



1 CORINTHIANS

U P S I D E D O W N

CHAPTERS 12–16

ev/church

1 CORINTHIANS 12-16: UPSIDE DOWN

| Week | Passage | Theme |
|------|------------------------|--|
| 1 | 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 | The mark of true worship |
| 2 | 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 | Many gifts from one God |
| 3 | 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 | Many gifts for one body |
| 4 | 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 | Love – truly spiritual |
| 5 | 1 Corinthians 14:1-25 | Gatherings that love Part 1: understandable |
| 6 | 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 | Gatherings that love Part 2: ordered |
| 7 | 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 | First importance – the gospel |
| 8 | 1 Corinthians 15:12-49 | Really raised |
| 9 | 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 | The death of death |
| 10 | 1 Corinthians 16:1-24 | The international, interdependent church |

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 – 2020

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.

GIVING AT EV CHURCH

The New Testament teaches us to give generously, regularly and joyfully. Please join with us in bringing to the Coast solid hope in Jesus.

More info on giving and account details: evchurch.info/giving

INTRODUCTION: 1 CORINTHIANS 12-16

The Purpose of 1 Corinthians

The Apostle Paul's concern in 1 Corinthians is the glory and honour of God in the life of the Corinthian church.

Paul had received a letter from the church (7:1) as well as reports about the church from certain church members (1:11, 16:17). From these sources, Paul had become aware of numerous issues among the church. Put simply, they were fighting over their leaders (chapters 1-4), stuck in pagan thinking and practices when it came to sex (chapters 5-7), stuck in wrong-headed spirituality and worship practices (chapters 8-14), and super confused about the resurrection (chapter 15). All these issues hindered the Corinthians from living as holy people who honour God and the Lord Jesus in their lives (1:2). As Christians, they were the temple of the living God – indwelt by the Spirit of God Himself (3:16), and yet in many aspects of their lives they were living like pagans. Their convictions and their lives were upside down.

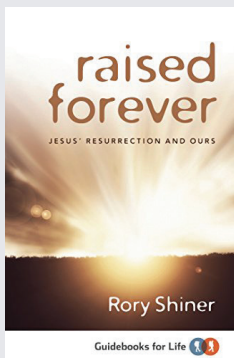
UPSIDE DOWN

Our Focus on Chapters 12-16

Our time in 1 Corinthians this term fits into the section of the letter focused on their worship. A big issue for the Corinthians was a misunderstanding of what makes someone truly spiritual. This was a church full of spectacular spiritual gifting (1:6-7), but this led them to value the wrong things. Paul will teach them that the key thing that marks someone as spiritual was not how spiritually gifted they were, but that their trust was in Jesus (12:1-3). He will also teach them to value the building up of others over making themselves look good in church (chapters 12-14).

Further, they were confused about the resurrection: Will there really be a resurrection of the dead? If so, how could that even work? Will we have bodies? The Corinthians' questions and doubts showed that there were critical parts of the gospel they had not yet fully grasped (chapter 15).

Today, just like then, if Christians naively hold to worldly values, we will inevitably take on worldly lifestyles – just as the Corinthians did. During this term, we will be reminded of what we ought to value and pursue as those who are 'sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people'. This letter will urge us to be shaped by the gospel, and, with God's help, to live right-side up to the glory of God.



Book recommendation:

***Raised Forever* by Rory Shiner**

When we arrive at 1 Corinthians chapter 15, Paul spends a considerable amount of time teaching on the resurrection. This book will help us dive deeper into what the resurrection means for the Lord Jesus Himself, but also how His resurrection has a profound effect on us too – on our past, our present and our future.

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"/> |

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

YEAR 1: TERM 2

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

YEAR 1: TERM 3

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

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

YEAR 2: TERM 1

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

YEAR 2: TERM 2

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

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|---------|---|--------------------------|
| 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 12:1-3

DAY 1

In chapters 12-14, Paul continues to address what proper worship should look like in church (chapters 8-14 all address this topic in some form). He begins here in 12:1-3 by stating what true spirituality is.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-3

1. What issue is Paul concerned that the Corinthians not be ignorant about?
2. The English translation 'gifts of the Spirit' is perhaps not the most helpful translation of Paul's words (which were originally penned in Greek). It more literally reads 'Now concerning spiritual things.' With this in mind, what is it about the Corinthians' history that might make them badly prepared for understanding spiritual things? (verse 2).
3. According to verse 3, what is the mark of true spirituality?
4. Many people who do not follow Jesus would still consider themselves 'spiritual'. How might Paul respond to this view?

