

THE BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

TGC

The Gospel Coalition

BIBLE-STUDY GUIDE

Week 1: Overview

Key Verse

“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”
(1 Cor. 13:13)

As You Get Started...

What is your understanding of how 1 Corinthians helps us to grasp the identity and role of Christ's church?

What in your view does 1 Corinthians uniquely contribute, theologically and practically, to our understanding of a truly Spirit-filled, faithful local church, as well as the Spirit-filled life of the individual believer?

What is your current understanding of what 1 Corinthians contributes to Christian theology?

How does this letter clarify our understanding of Christian unity, the role of preaching, church leadership, sexual ethics, principles for worship gatherings, the place and role of spiritual gifts, Christian freedom and conscience, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and other truths?

What aspects of 1 Corinthians have confused you?

Are there any specific questions about church life and personal discipleship that you hope to have answered through this study?

As You Finish This Unit...

Take a moment now to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you engage in this study of 1 Corinthians. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, reflecting on a few key things that the Lord may be teaching you, and noting things to review again in the future.

Introduction: Speech, Knowledge, and Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 1:1-9)

The Place of the Passage

Paul begins this letter in classic form, with initial greetings and a highlighting of the issues that will arise as key themes throughout the letter, including the theme of unity. Paul identifies himself and his intended audience, and portrays the Corinthian church as those sanctified in Jesus and in fellowship with all the saints who call upon the name of the Lord (1 Cor. 1:2). Paul then shifts to words of thanksgiving as he addresses three key themes in the letter: speech, knowledge, and spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 1:5-7). This initial greeting is sincere, but also pointed. Paul

uses it as a means to point to the grace and salvation the Corinthian believers possess, yet also as a means to exhort them toward obedience in areas where they are clearly walking in sin.

Definition: Sanctification

The process of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. This process begins immediately after regeneration and continues throughout a Christian's life.

The Big Picture

In 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, Paul reveals that God's people are first and foremost defined by the peace and grace given to them through Jesus, which in turn is a basis and mandate

for their sanctification.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 1:1-9. Then review the following sections and write your own notes concerning this introductory section.

Greeting (1 Cor. 1:1-3)

Paul begins by identifying himself and Sosthenes.

What does it mean that Paul was “called” as an apostle?

Why is it important that he mentions this?

We don't know much about Sosthenes (Acts 18:12-17 may be describing the same man), but why might it be significant that Paul mentions this ministry partner?

How does partnership in ministry help frame the main idea of unity in this letter?

Several key terms such as sanctified, called, saints, grace, and peace are introduced by

Paul.

How do these terms set the stage for what is to come (feel free to read the next section to get the context)?

In a first-century secular letter, an introductory blessing would often be, "Peace and health." Notice that Paul says, "Grace and peace." How is that significant?

Thanksgiving (1 Cor. 1:4-9)

Speech, knowledge, and spiritual gifts arise as three key themes here, in preparation for and anticipation of the rest of the letter.

Notice how Paul comments on each in 1 Corinthians 1:5-7.

Is Paul condemning the existence of these three realities in the lives of the Corinthians?

If not, how is he shaping their view of each reality?

What is the greater reality to which Paul is calling these Christians at the end of 1 Corinthians 1:7?

How does that set the perspective the Corinthians should have toward their blessings and talents?

.Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 for your own life today.

What did you learn? How have you been shaped? How might you walk more fully trusting the Lord Jesus?

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In a culture of elitism in which social standing was everything, how does the theme of being called to Christ provide a challenge and new framework for these believers to think about their community and their individual lives?

The Issue of Disunity

(1 Cor. 1:10-17a)

The Big Picture

First Corinthians 1:10-17a shows that the Corinthian church was clearly disunited and quarreling, as a spirit of competitiveness had crept in, ironically finding expression in loyalty toward various Christian preachers.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 1:10-17a. Then review the following questions and write your own notes on them concerning this first movement of the main body of the letter.

Divisions (1 Cor. 1:10-12)

Paul appeals to the Corinthians in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why is the name of Jesus not merely a formula of authority, but also a theologically important reality to bring up at this point?

