



1 CORINTHIANS

U P S I D E D O W N

UPSIDE DOWN - 1 CORINTHIANS 1-6

Week	Passage	Theme
1	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	Introduction to 1 Corinthians
2	1 Corinthians 1:10-2:5	Division and the Cross
3	1 Corinthians 2:6-16	God's Wisdom Revealed
4	1 Corinthians 3:1-4	Worldly Christians
5	1 Corinthians 3:5-23	Addressing Misunderstandings
6	1 Corinthians 4:1-13	Genuine Apostleship
7	1 Corinthians 4:14-21	Personal Appeal and Warning
8	1 Corinthians 5:1-13	The Case of Incest
9	1 Corinthians 6:1-11	Lawsuits Between Christians
10	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	Sexual Immorality

We want to encourage each other to be on mission to our non-Christian friends, family and contacts.

Who are you on mission to?

Make a list and start praying for them (and yourself).

Pray for three friends, once a week, for one minute (3-1-1).

List the names of your family and friends here:

TERM 2 - 2018

How to use this book:

1. PERSONAL READING

- Use this guide to help you read your Bible every day.
- Scribble down your thoughts and questions each day, and remember to pray and ask God to speak to you by His Spirit, through His Word.

2. GROWTH GROUPS

- Take this guide with you to your Growth Group each week so you can write down prayer points that come from the study that week and prayer requests from the members of your group.
- Let your group know who you are on mission to.

3. CHURCH

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
- Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided.

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www.evchurch.info/series

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INTRODUCTION: 1 CORINTHIANS 1-6

The City of Corinth

At the bottom of an impressive rugged limestone summit, Greek Corinth had existed for several hundred years before it was destroyed by Rome in 146 B.C. The city was rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., becoming one of the most important cities of the Roman Empire. Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaia and the seat of the governor.

Roman Corinth was rich, trendy, and religiously diverse, accustomed to visits by impressive, traveling public speakers and obsessed with status, self-promotion, and personal rights. From a Jewish or Christian perspective, as with any pagan city, its inhabitants were marked by the worship of idols, sexual immorality, and greed.

Paul's Relationship with the Corinthians

Paul's relationship with the Corinthians is quite fascinating to trace historically through the book of Acts, his letters to the Corinthian church, as well as ancient historical and political records. The church in Corinth began in approximately AD 50-51 as part of Paul's second missionary journey; his relationship with them was roughly over a seven-year period. Paul visited Corinth three times and wrote four letters in total, two of which have been lost to time. The letters we know as 1 and 2 Corinthians were actually his second and fourth letters to them.

Paul's Purpose in Writing

The historical context leading up to Paul writing 1 Corinthians is important to understand. Between AD 52-54 when Paul came to Ephesus (Acts 19:1), things at Corinth became complicated for two reasons. First, for some of that time the church was under the influence of other leaders. There was the gifted Alexandrian Jewish leader, Apollos, who was an impressive 'man of words' (Acts 18:24). After him, the 'high-ranking' Apostle Peter and his wife visited Corinth also. By contrast, Paul seemed quite unimpressive. Secondly, the previous (lost) letter was directed to the church's failure to deal with internal moral issues of sexual immorality, drunkenness, idolatry and fraud (1 Corinthians 5:1-9). The church was growing in size, but with that came increasingly pagan thinking and behaviour. This pull of ungodly values, along with less effective leadership, meant the culture of the church in Corinth was declining in a hurry!

Paul was prompted to write this second letter, 1 Corinthians, in response to distressing news from the church. This news included verbal reports, from Chloe's people (1:11) and Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17), and a letter from the church that Paul mentions in 7:1, which contained a series of questions posed by the congregation. The congregation was now divided over their favourite Christian leaders (1:12). Further, Paul learned that they were confused over a range of issues, with some members taking legal action against other members (6:1–11), cases of sexual immorality (5:1–13; 6:12–20), marriage problems (7:1–40), questions concerning food offered to idols (chapters 8–10) and spiritual gifts (chapters 12–14).

What was causing the problems? Many of the Corinthians' faults can be traced to them adopting the attitudes, values, and behaviours of the society in which they lived. There was also a class divide between the rich and powerful ('haves') and the poor ('have nots'). As the church grew, so did this class divide within it. The power, position and prestige that the 'haves' were accustomed to were likely to be significant drivers of the problems in Corinth.

At the core, it seems that these problems grew out of the Corinthians' inability to let the gospel message fully reshape their lives, whether because they misunderstood that message or because they rejected it outright. Rather than being the "church of God in Corinth" (1:2), they were behaving more like they were the "church of the city of Corinth". It was their failure to grasp the gospel and its implications across all areas of their lives that led to the problems. Therefore, it's no mistake that Paul's letter begins with the power and wisdom of the cross and climaxes with detailed teaching on matters of "first importance", the gospel of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. In the middle of these problems, he applies the gospel and its implications to the Corinthian's current situation.

Today, just like then, if Christians naively hold worldly values we will inevitably take on worldly lifestyles. So, we also need to be reminded that the gospel message in its fullness will help us to think clearly and therefore see clearly resulting in us knowing how we are to live. This letter will urge us, with God's help, to turn our upside-down lives right-side up to the glory of God.



Suggested Reading:
Right Side Up
by Paul Grimmond

READ THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

Something you might like to use to extend your daily Bible reading.

The Bible is truly an extraordinary book, unique among all other books. It consists of 66 individual books, written by 40 different authors, in three different languages across 1,500 years of history. Yet for all of this diversity it contains a unified message that focuses on the coming of Jesus and the amazing salvation He offers through His death and resurrection!

The Bible contains words written by men in all the richness of literary types making it fun, challenging and enjoyable to dig into. Yet, at the same time, the Bible is also the very words of God given to us by His Spirit (1 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). These are not just words spoken in times past, but words that are alive for us to read today (Hebrews 4:12-13). The God of the universe actually addresses us today clearly in the pages of the Bible - amazing!

Jesus says the entire Bible points us to Him, that He is the focal point of it all. Listen to what He says, "He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." (Luke 24:44). Or, again Jesus says, "You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." (John 5:39-40).

Knowing this is helpful in motivating us to read the Bible regularly, to keep building a bigger understanding of God's purposes and how they are being fulfilled in Jesus. To help with this, the Daily Reading Notes now include an extra challenge: to read the whole Bible in two years. It's totally optional, are you up for it?

There is a list of around 15 chapters of additional reading for each week of the term that will help you achieve this challenge. These readings can be done on whatever days work best and in whatever order you prefer to read them. At the end of each term you have a chance to catch up before the next term's suggested readings begin again. You can also track your readings across the two years right here. Enjoy!