Prayer: Ask God to help you see that true spirituality is obedience to Jesus as Lord, and for the will to keep obeying Jesus day by day. Also ask Him to open more people's eyes to the reality of Jesus as Lord.

The Mark of True Worship

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-3

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

1. Scan through the verses again, noting where the idea of knowledge and knowing things occurs.

How is knowing things connected to being spiritual? (Particularly consider verse 2 and what the Corinthians used to worship; also see Ephesians 1:17).

2. Paul insists that the substance of our spirituality is how we relate to Jesus. How might this understanding change or shape your attitude towards:

a. Christians?

b. non-Christians?

3. How does this passage help us understand when someone's spiritual life is thriving or in danger?

Prayer: Thank God for showing you that Jesus is Lord. Pray that you might see and treat other Christians as those who are spiritual people, known and loved by God. Pray for those whose spiritual lives are in danger – that they may turn back to obedience to Christ.

WEEK 1: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-3

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-3:3

1. In these verses, Paul is talking about his preaching ministry as an Apostle. How does Paul describe his ministry? (See verse 13 particularly).
2. According to verse 14, why do some people accept the gospel message, and some people reject it?
3. Even though the Corinthians have – by the Spirit of God – accepted the gospel, Paul still couldn't address them as being 'spiritual' (3:1-4). Why is that? And what does it teach us about spirituality and its connection to our daily practical lives?

Prayer: Thank God for the Spirit's work in your life and ask Him to help you 'keep in step with the Spirit', living a godly life that pleases God.

The Mark of True Worship

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

1. How were the Corinthians behaving in an unspiritual, worldly, and 'merely human' way?
2. Why might Paul consider this kind of behaviour as being 'merely human'? How would Spirit-led living have changed this?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:4-7. The Corinthian church had every spiritual gift among them, yet in 3:1 Paul could not address them as 'spiritual'. What does this teach us about gifts and true spirituality?

Prayer: Pray that God would help you live a truly spiritual life – being selfless, peaceable, and concerned for the good of others. Pray about some specific relationships where you may need particular help from God to live this way.

WEEK 1: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-3

DAY 5

Read John 16:1-15

1. Before Jesus died and ascended to the Father's right hand, He spoke here about the coming of the Holy Spirit (the 'Advocate'). Make a list of all the things the Spirit would do when He came? (verses 8-15)
2. How would you describe the place of the Spirit's work in the life of a Christian, and what do you owe Him personally as someone who trusts in Jesus?

Prayer: Praise God for sending His Spirit, and for His work in your life to bring you to faith in Christ. Ask the Father to do a mighty work by His Spirit in seeing more and more people trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

The Mark of True Worship

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 2: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

Last week we saw that Paul wants the Corinthians to understand what defines a person's spirituality: their obedience to Jesus as Lord. With that foundation now in place, he begins to zero in on spiritual gifts particularly. Some people in the church were a little too preoccupied by certain gifts and evaluated others according to what gifts they had. Paul is concerned that they rightly understand the purpose and function of spiritual gifts in church.

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

1. What words to you see repeated throughout these verses?
2. What is the connection between:
 - a. 'Gifts' and the Spirit (verse 4)?
 - b. 'Service' and the Lord (verse 5)?
 - c. 'Workings' and God (verse 6)?
3. What point do you think Paul is trying to make to the Corinthians here? What are they meant to understand?

Prayer: Give thanks that each of our unique and various gifts at church come from the One Triune God. Pray that we might trust God's sovereign and wise choice in His distribution of our gifts by His Spirit, and that we might not elevate or degrade each other over them.

Many Gifts From One God

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

1. Like yesterday, write down the words that you see repeated throughout verses 7-11. How does seeing this repetition help you understand Paul's point?

2. Verse 7 gives us the reason for our various gifts.
 - a. What is the reason?

 - b. How does that help you think about how you might discover the way God's Spirit has particularly gifted you?

Prayer: It has been said that the Triune God loves diversity so much that 'when he sends a snowstorm, he makes each snowflake differently.* Spend some time thinking about the diversity of gifts at our church, giving thanks to God for this wonderful distribution. Ask God to help you use what He has given you 'for the common good.'

* D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, p.33.