Paul urges the Corinthians to agree together, to be united in the same mind, and even to have the same judgment.

Is Paul commanding this church to have absolute uniformity of opinion and belief? If not, what does he mean by such vivid terminology?

What is the connection between loyalty to Christian leaders, especially inspiring ones, and potential disunity?

Look at the way Paul rhetorically phrases this problem in the Corinthian church in 1 Cor. 1:12. How does that phraseology help identify how human loyalty and potential disunity can go hand in hand?

Identification (1 Cor. 1:13-17a)

Paul asks the Corinthians, “Is Christ divided?” ([1 Cor. 1:13](#)). What does he mean by that, given the context?

Paul then evokes the images of crucifixion and baptism. How do those in turn relate to the presenting issue of divisions over Christian preachers?

What is it about those two issues that gets at the heart of unity?

Baptism is a beautiful and glorious gift from God that symbolizes the work of the gospel in regenerating us. How is baptism coming into play here?

Are there areas in the contemporary church that are similar, calling for a response similar to Paul's?

How would eloquent communication skills inadvertently play into the current divisions in the Corinthian church?

Proclamation, Wisdom, and Unity

(1 Cor. 1:17b-4:21)

The Big Picture

In 1 Corinthians 1:17b-4:21 Paul exhorts the people of God to reclaim true Christian unity by embracing Christ crucified as the solution to their quarreling and competitiveness, because Christ crucified is the logic of all of spiritual life.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 1:17a-4:21. Then review the following questions and write your own notes on them concerning this larger section, broken down into the nature of God's wisdom (1 Cor. 1:17b-2:16) and God's wisdom applied

to the human preachers and the Corinthians themselves (1 Cor. 3:1-4:21).

The nature of God's wisdom (1 Cor. 1:17b-2:16)

Human wisdom is about strength found in this world, about power advantage, about prestige, and about looking good in front of others. How does Paul unsettle these notions?

Look at Isaiah 29:14, quoted in 1 Corinthians 1:19. How does the context of Isaiah and that quote support Paul's point?

Ancient rhetoricians were professional traveling speakers who thrilled crowds with their use of words. How is Paul contradicting all of this? How was Paul's self-conception different (see 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5)?

If Paul is not a typical rhetorician, and his aim is to convey a message about Jesus and the cross in 1 Corinthians 1:17b-2:16, what is the job description of the faithful herald of the gospel?

How does Paul define true wisdom? How is the cross essential to the argument and profoundly evocative of true wisdom?

God's wisdom applied to Apollos, Paul, and the Corinthians (1 Cor. 3:1-4:21) Given the argument of 1 Corinthians 1:17b-2:16, how then should the Corinthians view people like Paul, Apollos, Cephas (Peter), or any other gifted preacher or leader?

How should true wisdom shape the self-conception of preachers, both in the ancient world and today?

Is the use of elocution or rhetoric inherently wrong? If not, how can we use various communication techniques without contradicting the gospel?

In this section, we see that human weakness highlights the power of the Spirit in true gospel proclamation. How does he describe the true life and ministry of the apostles (1 Cor. 4:8-4:13)?

What are some of the implications of this for gospel ministry today? How does this encourage and fuel steadfastness in ministry?

In 1 Corinthians 4:4-5, Paul describes a clear conscience. He is being accused of lacking true apostolic status because of his suffering.. How does his teaching encourage the suffering pastor, especially one being falsely accused?

Sexual Immorality and Legal Cases (1 Cor. 5:1-6:20)

The Big Picture

First Corinthians 5:1-6:20 teaches that the church must maintain its purity in terms of sexuality and in how it deals with strife. In each case, the reality of the church as the body of Christ, holy and Spirit-filled, is the defining vision.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 5:1-6:20. Then review the following questions and write your own notes on them concerning this text section, divided into the case of sexual immorality

within a family (1 Cor. 5:1-13), the issue of legal cases among believers (1 Cor. 6:1-11), and sexual immorality regarding prostitutes (1 Cor. 6:12-20).

