



# DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

**SERIES: 1 CORINTHIANS •**

**MESSAGE: INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS •**

**1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9 • 5/1/2022**

## MAIN POINT

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God will be faithful to make us holy as the church of Jesus Christ.

## INTRODUCTION

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As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Have you ever taken on a home renovation project? What was the biggest hurdle you faced in the transformation process?**

**What does it mean to be sanctified?**

**How does God sanctify us as a church?**

A home renovation project gives us a good metaphor for the Christian life. When you renovate a home, you take something old and make it new again. When we enter into a relationship with Jesus, this is the work God performs in our lives. God takes a person who is dead in sin and makes that person alive in Christ. Then He commits to making that same person holy. To be holy is to be like Christ. Holiness is something you are, and it is something that you are called to be. God designed the process of becoming holy—sanctification—to happen largely in community. Today’s passage will help us understand why it is so important for us to meet together with the church as we progress in Christ-likeness.

## UNDERSTANDING

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Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-3.**

**How was Paul made an apostle?**

**How are any gifts of God acquired by God’s people? Why is it important to see that gifts are distributed according to His will and not ours?**

Paul was an apostle because of God’s will, not because of Paul’s will. Paul writes, “One and the same Spirit is active in all these (gifts), distributing to each person as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11). God is gracious to give us all gifts, but He does this according to His will in order to make us dependent on one another as a body. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ, but he did not work alone. Sometimes he went with Barnabas, and sometimes he went with Timothy. Sometimes he travelled with Epaphroditus. Here, he is with Sosthenes. Not even Paul went out alone if he could take brothers with

him. The church is a body, and as a body, we need one another to become what God has called us to be.

**Why does Paul say that we are “sanctified” in the past tense? When are we sanctified? When will that work be completed?**

It is true that we are sanctified in Christ, but it is also true that God is still sanctifying us. When we are born again, the old passes away and the new comes (2 Cor. 5:17). Yet, we “are being renewed in the spirit of (our) minds” (Ephesians 4:23). Yes, we are holy, but we are also still progressing together in holiness. That work will not be completed until we are all perfected together at the return of Jesus Christ.

**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-7.**

**Why do you suppose Paul was so thankful for the grace that was given to the church in Corinth? Why did it bring him constant cheer to think of them?**

Paul was thankful for the Corinthians because he loved them. He knew that because the grace of God was at work in them, together they would be a light to the world. Imagine your church set loose in the name of Christ to do good works in the community to bring kindness and love to others. Your church can make a tremendous difference by teaching and living out the gospel in your city, and that ought to bring joy to every believer’s heart.

**In what ways are we enriched in Jesus Christ?**

**Do you eagerly await the return of Jesus?**

Paul says we are “enriched in everything.” It is a past tense statement. God has given us everything we need in Christ Jesus. He gave us speech, knowledge, and gifts... everything! So we as a body do not have to wait for “greater gifts”; we are equipped

right now to make a difference in the lives of others. We are ready now to encourage one another to walk in holiness.

**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:8-9.**

**Will you be strengthened to persevere by your own strength or by God's strength? Who will make you blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ?**

**Can you remember times when God was faithful to you, even if you weren't being faithful to Him? How do you know you can count on Him to continue His faithfulness to the end?**

The Lord Himself has promised to strengthen us "to the end." It is very refreshing to realize that God will give us strength instead of having to rely only on our own strength. Though sometimes we may feel weak, we can rest secure on the promise that God will make us "blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Salvation is by God's grace, not by our own strength. You cannot see it in English, but in Greek the "you" in these verses is plural. When Paul says God will "strengthen you" and that "you will be blameless" and that "you were called by Him into fellowship," he is speaking to the entire church. We will be strengthened together. We will be made blameless together. We will fellowship with Jesus together. Together, we are stronger than when we are apart, and that is why it is so important to be active together in our local churches.

## **APPLICATION**

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Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Can you think of times when the church has helped you and strengthened you in the faith? Perhaps this week you could encourage someone who has been an encouragement to you.

Paul was thankful for the church in Corinth. How can you make it a priority to thank God for your local church and pray for any needs you know people have?

This passage teaches us that we have been given all the gifts we need to serve Christ. Why not take time this week to show mercy or love to someone with the confidence that God will work through you to encourage that person?

## PRAYER

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Close with a time of prayer, thanking God for our church and for the churches of our community. Ask the Lord to strengthen our pastors and those who serve in our fellowship. Pray that God will also strengthen our brothers and sisters around the world as they seek to make Christ known to others.

## COMMENTARY

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1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9

1:1. Paul wrote with the authority of an apostle (one commissioned and sent) of Christ Jesus. He had been called by the will of God, so his words were to be received as God's own commands (Matt. 10:40; 1 Cor. 14:37). Sosthenes, a Jewish believer and

resident of Corinth (Acts 18:17), may have served as Paul's secretary for this letter (1 Cor. 16:21).