YEAR 1: TERM 1

- | | | |
|--------|---|--------------------------|
| Week 1 | Genesis 1-5; Psalms 1-4; Genesis 5-10; Matthew 1-2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 2 | Genesis 11-15; Psalms 5-7; Genesis 16-20; Matthew 3-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 3 | Genesis 21-25; Psalms 8-10; Genesis 26-30; Matthew 5-6 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 4 | Genesis 31-35; Psalms 11-16; Genesis 36-40; Matthew 7-9 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Week 5 Genesis 41-45; Psalms 17-19; Genesis 46-50; Matthew 10-11
- Week 6 Exodus 1-5; Psalms 20-24; Exodus 6-10; Matthew 12-13
- Week 7 Exodus 11-15, Psalms 25-27; Exodus 16-20; Matthew 14-15
- Week 8 Exodus 21-25; Psalms 28-31; Exodus 26-30; Matthew 16-17
- Week 9 Exodus 31-35; Psalms 32-34; Exodus 36-40; Matthew 18-19
- Week 10 Leviticus 1-5; Psalms 35-37; Leviticus 6-10; Matthew 20-21

YEAR 1: TERM 2

- Week 1 Leviticus 11-15; Psalms 38-41; Leviticus 16-20; Matthew 22-24
- Week 2 Leviticus 21-27; Numbers 1-3; Proverbs 1-3; Matthew 25-26
- Week 3 Numbers 4-13; Proverbs 4-6; Matthew 27-28
- Week 4 Numbers 14-23; Proverbs 7-9; Acts 1-2
- Week 5 Numbers 24-33; Psalms 42-44; Acts 3-4
- Week 6 Numbers 34-36; Psalms 45-48; Acts 5-6
- Week 7 Deuteronomy 1-7; Psalms 49-51; Acts 7-8
- Week 8 Deuteronomy 8-17; Psalms 52-54; Acts 9-10
- Week 9 Deuteronomy 18-27; Psalms 55-57; Acts 11-12
- Week 10 Deuteronomy 28-34; Joshua 1-3; Psalms 58-61; Acts 13-14

YEAR 1: TERM 3

- Week 1 Joshua 4-13; Psalms 62-65; Acts 15-16
- Week 2 Joshua 14-23; Psalms 66-68; Acts 17-18
- Week 3 Joshua 24; Judges 1-9; Psalms 69-71; Acts 19-20
- Week 4 Judges 10-19; Psalms 72; Proverbs 10-11; Acts 21-22
- Week 5 Judges 20-21; Ruth 1-4; 1 Samuel 1-4; Proverbs 12-14; Acts 23-24
- Week 6 1 Samuel 5-14; Proverbs 15-17; Acts 25-26
- Week 7 1 Samuel 15-24; Proverbs 18-20; Acts 27-28
- Week 8 1 Samuel 25-31; 2 Samuel 1-3; Proverbs 21-22; Mark 1-2
- Week 9 2 Samuel 4-13; Psalms 73-75; Mark 3-4
- Week 10 2 Samuel 14-24; Psalms 76-77; Mark 5-6

READ THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

YEAR 1: TERM 4

- Week 1 1 Kings 1-5; Psalms 78-80; 1 Kings 6-10; Mark 7-8
- Week 2 1 Kings 11-15; Psalms 81-83; 1 Kings 16-20; Mark 9-10
- Week 3 1 Kings 21-22; 2 Kings 1-8; Psalms 84-86; Mark 11-12
- Week 4 2 Kings 9-13; Psalms 87-89; 2 Kings 14-18; Mark 13-14
- Week 5 2 Kings 19-25; 1 Chronicles 1-3; Psalms 90-93; Mark 15-16
- Week 6 1 Chronicles 4-8; Psalms 94-96; 1 Chronicles 9-13; Romans 1-2
- Week 7 1 Chronicles 14-18; Psalms 97-101; 1 Chronicles 19-23; Romans 3-4
- Week 8 1 Chronicles 24-29; Psalms 102-104; Romans 5-6
- Week 9 2 Chronicles 1-5; Psalms 105-106; 2 Chronicles 6-10; Romans 7-8
- Week 10 2 Chronicles 11-15; Proverbs 23-25; 2 Chronicles 16-20; Romans 9-10

YEAR 2: TERM 1

- Week 1 2 Chronicles 21-25; Proverbs 26-28; 2 Chronicles 26-30; Romans 11-12
- Week 2 2 Chronicles 31-36; Ezra 1-4; Proverbs 29-31; Romans 13-14
- Week 3 Ezra 5-10; Nehemiah 1-4; Psalms 107-109; Romans 15-16
- Week 4 Nehemiah 5-13; Psalms 110-113; 1 Corinthians 1-2
- Week 5 Esther 1-10; Psalms 114-117; 1 Corinthians 3-4
- Week 6 Job 1-5; Psalms 118; Job 6-10; 1 Corinthians 5-6
- Week 7 Job 11-15; Psalms 119:1-48; Job 16-20; 1 Corinthians 7-8
- Week 8 Job 21-25; Psalms 119:49-96; Job 26-30; 1 Corinthians 9-10
- Week 9 Job 31-35; Psalms 119:97-144; Job 36-40; 1 Corinthians 11-12
- Week 10 Job 41-42; Ecclesiastes 1-8; Psalms 119:145-176; 1 Corinthians 13-14

YEAR 2: TERM 2

- Week 1 Ecclesiastes 9-12; Song of Songs 1-5; Psalms 120-122; 1 Cor 15-16
- Week 2 Songs of Songs 6-8; Isaiah 1-7; Psalms 123-125; Luke 1-2
- Week 3 Isaiah 8-12; Psalms 126-130; Isaiah 13-17; Luke 3-4
- Week 4 Isaiah 18-22; Psalms 131-135; Isaiah 23-27; Luke 5-6
- Week 5 Isaiah 28-32; Psalms 136-138; Isaiah 33-37; Luke 7-8

Week 6	Isaiah 38-42; Psalms 139-142; Isaiah 43-47; Luke 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	Isaiah 48-52; Psalms 143-145; Isaiah 53-57; Luke 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	Isaiah 58-62; Psalms 146-147; Isaiah 63-66; Luke 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	Jeremiah 1-5; Psalms 148-150; Jeremiah 6-10; Luke 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	Jeremiah 11-15; Luke 17-21; Jeremiah 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/>

YEAR 2: TERM 3

Week 1	Jeremiah 21-25; Luke 21-24; Jeremiah 26-30; 2 Corinthians 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	Jeremiah 31-35; 2 Corinthians 2-7; Jeremiah 36-40	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	Jeremiah 41-45; 2 Corinthians 8-13; Jeremiah 46-50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	Jeremiah 51-52; Lamentations 1-5; Galatians 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 5	Ezekiel 1-5; Ephesians 1-6; Ezekiel 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	Ezekiel 11-15; Philippians 1-4; Ezekiel 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	Ezekiel 21-25; Colossians 1-4; Ezekiel 26-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	Ezekiel 31-35; 1 Thessalonians 1-5; Ezekiel 36-40; 2 Thessalonians 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	Ezekiel 41-48; 1 Timothy 1-6; 2 Timothy 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	Daniel 1-10; Titus 1-3, Philemon	<input type="checkbox"/>

YEAR 2: TERM 4

Week 1	Daniel 11-12; Hosea 1-8; Hebrews 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	Hosea 9-14; Joel 1-3; Hebrews 8-13	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3	Amos 1-9; James 1-5; 1 Peter 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4	Obadiah; Jonah 1-4; 2 Peter 1-3; 1 John 1-6; 2 John; 3 John	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 5	Micah 1-7; Nahum 1-3; Jude; Revelation 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6	Habakkuk 1-3; Revelation 6-19:10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7	Zephaniah 1-3; Revelation 19:11-22:21	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8	Haggai 1-2; John 1-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 9	Zechariah 1-14; John 13-17	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 10	Malachi 1-4; John 18-21	<input type="checkbox"/>

WEEK 1: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9

This week we're going to do some work digging into the context of Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church and try to understand his purpose for writing this letter to them. It will help you get your head into things if you read through the Introduction to 1 Corinthians on pages 4-5 of these Daily Reading Notes.

