



### Problems in the Corinthian Church

1. Church division
2. Sexual immorality
3. Lawsuits among believers
4. Questions about celibacy and marriage
5. Food sacrificed to idols
6. Mistreatment of the Lord's Supper
7. Misunderstanding of spiritual gifts
8. Orderly worship
9. Misunderstanding of the resurrection body
10. Financial giving

### Greeting 1:1-2

The author identifies himself in 1:1 and 16:21 as the apostle Paul who along with Sosthenes is sending this letter to the church in the city of Corinth. We do not know anything with certainty about Sosthenes though it is quite possible that he is the same Sosthenes who was the ruler of the Corinthian synagogue in Acts 18:17. From 1 Corinthians 16:8 we know that Paul wrote this letter from the city of Ephesus. The date of writing was about the year A.D. 55. Paul planted the church in Corinth during his second missionary journey as recorded in Acts 18.

Paul asserts his apostolic authority in 1:1 identifying his call from God. He wants his readers understand that he writes from a position of divine authority and therefore they should obey his words.

1. **How did Paul identify himself and why might it have been necessary for Paul to stress his apostolic credentials to the church at Corinth? (see also 1 Cor 4:3)**

### A Description of Christians 1:2-9

Paul addresses the the Corinthian Christians as 1) **the church of God** that is in Corinth. In spite of fact that the church was divided, immoral, unloving, and confused, they were still identifiable as the church.

2. **What is the church?**

3. **To whom does the church belong?**

Christians are 2) **a sanctified people**. The word sanctified means “*to be made holy*” and indicates a past action with continuing effect. To be made holy is to be separated from the world and to Christ. Sanctification indicates a changed position. It is a change from a position of sin and lostness to one of holiness and salvation.

Christians are sanctified by the blood of Christ. Hebrews 10:10 puts it this way: “...*we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*” The offering of Jesus Christ brings us to salvation when we are baptised into him. We are cleansed of sin, change our position to being in Christ, and are made holy.

Because of this new position we can one day stand before the Lord in judgement and hear him pronounce us **not guilty**. Our guilt has been borne by Christ as he died on the cross in our place. 1:8 says that Christ will “*sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

#### 4. What difference does it make to your life to know that you have been sanctified?

Christians are **3) called** to be **4) saints**. The call came God through those who taught them the good news about Jesus. They are called by Jesus Christ through his Word. The word “saint” comes from the same root word as sanctified. A saint is one who is set apart to God so every Christian is a saint.



Christians are part of a **5) unique fellowship**. Verse 2 addresses the Corinthian Christians as those who are “*called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” There are many Christians in every corner of this world. The fact that we are not alone gives us great comfort. We are a part of a unique, large, and growing worldwide fellowship of all those who have obeyed the gospel. We are truly brothers and sisters.

#### 5. In what ways have you benefitted from the unique worldwide fellowship that we enjoy as Christians?

As Christians, **6) Christ is our Lord**. To call Christ our Lord is to say that he is our master and we are his servants. To call Christ Lord is to declare his ownership of us.

In verse 4, Paul makes one of the most beautiful statements that one Christian can say about another . . . *I give thanks to my God always for you ...*” Paul had taught the Corinthians the gospel and even though the church had many problems, he was thankful for their position in Christ. The Corinthian church had many deep and difficult problems and Paul is not commending them on their actions. He is instead voicing his thanksgiving to God concerning them.

Paul is thankful because the Corinthian Christians were **7) recipients of God’s grace**. God’s grace provides Christians with a salvation that is undeserved; however the grace of God here seems to refer specifically to the spiritual gifts that the Corinthian Christians had received.

Verses 5-7 teaches that Christians are **8) a people who have been given every necessary spiritual gift**. In these verses we read, “*that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Notice all the inclusive words used in this passage. Christians have everything necessary to live for Christ.

Though the Corinthian Christians had been spiritually destitute, now in Christ they were “enriched.” They were enriched in “all speech and all knowledge.” This may well refer to the gifts of speaking in tongues, prophecy, and knowledge that were available to some in the first century church. Paul will address the misuse of these gifts in chapters 12-14.

Though we may not have these spiritual gifts available to us today, God always provides everything necessary for his people to live abundant spiritual lives.

**6. In verse 8 we read that Christ will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. How does God sustain the Christian?**

**7. Is the end in 1:8 the end of time or the end of our lives?**



The Christian will be sustained “guiltless” or “blameless.” This means that there is no indictment that can be brought before the judge against the Christian. Because Jesus pays the penalty for our sin, there is no sin, infraction, or crime with which to charge the Christian.

Christians are **9) a waiting people**. We are waiting for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. This refers to the Second Coming of Christ. The word wait has the idea of waiting patiently, but persistently, and with great anticipation.

**7. How does living in expectation of the Second Coming influence our lives?**

Christians are **9) a people who serve a faithful God**. Verse 9 emphatically states: “*God is faithful.*” As Christians are lives are built on the faithfulness of God. We can trust him completely. It is the faithful God who has called Christians to him and to his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.