Incest, arrogance, and the need for discipline (1 Cor. 5:1-13)

Paul says that his judgment with regard to a man living in sexual sin with his father's wife (i.e., his stepmother) is true and authoritative in that his spirit—along with the power and the name of Jesus—are authoritative pronouncements.

Do pastors or other Christians have that kind of authority today? If not, what basis does the church have for church discipline?

What is at stake in church discipline, according to Paul? When someone comes under church discipline and has to be excommunicated, what is the purpose of that excommunication?

Paul speaks of the difference between a believer living in unrepented sin and an unbeliever who lives in sin.

What is the difference, and how does that affect our approach to and fellowship with each?

Trivial cases before unrighteous judges (1 Cor. 6:1-11)

There seem to be cases of fraud and property rights violations within the Corinthian church community, and some of the believers are suing each other in the secular court system.

What theological reasons does Paul give here for why believers should adjudicate such matters within the church rather than in civil courts?

Does this section mean that believers should never use secular courts? If there is room for believers to use secular courts, how might the principles in this text be used to create a godly process?

Paul then lists several sinful lifestyles characteristic of the unrighteous person. Does this list suggest that anyone who struggles with such things will not be received by Jesus and have entrance into heaven?

What verse in this passage teaches that simply struggling with such sins does not cut us off from grace?

So, how would you characterize the person represented in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10?

Sexual immorality and the body's resurrection (1 Cor. 6:12-20)

The point is that the gospel does not give free permission to live in sin. Paul then gives a theologically rich vision of the body.

How does he describe the human body in terms of Jesus? The Spirits? The temple? The resurrection also factors into Paul's teaching. How?

In 1 Corinthians 6:18, Paul teaches that—contrary to much popular teaching today—sexual sin is not just like any other sins. How is it that sexual sin is “against” the body while other sins are “outside” the body?

Questions and Answers,
Part 1: Marriage, Divorce,
Betrothal, Widows
(1 Cor. 7:1-40)

The Big Picture

First Corinthians 7:1-40 teaches that our identity is most fundamentally in Christ, rather than in our circumstances of marriage, singleness, vocation, and ethnicity.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 7:1-40. Then review the following questions and write your own notes on them concerning this larger section, broken down into the issues of marriage, divorce, and unchangeable circumstances.

Divorce (1 Cor. 7:1-24)

Divorce is a controversial topic. It is never a good thing, but Paul gives some conditions for divorce here. Look up some of the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels on this topic (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18).

How does Paul add to or further explain the conditions for divorce?

How do we know what kinds of life patterns must be repented of by new believers, and what kinds may be allowed to continue, even though they are less than God's ideal for us?

The betrothed and widows (1 Cor. 7:25-40)

Paul speaks of the "present distress" (1 Cor. 7:26). How does Paul envision the days in which the Corinthian church lived?

What reasons does Paul give for choosing to remain unmarried? Do these reasons square with the reasons many young people today choose to avoid or delay marriage?

If married, is it impossible to be single-minded about the Lord? If it is possible, how specifically might married people be fully committed to their spouse and yet live with gospel urgency in these final days?

In the Old Testament, singleness was a curse. What has changed in the new covenant? Is there any notion in the New Testament that marriage and procreation have been lowered in status?

Questions and Answers

Part 2: Food and Idolatry

(1 Cor. 8:1-11:1)

The Big Picture

1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 unpacks how God-honoring decisions need to be made in controversial situations that require the balance of biblical freedom, cultural awareness, and love for other believers.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Meat sacrificed to idols ([1 Cor. 8:1-13](#))

“Knowledge” is a key word in this chapter. How does our knowledge of the effect of our decisions on other Christians impinge on our choices?

If there is only one true God, why is the issue of idol worship so powerful in the Corinthian context? What are some contemporary issues similar to the issue of meat sacrificed to idols in New Testament times?

The principle of sacrifice (1 Cor. 9:1-27)

What does it mean for the Corinthians to be Paul's "workmanship" and the "seal" of his apostleship in the Lord (1 Cor. 9:1-2)?