DAY 1

Read Acts 18:1-11

The book of Acts records three missionary journeys that the Apostle Paul made as he preached the gospel. Today's reading is part of Paul's second journey when he first arrived in Corinth around AD50/51.

1. What happened as Paul arrived in Corinth?
2. Why would God's words to Paul in the vision have been so important for him to hear?
 - a. How are these words an encouragement for us today as we live in a world that is increasingly hostile towards the gospel?

Prayer: Thank God for the gospel going out to the nations and coming to Australia, just like it came to the Corinthians 2,000 years ago. Pray that God might stir your heart with those same words He gave to Paul, "I have many people in this city", so that you might stay faithful to Him and take up the urgent task of spreading the gospel on the coast.

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

DAY 2

Yesterday, we saw how the gospel came to Corinth through the preaching of the Apostle Paul. Today, we will look into the reasons that Paul wrote the letter we know as '1 Corinthians' to this church.

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Ecclesiastes 9-12; Song of Songs 1-5;
Psalms 120-122; 1 Corinthians 15-16

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-11; 5:1; 5:9; 7:1

1. Looking at these verses, what do you learn about the reason/s that Paul wrote this letter?
 - a. What are the two issues that have been reported back to Paul? (1:10-11; 5:1)
 - b. Is this the first letter Paul had written to them? (5:9)
 - c. Chapter 7:1 begins a section that runs all the way through to the end of chapter 14. How does 7:1 help us understand about why Paul wrote this section?

It's helpful to notice these verses because we start to get a feel for how things were going in Corinth since the gospel landed there. There had been significant issues that caused Paul to write a previous letter (now lost to time). Despite this first letter, the report he receives back is that things are no better; in fact they seem to be getting worse! More than that, the church has a whole range of questions about the Christian life showing they have a long way to go – they are still very worldly in thought and lifestyle. It's helpful for us to notice that people don't grow into maturity overnight. In fact, it's often through difficulty, hardship, struggle, even personal failures that God brings us to our senses and teaches us to trust and honour Him. This letter to the Corinthians will speak powerfully to us today because ancient Corinth and the Central Coast are not all that different in many ways.

Prayer: Ask God to help you be open to hearing from Him this term as the gospel rubs up against our values and our lifestyles. Ask Him to give you a soft heart that is ready and wanting to change so that you might grow in your love for God and into deeper Christian maturity.

WEEK 1: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

1. What does Paul say about the Corinthian's identity and purpose?
 - a. Who do they belong to? (Verse 2)
 - b. What had God done for them?
 - c. What is God's purpose for them?
 - d. What is the basis for all this? (Verse 3)

2. To a church that was still thinking and behaving like the world they lived in, why is Paul's introduction such a powerful way to open the letter?

3. Like the Corinthians back then, we could mistakenly think of the gospel as a 'get out of jail free' card, a kind of eternal insurance policy that means we can live this life however we want without the fear of judgement. But these opening verses show that the grace of God that has come to us causes us to see ourselves differently. We belong to God now, and our confidence about the future is because we've been sanctified in Christ Jesus (that is, set apart from our old life and joined to Jesus). We are called to be God's holy people, to be different, not like the world. As you look back over these opening verses, notice how the Christian life is all about God and not you? How does this challenge the way you see yourself and the purpose of your life?

Prayer: Ask God to help you understand the gospel more deeply so that the way you think about yourself and your life might bring glory to the God who has saved you.

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

1. Among the range of issues was a sense of spiritual elitism among some in the Corinthian church (likely those who were already the cultural elites of the day). In part, the source of their growing pride, and their disowning of their Apostle Paul, was due to their spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14). Sadly, they thought of themselves spiritually elite because of their gifts. In Paul's opening (1:4-9), you might imagine him critiquing them heavily about this, yet he takes another tact. What does he say about their spiritual gifts?
 - a. Where did the gifts come from?
 - b. Why should that change their thinking about themselves?
 - c. How should they think about Paul because of this?
2. It's not uncommon to compare ourselves to others and wish we were smarter, more gifted, or more able in some way. Or, you may think that because of your success or influence in life you must therefore also be a spiritually superior Christian. Regardless of who we are, or what gifting we have, Paul's words are powerful and important for us today. It is "in Christ" (verse 4) that we have been enriched in every way. It's not about us; it's about Jesus. And in Jesus, every Christian has been enriched in every way! Therefore, there is nothing lacking in your life if you are in Christ. If you can grasp this, you will grow in gratitude for God's grace (verse 4), and you will be guarded from thinking too much of yourself.
 - a. What kind of person do you tend to be?
 - b. How does the gospel need to challenge you today?

Prayer: Pray that God guards you from worldly thinking that causes you to either think too little of yourself, or too much! Ask God to grow your gratitude for His grace to you in Christ that your identity might be shaped by the gospel more and more each day.

WEEK 1: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

1. What is the source of Paul's confidence as he writes to this very messed-up church?
2. It can be hard to honestly face the areas you need to change in your own life. But a right understanding of the gospel causes us not to have a defeatist attitude about it, quite the opposite in fact! God is the hero of the Christian story. It is God who acted in Christ to save you; it is God who has given you every spiritual blessing in this life and the life to come in Christ. And, it is God who will work to keep you standing firm until the end. God is faithful to His promise to do all these things.
 - a. How does this help you think about the areas of your life that you need to change?

Prayer: Take some time to turn Paul's words of thanksgiving into a prayer for yourself today.

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

NOTES AND PRAYER POINTS

WEEK 2: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-2:5

1 Corinthians 1:10-12 describes the first of two significant problems reported back to Paul. The first problem is so important to Paul that today's reading will briefly identify the issue, but his response will take us right through to the end of chapter 4.

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-12

1. What is Paul's appeal to the Corinthians?
 - a. Why does he say this?

2. What does the Corinthians' division over their favourite leaders reveal about their understanding of the gospel?

3. Why is it so important that God's people are united in mind and thought about the gospel?

Prayer: Pray that God would grow your understanding of the gospel to guard you against finding your identity in things that really do not matter.

Division and the Cross

DAY 2

**Read Acts 18:24-29;
1 Corinthians 1:10-17**

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Songs of Songs 6-8; Isaiah 1-7;
Psalms 123-125; Luke 1-2

History suggests that Corinth was used to visits by impressive traveling public speakers and was obsessed with status. It is very likely this underlying culture was driving the first reported issue that Paul deals with.

1. What do we learn about Apollos from Acts 18:24-29?
2. Why might Apollos have been such an appealing leader in Corinth?
3. Looking at 1 Corinthians 1:13-17, how does Paul respond to this division around leaders?
4. What is really at stake here?
5. How does this passage help us know what we ought to value most highly in Christian leaders?

Prayer: Pray for your pastors and leaders today. Pray for their resolve to stand firm in the gospel and to not give in to worldly values as they teach and preach the gospel.

WEEK 2: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-2:5

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

1. What does the cross of Christ do to human wisdom and human strength?
2. Why was human wisdom never going to lead people to God?
3. How would this confront the Corinthians' craving to hear gifted speakers teach using worldly wisdom?
4. How do Paul's words here build your confidence in the gospel?