WEEK 2: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

DAY 3

The gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 appear to be quite spectacular! This is why the church was holding these particular gifts in higher regard than others. Today, let's spend some time thinking about the gift of healing (verse 9), as an example of these more 'extraordinary' gifts.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, and 12:28-31

1. To understand what 'gifts of healing' means, we need to pay close attention to the words Paul uses.
 - a. In the phrase 'gifts of healing by that one Spirit', which words are singular, and which are plural?
 - b. What might it mean that there are 'gifts of healing' given to a person, rather than the singular 'gift of healing'?
 - c. How might this caution us about someone who claims to be a spiritual 'healer'?
2. Paul clearly understood that the Spirit gave to some Christians gifts of bringing healing to others on certain occasions, as the Spirit did through Jesus and the Apostles at various times (e.g. Acts 3:1-10). At other times, however, he does not do so. Even Paul himself desired healing at one point and yet God, in His infinite wisdom, chose not to bring it (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). We therefore ought not be sceptical that God can bring healing, nor presume that He always will. Even still, is there suffering that you desire (either for yourself or others) to be healed from?

Prayer: Bring these requests for healing to God, who is merciful and infinitely wise.

Many Gifts From One God

DAY 4

Romans 12 contains a similar discussion about gifts as 1 Corinthians 12.

Read Romans 12:3-8

1. Compare Romans 12:3-8 to 1 Corinthians 12:8-11. What gifts appear in both passages, and where are there differences between the lists?
2. When we look at other passages that mention certain gifts from God, we find still more gifts not mentioned so far (e.g. 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, Ephesians 4:11-12). There is no exhaustive list of gifts in the New Testament, and some of the gifts that are listed we might not even think to consider to be 'spiritual gifts'! (For example, do you love administration? Would you think to call it a spiritual gift?!) How is this helpful as you consider the ways in which God has gifted you for the good of others?
3. Some of the gifts Paul mentions appear to be quite 'extraordinary', while others (like the gift of generosity) seem a bit less so. Yet all are 'manifestations of the Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12:7). Is it ever right to think that the more 'extraordinary' gifts display the work or presence of the Holy Spirit in a more profound way?

Prayer: Pray that God would use you powerfully – whatever your gifts might be – for the good of others in our church. Pray for humility as you serve, knowing that anything we do have is received from Him.

WEEK 2: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

DAY 5

Read Ephesians 4:1-6

1. List the different things that Christians share in common (hint: look for the word 'one').
2. As members of Christ's church, we have a 'unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.' Why then do we still need to be urged to be humble, gentle, and patient with one another (4:2), and even to keep the unity we already have in the Spirit?
3. Once again, like in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul grounds our unity in the unity and 'oneness' of God. How is God's oneness (even with a diversity of persons – Father, Son and Spirit) a powerful motivator for us to be unified?
4. Although the New Testament authors never use the word 'Trinity', passages like Ephesians 4:4-6 show that they understood the one God to exist as Father, Son, and Spirit. If you have time, read Romans 15:30, 2 Corinthians 13:14, and 1 Peter 1:1-2. How do you see the different persons of God relating towards us?

Prayer: Praise God that He is Father, Son and Spirit, and that He has brought us to unity, even in our diversity. Pray that we as a church might humbly maintain the unity in the Spirit that He has given us. If you have any conflict with someone in church, pray that God might help you to reconcile with them.

Many Gifts From One God

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 3: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

Have you ever stubbed your toe? Isn't it incredible that such a tiny part of our body, when sore, affects the entirety of our body, making us limp around like a one-legged frog! In this week's passage, Paul compares the Corinthian church to a human body: each person is a different body part, each part is there for a reason, and each part needs all the other parts.

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

1. Today we will focus on verses 12-14. Looking again, notice the repetition of the words 'one' and 'many' throughout these verses. How does this help you understand what point Paul is making?
2. In verse 13, there are two things that happened for the Corinthians which made them part of the body of Christ. We will think more about the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Day 5, but until then:
 - a. In what way does verse 13 recognise the real diversity that exists among Christians?
 - b. How does this diversity serve to demonstrate the incredible unity that Christians have in the body of Christ?
3. Do you focus more on the diversity we have in our church, or on the unity we have as the body of Christ? How might this passage help you to appreciate both aspects of our church?

Prayer: Praise God that He takes people of different social and racial backgrounds and makes them one body – the body of Christ. Ask God that you, and every member of our church, might learn to appreciate the diversity God has brought to us, for the good of all.