1:2. Paul sent this letter to believers in Corinth, a Greek seaport and center of international commerce. The apostle's description of these Christians revealed his deep concern for them. First, he called them the church of God. The readers were not merely individuals. They constituted a church community that belonged to God. Only God's desires held sway over the life of this church. Second, the believers in this church had been sanctified, or set apart from the world, by virtue of their faith in Christ. Third, the Corinthian believers were called to pursue pure and holy lives. Fourth, they were called to holiness together with all believers everywhere. Holiness was not to be pursued simply by individuals, but by the entire church. This opening address set the stage for Paul's central concern in this section: God's gift of salvation had brought the Corinthians into a relationship with other believers; they were members of one body (1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12-27).

1:3. Paul issued a standard greeting among Christians in his day. He expressed his hope that God would continue to bless his readers through Christ with his enabling grace and the experience of peace.

1:4. Before wrestling with a long list of problems in the Corinthian church, Paul mentioned several positive feelings and hopes. He affirmed that he was always sure to thank God for his readers, and explained why. Paul first explained that the cause of his gratitude was the grace, or unmerited favor, the Corinthians had received in Christ Jesus. Some interpreters have also suggested that grace refers to the Corinthians' charismatic gifts. The phrase "in Christ" appears often in Paul's writings. It refers to his teaching that all who trust in Christ have been joined to him, participating in his death and resurrection. Those united to Christ die to the judgment of death and come alive to countless blessings of new life, sharing in Christ's inheritance (Rom 6:1-7; Gal 3:28-29; Eph. 1:3-14). By being united to Christ, believers draw their life from him (Gal. 2:20; cf. John 15:1-8; 17:22-23), and Christ represents them as righteous before the Father (Rom. 5:15-19; 1 Cor. 15:22).

1:5. Paul specified a number of blessings which the Corinthians had received. Their lives had been enriched with speaking and knowledge. Chapters 12-14 explain that Paul's readers greatly prized their spiritual gifts of revelation and knowledge. Although the apostle warned against the abuses of these gifts (1 Cor. 8:1-13; 13:1-2), he was also pleased that God had granted them these blessings.

1:6. Paul acknowledged the great privileges that God afforded the church at Corinth. Then he foreshadowed the argument he would pursue later in this chapter. He pointed out that the Corinthians' gifts confirmed the testimony, or witness, which he himself had given them. Paul's preaching of the gospel had been the conduit of their gifts of revelation and knowledge. As a result, the presence of spiritual gifts in the church confirmed the efficacy and truth of Paul's gospel message. This brief aside was important because the Corinthians took great pride in human wisdom. Yet, the gospel that had enriched their lives with these gifts was not based on human wisdom and pride, but on humility and spiritual wisdom.

1:7. Although the Corinthians longed for Christ to return in glory, their spiritual gifts equipped them to live lives of faith in the meantime. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:14, the Holy Spirit "is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession." The Spirit supplies believers with a host of blessings as they long for Christ's return.

Paul mentioned the return of Christ here to remind the Corinthians of the true nature of their condition. Many people in the Corinthian church thought they were more blessed with gifts than they actually were. For example, Paul wrote, "Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings—and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you!" (1 Cor. 4:8). He also had to remind them that their gifts were only temporary, partial manifestations of the blessings they would receive at Christ's return (1 Cor. 13:8-13). Paul probably mentioned Christ's return to remind them that they needed to stop being satisfied with the progress they had made. They needed to apply themselves to waiting eagerly for Christ's return.

1:8. The gifts of the Spirit displayed in Corinth gave Paul great confidence that God would keep them safe until the end of this age. The day of our Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the great "day of the Lord" (Amos 5:18-20; Joel 2:31). That day will bring judgment against the enemies of God and wondrous reward for God's people (Joel 3:14-21; 2 Pet. 3:10-13). Although Paul later warned the Corinthians that flagrant apostasy could prove their faith in vain (1 Cor. 9:27; 10:1-12), he fully expected them to be blameless, without guilt.

1:9. Paul's confidence in the Corinthians' future rested not on them, but on God's faithfulness both to them (1 Cor. 10:13) and to his Son (cf. John 10:29; Eph. 1:18; Heb. 2:13). God had called them into fellowship with his Son (cf. 1 Cor. 1:4), and God ... is

faithful. He will keep all who believe safe until the end. Paul did not place his confidence in the church as the Corinthians did, but in the church's God. Paul pointed out that God had called the Corinthian church together into fellowship with his Son. He did this not only to assure them of their salvation, but also to remind them that the fellowship they shared with one another was in Christ. When they disrupted their fellowship with one another, they disrupted their fellowship with Christ.