Prayer: Pray that your categories of wisdom and power might be turned right-side up through your confidence in the cross of Christ.

Division and the Cross

DAY 4

Similar to today, the ancient world had a class divide between the rich and powerful cultural elites 'haves', and the poorer 'have nots'. As we continue through 1 Corinthians we will see that this class divide was evident in the church as well. You can therefore imagine it would have been natural for newly-converted cultural elites to assume their privileged status carried over into the Christian world. You can also imagine it was natural they would be drawn to identify themselves with the most gifted and impressive speakers, including their Christian leaders. But it would have also been tempting for the lower classes to want to identify themselves with high profile and gifted public speakers to try and boost their status! In 1:18-25, Paul responded to this temptation by turning the Corinthians' worldly thinking about wisdom and power on its ear! He said that the cross of Christ is the example of God's true wisdom and power, making a mockery of the world's greatest wisdom and strength! They needed to change the way they thought about wisdom and power. Now, Paul takes the argument to the Corinthians themselves...

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

1. Why does Paul remind the Corinthians of their cultural status before the gospel came to them?
 - a. How does this highlight God as the hero in the Corinthians' conversion story?

2. Where does Paul want the Corinthians' identity to be based?
 - a. How would this protect them from disunity?

Prayer: Pray that God would keep you humble through a right view of yourself in God's story so that you might rightly find your identity in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that you might boast in what God has done for you in Christ.

WEEK 2: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-2:5

DAY 5

Compared to Apollos and Peter (Cephas), it's likely Paul was something of a disappointment to the Corinthians. To them he was unimpressive and possibly even embarrassing because of what they wrongly valued in their leaders. In today's passage, Paul will defend his manner, his method and the reason that it has to be this way.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1. How does Paul describe himself (his manner)?
2. How does Paul describe his ministry method?
3. As a gospel minister, what does Paul care most about and why?
4. How is this helpful to think about what you most want to see in your church leaders?

Prayer: Pray that God continues to raise up men and women among us at EV, around Australia and the world who will clearly and boldly preach the gospel without compromise, without falling into the temptation of celebrity or social fame. Pray for our mission partners also, that they would be like Paul in their ministry – desiring God's power to ground people's faith in the truths of the gospel rather than a certain personality.

Division and the Cross

NOTES AND PRAYER POINTS

WEEK 3: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16

DAY 1

Up to this point, Paul has slammed the false worldly wisdom that was leading to divisions and factions in the church. He did this by contrasting the world's greatest wisdom and power as nothing compared to the foolishness and weakness of the cross. The repetition of the words "wisdom", "mature" and "spiritual" in this opening section (1:18-3:4) suggests these were 'catch words' among the Corinthians, but not rightly understood in the slightest! In fact, it was the misunderstood meaning of these words that was part of the problem! In case the Corinthians thought Paul was against wisdom altogether, he will now begin re-claiming the language of wisdom, along with what it means to be mature and spiritual.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; Colossians 1:28

1. 1 Corinthians 2:6a functions like a summary statement of this section. What is Paul saying here about wisdom?
 - a. What does this suggest about the Corinthians given they don't understand Paul's teaching as wisdom?

2. What is the pathway to maturity according to these verses?
 - a. Where do we go to hear that wisdom?

Prayer: Ask God to grow your conviction about growing in maturity and your love for God's Word that you might grow into greater Christ-likeness.

God's Wisdom Revealed

DAY 2

**Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16;
Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 5:13-14**

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Isaiah 8-12; Psalms 126-130;
Isaiah 13-17; Luke 3-4

1. Yesterday we saw that learning God's wisdom leads to growth in maturity. But what is this 'wisdom' that Paul is speaking about?

2. Given Paul speaks to the Corinthians as Christians, can the wisdom be the gospel, or is it more than this? Why?

3. How will developing the mind of Christ help us in our Christian growth and maturity?
 - a. Do you make your day-to-day decisions based on the wisdom of the world and its values, or do you seek to know the mind of Christ?

 - b. What decisions have you recently made that went against the wisdom of the world?

Prayer: Pray that God might stir you to ground your life in His Word, able to discern good from evil, so that you may be mature in the way you think and live.

WEEK 3: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-13

This week we have looked at the connection between learning God's wisdom and growing in Christian maturity. We've seen that God's wisdom is the teaching about righteousness that leads to us developing the mind of Christ, becoming mature. This wisdom reveals the eternal plan of God in Christ and all that flows out of that. Today we're going to press into the source of this wisdom.

1. What is the source of true wisdom?
2. Can it be known by anyone?
3. How is it able to be known?
4. How does God reveal this wisdom?
5. How does 2:9 motivate you to pursue a deeper understanding of God's wisdom?

Prayer: Ask God to help you grasp the wisdom that comes from knowing Christ and everything that means.

God's Wisdom Revealed

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 3:5-9; 4:1

One of the mistakes we can make is to assume whom Paul means when he says, "we", "you" or "us" in 2:6-16. So, let's explore this for a moment.

1. What are the possible options that Paul is referring to when he says, "we" throughout 2:6-16?
2. How do the other readings help clarify who Paul is referring to?
3. How does this bring clarity to our understanding of 2:6-16?
4. Where do we find these Spirit words of God's revealed wisdom?

Prayer: Pray that God causes you to love His Word as the living and active Spirit Word of God, revealed to the Apostles, and passed on to us so that we might be like Christ and grow in His likeness.

WEEK 3: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 2:14-16

1. Yesterday, we saw that God's secret wisdom was revealed to the Apostles by His Spirit, and through their teaching it continues to be revealed as the Spirit Word of God's wisdom.
 - a. What is required for a person to receive this wisdom?

 - b. Who is the truly spiritual person?

2. How do Paul's words here challenge the value of worldly wisdom?

Prayer: Thank God for saving you, for giving you His Spirit, and making it possible to know the wisdom needed to live as God's person through His Word.

God's Wisdom Revealed

NOTES AND PRAYER POINTS

WEEK 4: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-4

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; 2 Corinthians 13:5-10

1. In last week's reading, Paul was clear to distinguish between those with the Spirit and those without. Only those with the Spirit (Christians) were able to accept spiritual wisdom, God's wisdom. In light of this, how do the Corinthians fair in Paul's assessment of them?
2. What is the key issue?
3. This problem of worldliness plagued the Corinthian church for some time. How serious a problem was it by the end of 2 Corinthians?
4. Worldliness is something that all Christians struggle with and, if left unchallenged, it may end up revealing you never really became a Christian. It's no small matter. Can you identify areas in your life where worldly values matter to you more than godly ones? Are there things you need to start taking seriously today?

Prayer: Pray that God would be gracious to you by helping you see the areas in your life that are worldly so you can repent of them and commit yourself to growing in godliness.

Worldly Christians

DAY 2

Martin Luther said, “we are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.” In other words, a genuinely saved person must necessarily display the evidence of that salvation through a changed life. Our upside-down lives need to be turned right-side up! Yesterday, we saw how serious a problem worldliness is for a Christian. So, for the rest of this week we’re going to look at a range of places where God’s Word speaks to us about the need to grow and how to do that.

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Isaiah 18-22; Psalms 131-135;
Isaiah 23-27; Luke 5-6

Read 2 Peter 1:3-11; 20-21

1. How do Christians escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires?
2. Where do we go to learn about God’s great and precious promises?
3. As we let God’s Word soak into us we actually participate in relationship with Him. As our worldly way of thinking is re-shaped to match God’s thinking, Peter tells Christians to add to their faith a range of behaviours, why?
4. What does Peter say about people who do not exhibit these behaviours?