If Paul is an apostle and therefore has the rights of authority and is entitled to many benefits, why does he give up those rights?

In 1 Corinthians 9:16, Paul speaks of boasting. In what way is this kind of boasting commendable?

If we should give up certain earthly rewards for the sake of ministry, what is the true reward we await (1 Cor. 9:18)?

First Corinthians 9:19-23 is cited often in relation to doing missionary ministry in such a way that we adapt appropriately to our host culture.

What are some lines that believers should never cross in our desire to contextualize to a host culture?

In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, how do the athletic images Paul portrays help us understand what our attitude should be in the use of rights, sacrifice, and ministry?

Fleeing idolatry, seeking the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:1-11:1) Paul's tone shifts as he forbids participation in meals that are actually part of a pagan worship (1 Cor. 10:7). **How does this context change the situation, making it more clear-cut morally?**

What is the Old Testament narrative Paul uses as a primary theological grid to explain his point in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13?

How might the Corinthians be playing with fire, so to speak, by using their “freedom” to actually sit and eat amid a pagan ceremony?

How are the glory of God and the good of others connected in 1 Corinthians 10:31-33?

Glory, Unity, and Worship Order (1 Cor. 11:2-16)

The Big Picture

First Corinthians 11:2-16 explains how the relationship between God the Father and God the Son is reflected in the department of husbands and wives within the gathered worship of a local church in the first century.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

Head coverings and worship (1 Cor. 11:2-16)

Paul's argument in these verses can be confusing at first. Try to carefully map out the relationships involved here—between God the Father and God the Son, and then between husbands and wives.

How does Paul speak of each relationship?
How does Genesis 1 speak of the image of God and humanity, and how does that relate to our passage?

For a woman to have a head covering was a sign of being married, and of being under her husband's authority.

With that in mind, why is it important that Paul talks about husbands and wives and the nature of head coverings? What is at stake theologically in this issue?

Authority is a central idea in our passage. How does the relationship between the Father and the Son within the Trinity help us understand that individuals may have different roles, but equal worth?

Note that Paul begins this section by commending the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:2). How does the contemporary church superficially carry out right worship without necessarily having the right heart or theology behind it?

How can we remain healthy not just in our external forms but also in our underlying motives?

Love, Unity, and Worship Order

(1 Cor. 11:17-14:40)

The Big Picture

First Corinthians 11:17-14:40 teaches that loving unity is paramount in the church's life, especially in the context of the Lord's Supper and in the use of spiritual gifts. The sign of love is that all things are done in proper relationship to the reality of the gospel and for the building up of other Christians.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 11:17-14:40.

Social snobbery at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34)

The subject at hand is the Lord's Supper.. The Lord's Supper may have been a full meal, and as was the custom of the day, the rich would have been served first, then the poor. The rich were eating the entirety of the meal, leaving the poor with little to nothing (1 Cor. 11:20-21).

How does such an action work against the very reality to which the meal is intended to point?

The assumption behind Paul's rebuke is that the Lord's Supper has significant horizontal implications. The meal should involve not only divine communion, but also communion of believers together. **How does this help you understand what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:22-29?**

In 1 Corinthians 11:30, Paul speaks of physical judgments as a result of ungodly worship. How do we understand the relationship between disobedience and physical judgment (look at 1 Cor. 5:5 for context)?

Elevating one spiritual gift above others (1 Cor. 12:1-31 and 1 Cor. 14:1-40)

In these two chapters, what are the gifts with which the Spirit empowers believers? For what purpose?

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-30, Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to explain the reality of spiritual gifts in the church. **How does that metaphor contribute to our understanding of the diversity, unity, and equality of people and their gifts?**

What happens if everyone wants to be a head, like the Corinthians? What happens, on the other hand, if there are only “unpresentable” parts and no “more presentable” ones (1 Cor. 12:23-24)?

In 1 Corinthians 14, what is the gift that seems to be getting top billing? Why might it be tempting to elevate such a gift?

The principles of clarity and intelligibility are central in 1 Corinthians 14. How is evangelism, in particular, tied to intelligibility in 1 Corinthians 14:24-25?