Many Gifts for One Body

DAY 2

From verses 15-26; Paul really leans into his 'body' illustration: Feet and eyes speak, eyes talk to hands, and the head talks to the feet! As entertaining as this may be, he is trying to help the Corinthians understand each person's place within the church – the body of Christ.

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

Read 1 Corinthians 12:15-20

1. From verses 15-16, what might some people in the church be feeling?
2. How does Paul try to show them that they are in fact indispensable to the church?
3. How might these verses encourage us to not feel threatened by someone in church who has a different gift or ministry to us? (Consider verse 18 particularly.)
4. Every now and then a movement pops up within Christian communities that stresses the need to do some particular thing (in the Corinthians' case, it was speaking in tongues) in order to experience a greater connection to God. How do these verses prepare us for an encounter with a movement like that? What might you say if someone insisted you needed to experience and display a particular gifting from God?

Prayer: Praise God that every member of church – as different as we may be – are purposely placed there by God, just as He wants them to be. We can be secure in our place in church, knowing that God has gifted us in the way He has for the good of the whole body. Pray for contentment and thankfulness to God for this.

WEEK 3: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

DAY 3

If verses 15-20 taught us that 'I am needed in church', verses 21-26 teach us that 'I need others in church'.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:21-26

1. What correction does Paul bring to those who believe that some members of the Corinthian church were not needed and unimportant?
2. When it comes to our physical bodies, there are some parts we clothe and cover up, treating them with 'special honour' and 'special modesty' (verses 22-24). In the Corinthian context, where some elitists were considering particular members of the church to be less needed, how does Paul's illustration encourage them to honour and love those so-called 'weaker' members?
3. Verse 25-26 reveals God's counter-cultural desire for the way His church members consider and act towards each other. How is God encouraging you to act in our church from these verses?
4. Spiritual maturity is seeing other members of church as essential to our life together as the body of Christ. How is this a challenge or an affirmation to the way you think about others in our church?

Prayer: Ask God for the humility to consider all members of our church as indispensable, and to give you a heart that loves and serves others.

Many Gifts for One Body

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

1. How is verse 27 a summary of Paul's whole argument so far in chapter 12?
2. How might listing different roles in church help the Corinthians move past their devaluing of certain gifts?
3. What is the anticipated answer to each of Paul's rhetorical questions in verses 29-30?
4. How does the knowledge that not all people are gifted the same help free us from insecurities about our place in church?

Prayer: Praise God for the differences among us! Ask for our church to be one of humble and joyful service, where we each have great security in being a loved child of God, gifted uniquely by God to build His body.

WEEK 3: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 and Luke 3:16

In 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul mentions baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the recent past, this has been a much-misunderstood idea. Today we will have a brief survey on the Bible's teaching on it.

1. Some from the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have taught that baptism in the Spirit is a unique experience that only some Christians experience. From verse 13, what do we learn about who is baptised by the Spirit, and how does this challenge that particular teaching?
2. Read John 1:29-34. How might this passage also suggest that baptism in the Spirit is an experience common to all Christians?

"Okay, but what actually is baptism in the Spirit?" The language of baptism in the Spirit does not occur again in John's Gospel; however, John's Gospel does speak of the coming of the Spirit and of His work in believers.

3. Read John 3:1-8. In His encounter with Nicodemus, how does Jesus talk about the experience of becoming a Christian, particularly noting the role of the Spirit?
4. Granted that the language of 'baptism' in the Spirit is different language to being 'born' by the Spirit – even still – how might they be expressing a similar idea? (If you have time, also read John 14:15-18, where different language is used again.)

Many Gifts for One Body

5. Putting these passages together, how might you describe what baptism in the Spirit is?

Prayer: Give thanks to God that He sent His Spirit into the world to grant us new life to all those who put their trust in Jesus. Praise God that Jesus has baptised you in the Spirit, giving you a new heart, will and power to obey God through Christ.

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 4: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

At the end of chapter 12, Paul urged the Corinthians to 'eagerly desire the greater gifts.' He will go on in chapter 14 to show how and why some gifts can be called 'greater', but of first priority is showing them 'the most excellent way.' ... And so enters the famous wedding passage: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13! However, read in context, this hymn about love is first and foremost relevant to the context of church gatherings. Paul desires that the Corinthians seek and value love in their gatherings above all else; this is how they would show their true spirituality.