Prayer: Ask God to grow your hunger to know His great and precious promises so that you might grow in your relationship with Him, that you might know how to live your life in a way that is productive and effective, and so that you might not stumble as you head towards heaven.

WEEK 4: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-4

DAY 3

Read Hebrews 5:11-6:2; 3:7-14

1. What should a Christian's life look like if they are growing in maturity?
2. What's the problem with just a basic understanding of the gospel without a commitment to growing in wisdom and maturity?
3. As you reflect on these verses today, what is God saying to you?

Prayer: Pray in response to God's Word today.

Worldly Christians

DAY 4

Read **Philippians 3:10-21**

1. Where is the mature Christian's focus meant to be?
2. What happens when your heart moves from heaven to earthly things?
3. The purpose of this week's readings has been to help us feel the importance of turning our upside-down lives right-side up to the glory of God. We've looked at a range of different readings and they've had a constant theme calling Christians over and again to growth and maturity. Have you been feeling that weight this week? What are the steps you plan on taking to give yourself to this?

Prayer: Ask God to help you live this life in light of heaven with clarity and purpose and that you will not be distracted by the temporary pleasures of the world.

WEEK 4: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-4

DAY 5

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

1. What things hinder you in your Christian life?
2. What sins easily entangle you?
3. When you are finding the Christian life difficult, what things are you to remember?
4. As we finish up this week's daily readings, the purpose was to understand the danger of worldliness and the great emphasis in His Word to grow in maturity. What has been God saying to you?

Prayer: Pray that God would encourage you deeply today by what Jesus has done so that you might throw off the things that are hindering you, and the sin that so easily entangles, and give you such a clear vision of heaven that it radically impacts everything you do in this life.

Worldly Christians

NOTES AND PRAYER POINTS

WEEK 5: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-23

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

1. What is the main issue Paul takes with the Corinthians' allegiance to their favourite leaders?
2. How does the metaphor of the field (3:5-9) clarify the way we should think about God, Christian leaders and the church?
3. Who is the only one we ought to identify ourselves with?
4. Thinking back over your life, who planted the seed of the gospel for you? Who has watered it over the years?

Prayer: Give thanks to God for working through the faithful gospel teaching of those men and women who have taught you the gospel and grown you in it over the years. Pray that He might continue to grow you, and to use you to share the gospel with others asking God to use your efforts to see people saved and matured in the gospel.

Addressing Misunderstandings

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 3:9-15

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Isaiah 28-32; Psalms 136-138;
Isaiah 33-37; Luke 7-8

1. What issue does Paul address with the building metaphor?
2. What is the foundation Paul has laid?
3. How does this serve as a warning to the existing leadership in Corinth?
 - a. What should their greatest priority be?
4. How does it serve as a warning to Christian leaders through all time?

Prayer: Pray for your leaders today. Pray that they would be faithful and fruitful ministers of the gospel.

WEEK 5: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-23

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

1. How are the Corinthians (and all Christians beyond them) to understand who they are?
2. Why would this be confronting but important to hear?
3. How do these words challenge your understanding of your identity?

Prayer: Thank God for the great privilege it is to belong to Him, for the gift of His Spirit who is present with us, and for the sacred value given to us because of His grace to us. Pray for His help to live your life to reflect this reality.

Addressing Misunderstandings

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-23

1. These verses act like a summary and conclusion to this section. How does Paul show that boasting about human leaders is so ridiculous?
 - a. What have they been given in Christ?

 - b. How does this make them seem so foolish for pandering to human leaders?

2. The danger of worldly thinking is that it takes you away from the gospel, the source of true wisdom. What values do you hold dear in life? Are they values that have come from your growth in the gospel? We have been given everything in Christ, yet how quickly do we settle for a little piece of the world instead? If you truly knew what you had in Christ, would you not live a very different life?

Prayer: Pray that God keeps showing you the foolishness of the world and the surpassing greatness of His true wisdom revealed in Jesus so that you see yourself in light of this, act in light of this, and look forward to the fulfillment of this. Ask God for a larger and clearer vision of heaven!

WEEK 5: 1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-23

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-23

1. As you read through this passage one last time, how many times do you see Paul showing you who the real hero of the Christian story is?
2. How should this impact our Christian confidence?
3. How should this lead to humility and worship?

Prayer: Pray that God would help you see yourself less and see Him more. Pray that His glory and greatness might crash into your heart and change you from the inside out.

Addressing Misunderstandings

NOTES AND PRAYER POINTS

WEEK 6: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-13

In dealing with the divisions in Corinth, Paul first addressed the Corinthians' worldly thinking about wisdom and then showing the 'foolishness' of the cross being God's ultimate display of wisdom and power. The Corinthians needed to think differently about wisdom. He will now turn to show the way right thinking should be reflected in right living.

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1; 15:1-11

1. The Corinthians were divided around their favourite leaders. But they were also particularly down on Paul, whose preaching they deemed to be very poor compared to the cultural wisdom of the day and the other Apostles' preaching. As we come to today passages, how does Paul want them to view the Apostles?
 - a. Why should the Corinthians hold their Apostles in equally high regard?
 - b. What should stop them thinking too much of any one Apostle?
2. How does this help us understand the nature of true apostleship?
3. In light of this, how should we think about Apostles today?

Prayer: Thank God for revealing the mystery of His saving purposes in Christ and entrusting this wisdom to the Apostles. Thank God for grounding this plan in history in a concrete way so that we can be sure of its truth thus enabling confident faith. Thank God for preserving this wisdom through the Apostles' teaching, through their letters and writings, that we too can know the certainty of the gospel today.

Genuine Apostleship

DAY 2

**Read 1 Corinthians 4:2-5;
Psalm 17:3, 26:1-3**

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Isaiah 38-42; Psalms 139-142;
Isaiah 43-47; Luke 9-10

1. What else do we learn about the nature of apostleship here?
2. Why should the Corinthians be cautious about judging their leaders?
3. Who is the only one who can judge the heart?
4. How does this challenge you today?

Prayer: Ask God to protect you from (or forgive you for) the arrogance and immaturity that would cause you to want to cut a leader down for reasons that don't really matter.

WEEK 6: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-13

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 4:6-7

1. How does Paul show the Corinthians that their obsession with their favourite leader is ridiculous?
 - a. What does he want them to understand?

 - b. What impact should this understanding have on them?

2. How does this understanding help us also?

Prayer: Pray that God guards us against thinking more of ourselves because of the church we belong to, or the leaders we have, or anything else apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Genuine Apostleship

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 4:8-9

The cultural elites of the day were used to social privilege and superiority for they had arrived at the apex of cultural position with all it offered. If the Corinthians had assumed their worldly cultural status had carried over to their Christian identity it could explain the mess they were in.

1. How does Paul contrast the Corinthians' status with the Apostles' in these two verses?
2. Does it seem like the Corinthians' status was shaped by the cross or by the world?
3. Why is this such an ugly picture of arrogance?

Prayer: Pray that God would guard you against thinking too much of yourself because of human standards rather than God's standards.