What are some questions we should always ask as we design our worship services?

The way of love (1 Cor. 13:1-13)

First Corinthians 13 is so important that we have given it its own section. Consider the context; what kind of love is Paul talking about?

Biblical love may be defined as faithfulness in word, speech, and action, based on a promise to be kept through grace and solid character. How does this kind of love create unity? In what ways does Paul show the futility that results when there is a lack of such love?

In 1 Corinthians 13:12, Paul speaks of a “now” versus “then” timeline. To what eras of time is he referring?

If he is speaking of “then” as the return of Christ, how does that help us understand whether spiritual gifts such as tongues, prophecy, and healing are relevant for Christians today?

Paul concludes with the holy triad of faith, hope, and love. Consider these three virtues and explain why love is the greatest. How does the reality of heaven put faith and hope in a category subordinate to love?

The Centrality and Necessity of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-58)

The Big Picture

1 Corinthians 15:1-58 reminds us that the truth of the bodily resurrection of believers in Christ is an essential doctrine for the reality of Christian faith and mission.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 15:1-58. Then review the following questions and write your own notes on them. This section will be broken up into three parts: the truthfulness of the traditions about Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-11); Christ's resurrection and the

resurrection of believers (1 Cor. 15:12-34); and the nature of the resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:35-58).

The truthfulness of the traditions about Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-11)

Paul reminds the Corinthians that they have received and believed the gospel he preached (1 Cor. 15:1, 11).

What does that say about their initial response to the teaching of Jesus' resurrection? What does it say about the relationship between initial belief and ongoing faith?

Paul cites several sources of authority for the truth of Jesus' bodily resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-8). What are those sources?

If Paul taught the Corinthians about Jesus' death and resurrection "in accordance with the Scriptures," then he is talking about the Old Testament.

What are some Old Testament texts that reflect or teach the truth of Christ's resurrection, or resurrection in general?

How does Paul's personal story of conversion legitimize the reality of the resurrection? What does his contrast of "in vain/not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:2, 10) contribute to his story?

Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of believers (1 Cor. 15:12-34). How is Paul connecting Christ's resurrection to the assurance of resurrection for his disciples?

What does Paul mean by saying that Christ is the “firstfruits” of those who have fallen asleep (1 Cor. 15:20, 23)?

Paul compares and contrasts Adam and Jesus. How are those two foundational biblical characters alike and how are they different, according to our passage?

If God the Father and God the Son are equal, how can Paul say that Jesus will be in subjection under the Father after the final resurrection (1 Cor. 15:28)?

What does this teach us about the relationship between the Father and the Son (see also the comments on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 in our consideration of "The Triune Relationship")?

A few scenarios that are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:29-34 should motivate the Corinthians to revive their belief in the resurrection.

How should belief in the resurrection motivate believers, some of whom may even be killed for their faith (1 Cor. 15:31-32)? How should it motivate godly living (1 Cor. 15:32b-34)?

The nature of the resurrection body ([1 Cor. 15:35-58](#))

In this final section, Paul compares the present human body to the future resurrection body. Make a side-by-side list

of the two states. Take into account chronology, physicality, the biblical storyline, and eternity.

What are some of the ways our current bodies will be transformed after the resurrection?

In 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, Paul is citing portions of Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14. How are those texts used in their original contexts, and how is Paul using them to further his case in this passage? What links do you see between these uses?

In 1 Corinthians 15:58: What are the four actions and attitudes the Corinthians should possess as a result of the resurrection?

The Collection for the Saints, Travel Plans, and Farewell Greetings

(1 Cor. 16:1-24)

The Big Picture

First Corinthians 16:1-24 reveals that gospel unity must be embodied through acts of grace and love, as illustrated here by a collection taken by the Corinthians for the Jerusalem church, by Paul's heartfelt desire to visit with the Corinthians, by the way Paul desires this church to treat other leaders, and by the way Paul encourages this church to press on in faith and mission.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, 1 Corinthians 16:1-24. This section will be broken up into two parts: the collection for the saints and Paul's travel plans (1 Cor. 16:1-12), and closing admonitions and greetings (1 Cor. 16:13-24).

