

OUTLINE OF 1 CORINTHIANS (largely from David Jackman)

A. DIVISION ISSUES

- 1:1-9 Teaching the Corinthians what is the reality of the “church of God” in Corinth. Recalling them to their fundamental unity, with all believers, in view of their destiny. The centrality of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1:10-17 Confronting the issue of division – which is especially focused on church leaders
- 1:18-2:5 The centrality of the gospel of the Cross, and of the Cross to the gospel
(a) God’s foolish wisdom, 1:18-25
(b) God’s weak agents, 1:26-31
(c) Paul’s trembling ministry, 2:1-5
- 2:6-16 The real division: those with and without the Spirit. Marked by knowledge of the “mystery” of the Gospel.
- 3:1-4:21 The nature of true Christian ministry – and therefore of gospel spirituality
(a) Only servants, 3:5
(b) God’s fellow workers, 3:9
(c) Stewards of the secret things of God, 4:1
(d) Fools for Christ, 4:10

Note the strong warnings against false views: 3:13, 17, 18, 21a; 4:5, 6-7, 14, 18-21

B. MORAL ISSUES

- 5:1-13 Immorality – even incest – within the church.
Key remedy = 5:6-8, back to the Cross.
- 6:1-11 Believers taking grievances vs. each other believers to pagan law courts – denial of Gospel.
- 6:12-20 Excusing sexual immorality – but they’re united to Christ
- 7:1-11 Issues surrounding marriage, sex, singleness, divorce – kingdom priorities.

C. FREEDOM ISSUES

- 8:1-13 Food offered to idols – the issue of freedom vs. love
- 9:1-27 Paul reflects on his own freedom, as a Christian worker.
Key ideas = 9:15, 19, 22b-23. The centrality of the gospel and an eternal perspective.
- 10:1-13 Lessons from the Old Testament – same temptations, same dangers
- 10:14-11:1 Dealing with idolatry – flee from evil (v14); seek the good of others (v24), follow the example of Christ (11:1)
- 11:2-16 Controversy over the role and appearance of women in church – a misuse of “freedom”

11:17-34 Abuses of the Lord's Supper – "without recognising the body of the Lord" (v29)... "wait for each other" (v33)

SPIRITUAL ISSUES

12:1-31 Spiritual gifts set in the context of unity of the body

13:1-13 Love is the essential foundation of all that goes on within the body, because it's the eternal expression of the character of the eternal God.

14:1-40 Use of spiritual gifts in public meetings based on the criteria of the gospel and love.

15:1-58 Teaching about the resurrection to counteract false "spirituality"

(a) The certainty of Christ's physical resurrection, vv1-20

(b) The believer, united with Christ, will also be raised, vv21-34

(c) The natural body raised a spiritual body, vv35-39

(d) Victory over death, vv50-58

16:1-4 The collection for God's people

16:5-24 Personal requests and final greetings

Note key verses: vv13-14, vv22-24.