WEEK 6: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-13

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 4:10-13

1. Yesterday we looked at the issue between Paul and the Corinthians when he contrasted their status with the Apostles'. Paul now offers a series of contrasts of worldliness compared to a life shaped by the cross.
 - a. What are the words Paul uses to describe the Corinthians?

 - b. What words does he use to describe the Apostles?

2. Why is worldliness such a hindrance to real growth and maturity?

Pride and arrogance are ugly qualities in general, but they're actually signs of significant immaturity for a Christian. Humility and self-sacrificial love are the outworking of a person who has felt the weight of their sin, received God's gracious gift of salvation, and seeks to live a life holy to the Lord. This is the shape of Paul's life described in today's passage. The death of Jesus saves us and also shapes what it means to follow Jesus. It's not glamorous, it's not popular; it's actually foolishness, weakness and dishonour in the eyes of the world. But the gospel is the power of God for the salvation for everyone who believes (Romans 1:6-7).

Prayer: Ask God to help you see where your view of yourself is inflated because of worldliness in your thinking. Ask God to help you understand the gospel more deeply and grant you humility and love so that you can pour yourself out for the good of others; the ultimate good being their salvation.

Genuine Apostleship

NOTES AND PRAYER POINTS

WEEK 7: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:14-21

These opening four chapters focused on the first 'reported' issue in Corinth, which was the division around their favorite leaders. Paul has identified the heart of their problem as immaturity/worldliness (3:1-4). It was their love of worldly wisdom that meant they could not (or would not) perceive that the cross is not only God's means of salvation, it also provides the shape for the Christian life. Last week, Paul contrasted his cross-shaped life as one marked by suffering with the Corinthians' lives which were apparently superior in wisdom, power and honour. This week, Paul will make his final appeal to them over this first matter and then set the tone for what he's about to say next in 1 Corinthians.

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 4:14-17; 10:11-13; 2 Corinthians 13:1-10

1. Looking at 4:14-17, what words does Paul use to describe his relationship with the Corinthians?
 - a. What tone does this set for what Paul is saying here?
2. What is Paul's purpose in writing to them?
3. The language of "warning" is found in both 1 and 2 Corinthians. What is his great concern for them?
4. How is the picture of Paul's fatherly concern a comfort and a challenge to you today?

Prayer: Ask God to help you see where you might be at risk of falling so that you might also take notice of this fatherly warning.

Personal Appeal and Warning

DAY 2

**Read 1 Corinthians 4:14-17,
11:1; 2 Timothy 2:1-3**

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Isaiah 48-52; Psalms 143-145;
Isaiah 53-57; Luke 11-12

1. What is the outcome Paul wants to see in the Corinthians?
2. How are they to know what it looks like to follow Jesus?
3. How can we know what it looks like to follow Jesus today?

Prayer: Ask God to help you evaluate your life against God's Word so that you might know where you need to grow in both knowledge and godliness.

WEEK 7: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:14-21

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 4:14-5:2; 5:9

1. Who is Paul writing to in 4:14-17?
2. Who is Paul writing to in 4:18-21?
3. How might the problem Paul raises in chapter 5 be connected to the people he writes to in 4:18-21?
4. How does the strength of Paul's language here indicate the seriousness of the problems he faces from this group of people?

Prayer: Pray for our church planters and missionaries, that those coming into their churches might grow in maturity and not cause problems because of their worldly thinking or actions. Pray for strong and courageous leadership in those new churches to lead people well. Pray that these new Christians might grow in their knowledge of the gospel and desire to follow the pattern Jesus gave to Paul, and that Paul passed down the ages to us about what it means to live the Christian life.

Personal Appeal and Warning

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 4:18-21; Hebrews 12:4-13

1. Earlier this week we saw that Paul used the language of 'father' to describe his relationship with the Corinthians (4:14-17). While he speaks to this second group of people with a much firmer tone, what words indicate he is still acting in a fatherly way to them?
2. Why is discipline such an important aspect of godly church leadership?
3. Looking at Hebrews 12:4-13, why is discipline a critically important part of growing as a Christian?
4. If you constantly hide the truth of your sin what might be the outcome based on today's readings?

Prayer: Pray that God gives you a greater love for His honour than your own reputation so that you might be humble and open about your sin, dealing with it appropriately in order that you might continue to grow in godliness and avoid the danger of hardening your heart towards God.

WEEK 7: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:14-21

DAY 5

Read Revelation 3:14-22; 1 Corinthians 1:2

To stay with the theme of discipline and the danger of worldliness, we'll finish this week by looking at Jesus' letter to the church in Laodicea.

1. What has been the result of worldliness on the hearts of the Christians in Laodicea?
2. In the eyes of the world, this church would look successful, but how does Jesus describe them?
3. What is the purpose of Jesus' discipline?
4. Becoming a Christian means we are given new birth into a new identity in Christ. This new identity means we no longer belong to the world; we belong to God. We are called to be holy – meaning “set apart”, or different (1 Corinthians 1:2). Our thinking has to change about who we are so that we can live according to our new identity. The problem is that we live in a part of the world that is very comfortable. We constantly face the temptation to be half-hearted and lukewarm because following Jesus faithfully will mean cost. It will require change. As Paul warned the Corinthians, and as Jesus warned the church in Laodicea, it's a grave concern when Christians live worldly lives. The danger of falling away is very real. As we finish in this week's readings, take some time to reflect on just how serious you are about living your life for Jesus, no matter the cost. Is there anything you need to change?

Prayer: Is the way you think about life in line with the gospel of Jesus? Is the way you live your life shaped by the cross? What do you need to repent of? How can you pray about that?

Personal Appeal and Warning

NOTES AND PRAYER POINTS

WEEK 8: 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13

This week, we will start looking at the second reported problem in Corinth (5:1). It describes their generally immoral behaviour in three particular ways throughout chapters 5 and 6. The first is the case of incest (5:1-13); the second, lawsuits among believers (6:1-11); and the third deals with sexual immorality in general (6:12-20).

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-2; Deuteronomy 22:30, 27:20;

1. What makes this act of sexual immorality particularly bad in Paul's description?
2. Who does Paul say should have done something about this problem?
3. How does this help you think about our responsibility together as a church to watch out for each other?

Prayer: Pray that God would help you feel the weight of not only your own sin, but also brothers and sisters who are consciously living in sin.

The Case of Incest

DAY 2

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Isaiah 58-62; Psalms 146-147;
Isaiah 63-66; Luke 13-14

Paul doesn't tell us who the man in this situation was, but it has been suggested it was one of the cultural elites, someone who perhaps even held sway in or over the leadership in some fashion. This could explain why this problem was so difficult for the church to deal with. Yesterday, we read that Paul told the congregation they should have put this man out of fellowship because of this brazen sexual sin. But this immature and worldly congregation seemed to have looked up to this man! Because of their worldliness, and the possibility that this man has superior cultural status to them, it seems that the church in Corinth really struggled to deal with this man.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:3-5; 3:16-17

1. What does Paul say to make them bolder in dealing with this situation?
 - a. What authority is he wanting to acknowledge?
 - b. Why might this have been both necessary and helpful?
2. Why does Paul tell the church to hand this man over to Satan?
 - a. What does he hope this will achieve?
3. How does our attitude towards sin reveal our understanding of who we really are as the church of God?

Prayer: Pray that God would grow your understanding and conviction about our true identity together as God's church so that we might act like we belong to God, and encourage those around us to do the same. Ask God to help you grieve when people you know deliberately engage in sinful behavior so that you might call them to repentance.