The collection for the saints and Paul's travel plans (1 Cor. 16:1-12)

The letter concludes with a reminder that Paul will be visiting Corinth to collect money for the Jerusalem church.

How was the money to be collected (1 Cor. 16:1-2)?

How would this collection embody the main ideas of this letter?

Paul describes his future travel plans (1 Cor. 16:5-9).

How does this reveal the heart of a pastor who at times must rebuke his sheep, and yet who closes his letter with such words as these?

Paul speaks of a ministry opportunity in Ephesus that compels him to remain there. (1

Cor. 16:8).

How is it that both the open door for ministry and the existence of adversaries to the faith are compelling reasons for Paul to stay in a given area?

Closing admonitions and greetings (1 Cor. 16:13-24) Paul draws his letter to a close with a farewell admonition, offering five imperatives: "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Cor. 16:13-14).

How does each of these relate to larger themes in the letter?

Given the teaching they had received to this point, how might the Corinthians have had their minds shaped regarding servanthood, subjection, and giving recognition to others? (1 Cor. 16:15-18).

Look at 1 Corinthians 1 and this final chapter, 1 Corinthians 16, and consider: **How do the bookends of 1 Corinthians compare to each other?**

How are tensions resolved? How are themes fulfilled?

How is the tone of the two chapters different?

Summary and Conclusion

As we conclude this study, we begin by recapping the big picture of 1 Corinthians as a whole. We will then review some questions for reflection in light of the book's entire message, with a final identification of Gospel Glimpses, Whole-Bible Connections, and Theological Soundings, all with a view to appreciating Paul's first biblical letter to the Corinthians in its entirety.

The Big Picture of 1 Corinthians

During our study of this letter, we detected the main theme of gospel unity. The letter began by informing the reader that this church was fractured and needed its vision of the gospel restored and, consequently, its unity rebuilt around Jesus.

The letter is quite practical all the way through, but in 1 Corinthians 1-4, a baseline theological reality involving proclamation, wisdom, and unity is established, while **1 Corinthians 5-15** apply that vision to practical matters of behavior and belief.

First Corinthians 1-4 is a powerful rebuke and encouragement, and uses some of the most elevated language in Scripture with regard to the cross and its implications for Christian character. The Corinthians were divided, with factions following different Christian leaders (**1 Cor. 1:10-17a**). The underlying issue was pride due to a lack of understanding of God's sovereign and infinite grace. This pride fostered self-sufficiency, elitism, competitiveness, and thus disunity. There were cultural and social pressures, and

the Corinthians were giving way to those pressures out of a superficial understanding of the gospel. Paul's response was to show them that the gospel turned their worldview upside down, that all that they thought was wise and powerful was actually weak, and that God's wisdom and power were made known through the death of his Son upon the cross, as proclaimed by humble preachers (1 Cor. 1:17b-4:21).

First Corinthians 5-15 takes up practical matters, some of which were occasioned by a previous interchange of letters that are not included in the Bible. From sexual purity, to legal cases; from issues of marriage, divorce, and betrothal, to food and idolatry; from worship order to the truth of the bodily resurrection, Paul uses the baseline argument

of 1 Corinthians 1-4 to expose, rebuke, rebuild, and encourage gospel unity and godliness.

Paul concludes his letter with a brief yet powerful reminder about his effort to collect money for the poor in the Jerusalem church, a vivid expression of gospel unity in that a Gentile church was sacrificing to help a Jewish church (1 Cor. 16:1-24).

The first section of the book (1 Corinthians 1-4) teaches that true power, wisdom, and worth are in Christ crucified. The second section (1 Corinthians 5-15) teaches that the cross changes our view of all activities, personal and communal. Paul anchors his letter in the truth of the resurrection, reminding us that the power of the cross was vindicated, fulfilled, and released in the

resurrection of Jesus. Throughout the letter, we are reminded that this glorious cross and resurrection truth brings about loving unity among believers (1 Cor. 13:1-13).