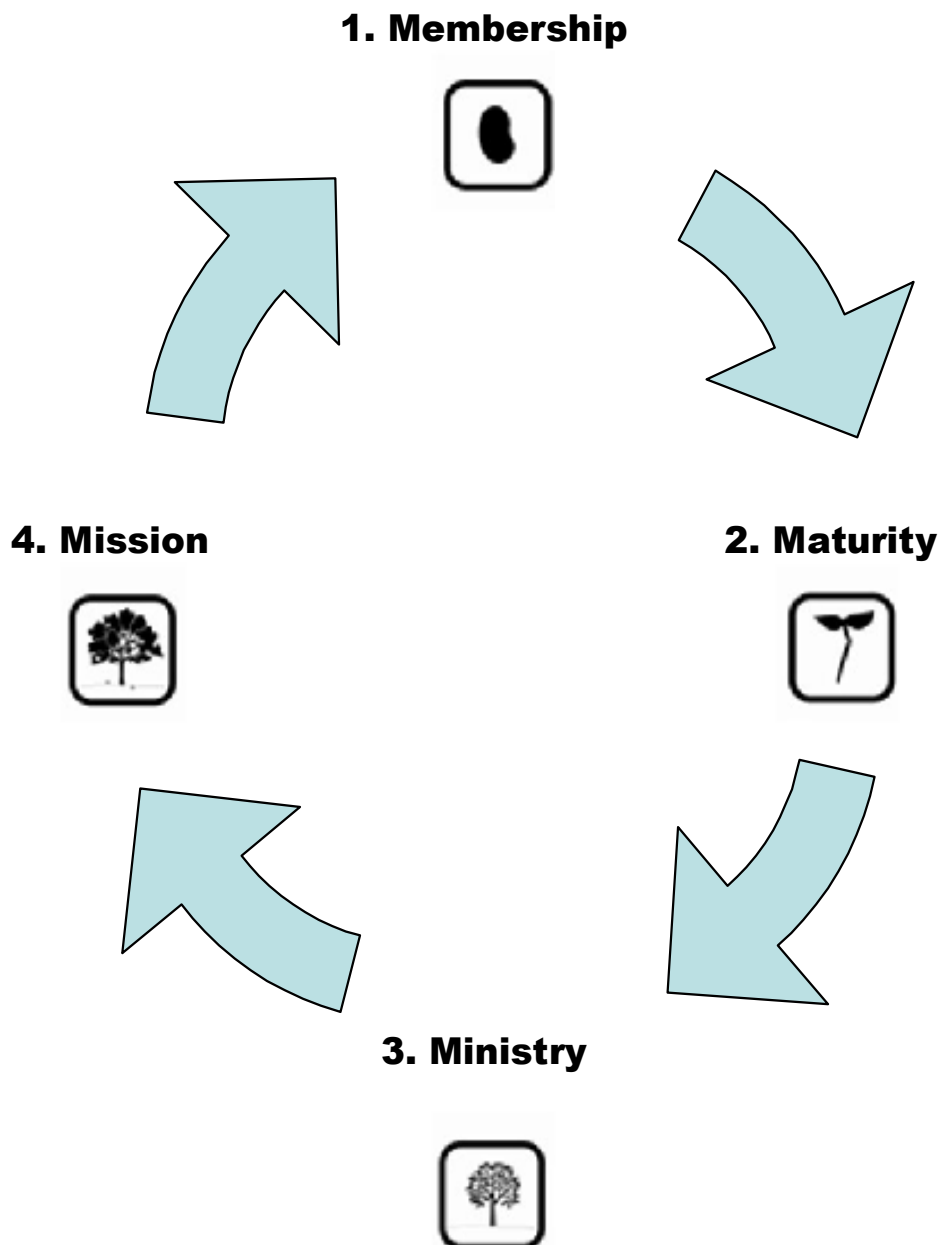
Prayer points...

Prayer points...

Our Vision

We want people to glorify God as they

- Belong as **Members** – to join God’s kingdom and commit to loving this family of believers
- Grow in **Maturity** - to become more like Jesus as they get stuck into the Word of God and get transformed by the Holy Spirit.
- Serve in **Ministry** - to build up others in the body of Christ with their God-given gifts and abilities
- Live as **Missionaries** - to promote the gospel with their lips and lives among the 25,000 people living in our region.





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