WEEK 8: 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

1. How does the metaphor about the yeast validate Paul telling the Corinthians to expel this man from fellowship?
2. How do these words show the problem is the Corinthians' immaturity about the gospel?
3. It's possible to think that someone else's sin is a private matter, that it's not really hurting anyone else, so we ought not get involved. How does this passage show us that's simply not true?

Prayer: Pray for the clarity to see the church as it really is, and to live as someone who has truly grasped the gospel by having an increasing concern for your own, and other people's spiritual health.

The Case of Incest

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-11; 2 Corinthians 7:8-10

1. Looking at these verses, what is the context concerning Paul's instruction here?
 - a. Is this incestuous man wanting to change or is he in willful rebellion?
 - b. Is this the first time Paul has tried to deal with this issue? (5:9)
 - c. Given the church has been unwilling to deal with the problem, what risk are they putting themselves in?
2. How does knowing this help us understand the extreme measures Paul is putting in place? (5:9-11)
3. If someone had fallen into sin, yet was truly repentant, how might that be different to this scenario? (2 Corinthians 7:8-10)
4. We never outgrow our need for repentance as we wrestle with sinful motives, thoughts and actions. How has today helped you see the importance of taking sin seriously both in your own life and in the lives of others?

Prayer: Pray that God helps you understand the offense and danger of sin as He sees it. Pray that you would actively seek to grow in godliness, and encourage others to do the same so that together we might grow in our understanding of who we are as God's people, and reflect that reality by the way we live.

WEEK 8: 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 5:12-13; 9:19-23

1. In 5:9, Paul tells the church not to associate with sexually immoral people who claim to be Christians. More than this, he now tells them clearly to “expel the immoral person from among you”. He was guarding against the problem of Christians tolerating (or worse, celebrating) sexual sin because they were failing to grasp who they really are, a holy people (1:2; 5:9). In case the church took this stance too far, what does Paul say here that would protect them from isolating themselves from the world completely?
2. Why is it not possible for Christians to avoid contact with the world in its sin? (9:19-23)
3. Paul has identified that the Corinthians’ worldliness meant they did not grasp who they really were. Paul could have simply given them a bunch of “rules for life”, but you will notice over and over again that he connects the way they are thinking with the way they now need to live. Like the Corinthians, you are not of this world; you are now in Christ (1:2-4, 30; 3:16-17, 21-23; 4:14-17; 5:7). You no longer represent this world; you represent God. Together, we are sent into this world as ambassadors for Christ, to seek and save the lost (2 Corinthians 5:20). When Christians become tangled up in the loves or pleasures of the world we begin to live as something we are not. We need to be reminded that we are different now, a new creation, a people belonging to God called to be holy for the glory of God and His purposes (1 Corinthians 10:31).
 - a. Are you clear about your identity in Christ?
 - b. Do live with conviction based on your true identity?
 - c. What changes do you need to make in your life about these things?

Prayer: Ask God to help you grasp your true identity in Christ. Pray that you might continually turn from sin and grow in godliness as you seek to live as a person saved by God, belonging to God and called to be holy.

The Case of Incest

NOTES AND PRAYER POINTS

WEEK 9: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-6

1. Last week, Paul made a distinction between judging people in the church and those outside it. The Corinthians were to take action on moral issues within the church but had no mandate to judge those outside it for that is God's business. The Corinthians were living out of step with the gospel, so they were not making the necessary judgements or taking the necessary steps to honour God. How is their upside-down thinking on display in these verses?
 - a. Why are they unable to resolve these issues between themselves?
 - b. Why is their behaviour shameful?
 - c. What will be the Christian's future role in the judgement Jesus brings upon the earth? (See also Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30; Revelation 3:21).

In light of this, why is their lack of wisdom so disturbing?

2. How ought Christians handle disputes with one another?
3. When have you consciously or unconsciously brought shame on God's church by bringing your grievance about another Christian to a non-Christian?

Prayer: Pray that God would forgive you for the times you have not honoured Him or His people. Pray you would take responsibility to deal with disputes within the church, based on the grace of God shown to you, in order to honour God by honouring His redeemed people.

Lawsuits Between Christians

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-6; Romans 13:1-5

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Jeremiah 1-5; Psalms 148-150;
Jeremiah 6-10; Luke 15-16

History suggests that the Roman courts were corrupt and they favoured the wealthy because they were open to bribes. They tended to be a theatre for the elites to display their wealth and power. It's been suggested that the disputes Corinth was facing were most likely because the Christian elites were abusing their position or power by disadvantaging the lower-class Christians in some way. Instead of being able to (or even wanting to!) resolve this internally, the less wealthy lower-class Christians were wanting to stick it to the cultural elites in the courts (sounds very Australian doesn't it!?!).

1. Looking at both readings, is Paul saying Christians should never take legal action against another Christian?
2. What words are used to describe the issues the Corinthians are dragging into the courts?
3. We live in a time where people love any opportunity to stick it into the church. It's devastating and somewhat unavoidable when that occurs because of rightly-placed blame over a public moral failure by a church leader or member. Paul's appeal to the church would be that you don't offer the world any unnecessary reason to ridicule God's people and so bring dishonour to God. From what we've seen so far, if another Christian legally does wrong by you, what cautions should ring in your mind before you take action over it?

Prayer: Pray for great wisdom for yourself, and church leaders across Australia and around the world as we live together in a broken and messy world. Pray that our sense of personal rights doesn't overtake our sense of God's honour.

WEEK 9: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 6:7-8; James 5:1-4

1. The language in James 5 is very similar language used in 1 Corinthians 6:7-8. What kind of issues are the most likely problem in Corinth?
2. What crazy upside-down advice does Paul give those being wronged about how to deal with this problem? Apart from the gospel, why does this make no sense?
3. Are you willing, or able to let things go even if it unjustly disadvantages you?

Prayer: Pray that God would help you prize your own godliness and God's honour over financial gain, especially in your dealings with other Christians.

Lawsuits Between Christians

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 12:20, 13:5

1. Yesterday, Paul addressed those being wronged; today we see him speaking to with those engaging in the wrongdoing. What is his warning to them?
 - a. What is Paul's greatest concern for Christians who engage in overtly sinful behaviour?
 - b. Why might Paul add the wrongdoers to a greater list of sinful behaviours?
2. What might Paul mean when he says that people who live like this will not inherit the Kingdom of God?
 - a. Does he mean if people slip up just once they'll be rejected by God?
 - b. Does he mean that people who persist in unrepentant sinful behaviour will be at risk of being rejected by God?
3. How does this challenge us today to take seriously the sin that we keep going back to?

Prayer: Ask God to help you not take for granted the grace He has shown you in Jesus. Ask Him to help you identify you sin, repent of it and move forward in godliness.

WEEK 9: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

1. As we've seen already in this series, Paul clearly sees the link between what people think and how they act. He addresses their thinking in order to see a lasting change in behaviour. We see this again in the last verse of this section (6:11). What does Paul want the Corinthian Christians to remember?
2. How should right thinking about your identity in Christ and the hope of heaven set up your priorities for this life?
3. Regardless of your social status, what you do for work, how much money you have, how intelligent you are – in Christ we are all one, there is no distinction. We have all been washed clean by the same gracious act of God through Jesus' death and resurrection. We have been given new birth into a new identity in Christ and now we are called to live our lives based on this new identity. It's when we fail to believe this that we turn back to sin, to find in it some kind of momentary but soul-destroying pleasure. But this is not who you are! Let right thinking about who you are in Christ shape how you live.