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:3

1. What different spiritual gifts and accomplishments does Paul mention here, and what conclusion does he repeatedly reach when the person performing them does not have love?
2. We might have expected him to say that a person's gifts are nothing if they are not performed in love. What does he say instead, and how does this add weight to his argument?
3. How is the example from verse 3 particularly striking?
4. What are some things different Christians or churches look to in order to demonstrate how spiritual or 'in touch' with the Spirit they are? How does this passage teach us to evaluate this?

Prayer: Ask God to help both you and our church to be people of love – demonstrating true worship of God and spirituality by loving others as God has so loved us in Christ.

Love – Truly Spiritual

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

1. How does this passage describe what love is and is not?

2. Which aspects of loving action and unloving action are the most challenging to you?

3. Although the context of this passage primary has the church gathering in mind, its meditation on love is applicable into every area of life.
 - a. When do you find it hardest to truly love others in the way Paul describes love here (church, family, work, friendships)?

 - b. Are there things you need to repent of? What steps might you put in place to begin this?

Prayer: Praise God that He is a God of love and that He accepts us not on the basis of our ability to love, but on the basis of His loving mercy to us in Jesus. Ask Him to help you love in the way described in this passage.

WEEK 4: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

1. How does Paul take spiritual gifts 'down a peg' in verses 8-10?

2. What is the point of his 'child' illustration in verse 11? (Particularly in view of verses 8-10.)

3. Looking at verses 12-13, what will change for us in the future?

4. How should this future change have shaped the way the Corinthians viewed their:
 - a. Spiritual gifts?

 - b. Love?

Prayer: Ask God to help both you and our church to see things clearly: that the things of this world (even our spiritual gifts in their present form!) are passing away, and that what will remain is love. Ask God to help you to seek the way of love.

Love – Truly Spiritual

DAY 4

Today we will consider another great New Testament passage on 'love', which will show us the great motivation the Christian has for loving in the way described in 1 Corinthians 13.

Read 1 John 4:7-21

1. Numerous times in this passage we are encouraged to love one another. What reason is given for this?
2. From verses 9-10, how would you describe what is the main characteristic of God's love, and how does that square with Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13?
3. Verses 19-21 provides something of a litmus test for knowing whether we are in fact loving God. What is it, and how might you keep striving to love?

Prayer: Pray that you would demonstrate genuine love for the God who sent His Son to die for you in the way that you love your Christian brothers and sisters. Ask for that same self-sacrificial heart of your Father God.

WEEK 4: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

DAY 5

Today we read another encouragement from Paul to be genuinely Spirit-filled, by serving one another in love.

Read Galatians 5:13-26

1. In verses 13-15, Paul has been insisting to the Galatians that Christians are no longer under the Old Covenant, Mosaic Law – they are free! Even still, how could they fulfil the law in the way they serve each other?

2. Verses 16-26: The ‘flesh’ is Paul’s way of speaking about a person as they naturally are, without the work of the Holy Spirit in their life.
 - a. What does the life lived in the flesh look like, and how does that fit with your understanding of people? (verses 19-21)

 - b. What ought life led by the Spirit look like, and how is that a challenge or encouragement to you today? (verses 22-26)

Prayer: Ask God for His Spirit to work powerfully in you, bearing His fruit in your life. Pray that you might keep in step with the Spirit as you seek to love others self-sacrificially.

Love – Truly Spiritual

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 5: I CORINTHIANS 14:1-25

In Chapter 12, Paul explained that every member of the church has been gifted for the good of the whole. In Chapter 13, he stressed that love – not spiritual gifts – must be what frames all of the church's life together. Now, in chapter 14, he returns to his thought from 12:31 – that there are in fact 'greater gifts' which ought to be sought, for they are God's primary means of growing His people.

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-5

1. Consider what can be learnt about 'tongues' from this passage:
 - a. Who are 'tongues' spoken to?
 - b. Who is, and who is not able to understand what is being said?
 - c. Who is, and who is not edified by tongues-speech?
2. How is prophecy different from tongues?
3. Why, then, does Paul consider prophecy to be a 'greater gift' than tongues?
4. How does seeking prophecy over tongues fit with the command in verse 1 to 'follow the way of love'?

Prayer: Ask God for the same mindset of the Apostle Paul when it comes to church – that we would follow the way of love by putting the growth and building up of others over our own desires. Pray for humility, self-denial and a deep love for others, and for our church to deepen in maturity.