Prayer: Ask God to help you keep repenting of thoughts and actions that are not in line with your new identity in Christ as you look forward to the hope of heaven.

Lawsuits Between Christians

NOTES AND PRAYER POINTS

WEEK 10: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

DAY 1

Today we hit the third example of the moral problems in Corinth. The first was the case of incest, and the second was the disputes leading to lawsuits among believers. The third type of behaviour Paul addresses is prostitution and sexual immorality in general.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-17

1. How would you put into your own words the Corinthians' reason for engaging in prostitution?

2. We've seen several times now that the immaturity and worldliness of the Corinthians was the major cause of their problems. It seems pretty likely that the Corinthians were acting like they always had: by their own authority, doing whatever they desired because it was only natural, and culturally normal.
 - a. What understanding was missing for them about who they truly were?

 - b. How should that impact the way they used their bodies?

3. This is a helpful reminder for us today. As Christians, our bodies are not our own. Having saved us, we are now called to be holy (1:2) which means to be set apart by God, for God, for God's service. We are no longer our own and what we do with our bodies has consequences. Do you really understand who you now are in Christ? Are you using your body wisely for God's glory?

Prayer: Pray that God might help you know who you really are in Christ so that what you do with your body might flow out of this. Take time to repent of anything today that you have been doing with your body that is dishonouring to God.

Sexual Immorality

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-17

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

Jeremiah 11-15; Luke 17-21;
Jeremiah 16-20

1. As Paul address the Corinthians' attitudes and behaviour, what key truths does he raise for them to consider?
 - a. What is the purpose of the body?
 - b. How does the reality of our future bodily resurrection affirm the sacredness of our bodies now and into the future?
 - c. How does our union with Christ have a profound impact on the way we understand life in the body this side of death?
2. How do these ideas help your thinking today about sexual sin? What's really going on when you are being tempted towards sexual sin?

Prayer: Pray that God might help you grasp and live out of a deepening understanding of who you are in Christ, and what it means to live for Him.

WEEK 10: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 6:15-17

1. What repeated words do you notice in these verses?

2. At certain points in this letter you might be tempted to think the Corinthians were just naively immature, but here we see a willful denial of truth lying behind their actions.
 - a. What two things does Paul say they should have known?

 - b. What impact should this knowledge have had on their thinking about having sex with prostitutes?

 - c. What does this say about what the Corinthians really wanted to do?

3. In 1 Corinthians 3:2, Paul said he could not give the Corinthians “solid food” because they were so worldly. The problem seems to be they simply were not willing to live in line with even the basic truths of the gospel because of their love of the world. All this reveals something helpful for us today. If you want to grow in maturity, if you want to dig into solid food, you must be willing to repent of worldliness. You need to be ready to have your life turned upside down. Are you still growing in maturity? What have you recently repented of? What worldly loves are you aware of that are holding you back?

Prayer: Pray that God would help you to take action on what you already know and to help you grow in maturity as you seek to be a faithful follower of Jesus.

Sexual Immorality

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

1. Up until now, Paul seems to have been dealing with the matter of prostitution. What do you notice about his focus in these verses?
2. Why is sexual sin unique to other kinds of sin?
 - a. Why does it help knowing this?
3. What thinking needed to change if the Corinthians were to genuinely see change in their lives that would last?

Prayer: Pray that God would help you see the difference between our culture's open view about sex and His purpose for it. Pray you might not be swayed into thinking less of its importance than God does so that you might stand firm in times of temptation. Pray that you might honour God with your body knowing that the Holy Spirit dwells in you.

WEEK 10: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

1. When comparing God's way to live with the world that we live in, some areas stand out more than others in every culture. Sex is certainly one of those for us today, increasingly so. We named the series title "Upside Down" because to the world the gospel makes no sense, it seems upside down. But in reality, the gospel comes to show us how to live our lives right-side up. As you scan over this passage one last time:
 - a. How many different ways can you see that living for God clashes with our culture today?
 - b. How many different ways can you see that you need to change the way you think about yourself compared to our culture today?

Prayer: Ask God to graciously keep helping you turn your life from being upside down in sin to become right-side up in Christ.

Sexual Immorality

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES



Seth and Kate Buddhist Asia

As the fourth largest religion in the world, Buddhism comprises 10% of the world's population. The Buddhistic 'Bonba' people are gospel-zero. No gospel. No Bible. No church. No chance to hear about Jesus. Humanly speaking, not a hope in hell. So pray for Seth and Kate as they seek to plant churches in gospel-zero Buddhist Asia.

Derek and Anna (OMF) Southeast Asia

Derek and Anna (Liam, Jasmine and Juliet) are working in theological education and cross-cultural worker mobilisation in Southeast Asia. Pray for Derek as he continues with his classes in a local Bible college and is starting to train people to reach out to minority ethnic groups where there is no church. They are also trying to reach out to their local community, developing friendships and reading the Bible with those interested.



Craig and Samantha McCorkindale (CMS) Cambodia

Craig and Samantha have settled into life in Cambodia. In this first year they are beginning formal language learning and connecting in with the community. Craig will be forming relationships at Phnom Penh Bible School, where he plans to teach.



The Geneva Push Australia

Geneva Push is an Australian Church Planting Network aiming to inspire, equip and unleash a new generation of church planters dedicated to evangelising churches into existence. Pray for the assessment process, provision of ongoing support and training through coaching, mentoring, and conferences to ensure the biggest impact as church planters.



Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Australia

These churches are committed to praying for one another and continuing to promote planting of evangelical churches throughout Australia. Their pastors seek to provide support and encouragement to one another. FIEC is aiming, with God's help, to plant 100 churches across Australia during the next 15 years.





Jono and Grace Wright
(AIM) Cross cultural ministry in Australia

Jono and Grace Wright, with their kids, have been working amongst Aboriginals in Camooweal for the last 13 years. They are currently on a year's sabbatical undertaking some further Biblical study and being refreshed for future ministry. Pray for the ministries continuing back in Camooweal including; the Sunday meetings, weekly Bible study groups and prayer meetings, Sunday School, Scripture in the local primary school, and weekend Bible schools.



Liam and Lucy Doyle
Lake Mac Church (NSW Australia)

Liam and Lucy Doyle head up the church plant in Lake Macquarie and are now mentored through the Geneva program. The church has a great range of ages, and despite differences - like age, education and nationality - they enjoy a real sense of warmth, friendship and love as they hear God's word together and help each other follow Jesus. Pray for a good mentor relationship with Dave Sheath from Lakes Evangelical Church.



Martin and Jen Shadwick
(AFES) Newcastle University

Martin and Jen (Hannah and Evie) work with AFES discipling and training Christian students. Martin continues to work with both local and overseas students. Pray for wisdom in balancing ministry and family life, and for new partners to help them continue in this important ministry.



Nicole Berlach
Tuggerah Lakes Scripture Board



Colin and Jill Bakon
(SIM) Church and Missionary Mobilisation

Colin's two roles are in church mobilisation in Latin America where he is raising up national teams to run Kairos, with special focus this year on Ecuador and Peru. And he is working with a task force to mobilise for new initiatives within SIM to see work happening in areas where there is no church.