Gatherings That Love: Understandable

DAY 2

The Corinthians were 'eager for gifts of the Spirit' (14:12). In the passage today, Paul helps the Corinthians to have right priorities when it comes to spiritual gifts.

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

Read 1 Corinthians 14:6-12

1. Verses 6 and 12 reveal again what Paul thinks is the priority and aim of our interactions in the church gathering. What is that aim?
2. Both of Paul's illustrations (verses 7-8 and 10-11) are followed by the words 'so it is with you' (verses 9 and 12). What point is he making through the illustrations?
3. How might this aim of building and growing people in church sharpen, shape or change the way you think about your time and efforts in church?
4. One great way to work for the building up of others is to serve in a team with other people. There you can use your spiritual gifts to contribute to the building up of our church in love and knowledge of God. How might you make good use of your time in a ministry team to encourage others?

Prayer: Pray for opportunities to serve your church family, encouraging others in the knowledge and love of God, by humbly seeking their good.

WEEK 5: I CORINTHIANS 14:1-25

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 14:13-19

1. Verse 13 starts with the words 'For this reason'. What reason is he talking about? (Hint: verse 12!)
2. In verses 14-16, Paul considers the situation where a Christian with the gift of tongues is praying or singing in tongues in church, and someone who does not have the gift of tongues is also present. What impact does this have on the person who doesn't speak in tongues, and what does Paul therefore counsel them to do?
3. What do we learn about Paul and his priorities in verses 18-19?
4. If Paul does not speak tongues in church, where might he speak in tongues?

Prayer: Ask God for that same other-person-centredness that the Apostle Paul had – that you too might be so concerned for the good of others that you would shape your actions in order to help build them up. Pray for our church that we might speak words that build one another up in our faith in Jesus.

Gatherings That Love: Understandable

DAY 4

In 1 Corinthians 14:21, Paul quotes from Isaiah 28. It's always a good idea to look up any Old Testament passage you see quoted or referenced in the New Testament, so that you might properly understand what is being said.

Read Isaiah 28:7-13

1. What is the moral state of Israel's leaders during this time? (Verses 7-8)
2. Verses 9-10 are a quotation of Israel's leaders, arrogantly mocking God's instruction to them through His prophets. What does God decide to do in response to their arrogance? (Verses 11-13)
3. What is the result of God's speaking to the rebellious Israelites through 'foreign lips and strange tongues'? What happens to Israel?

Prayer: It is devastating that the Israelites would scarcely listen to God's warnings, even when He spoke through the mocking lips of invading foreign nations. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul will apply this passage to how we speak so that non-Christians can actually understand God's message about the Lord Jesus. But for now, pray for your friends, family, and our community members who don't know Jesus, that they would hear the gospel message and be saved.

WEEK 5: I CORINTHIANS 14:1-25

DAY 5

In Isaiah 28:11-12, God spoke in judgment of Israel through the 'strange tongues' of foreigners. Israel could not understand them and continued in their rebellion. In our passage today, Paul applies Isaiah 28 into how we speak in church for the sake of unbelievers.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:20-25

1. Given the quote from Isaiah 28:11-12 about Israel failing to understand God's word, in what way might tongues be a 'sign' to unbelievers?
2. What effect could a church speaking in tongues have on unbelievers? (Verse 23)
3. Why is prophecy different to tongues, and what outcome does prophecy in church make possible for unbelievers?
4. How might verses 24-25 give us some sense of what prophecy actually is?

Prayer: Pray that we might be a church who speaks God's word into one another's lives intelligibly, so that any unbelievers among us might hear the gospel, be convicted of sin and trust in Jesus for salvation. Pray for more unbelievers to come to church with us and that they might be saved.

Gatherings That Love: Understandable

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 6: 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40

In 1 Corinthians 14:1-39, Paul was trying to convince this church to prioritise love in their gatherings, by only exercising spiritual gifts when they are helpful for building others up. Now, in 14:26-40, he gets more specific: how should the Corinthians modify their current church gatherings in order to be more loving?

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 14:26-28

1. What picture do we get from these verses about what the Corinthian church gatherings were like? What things seemed to happen in their gatherings?
2. Paul is instructing them to behave differently from how they currently are. What did he want to see happening among them?
3. People remaining silent is a repeated instruction throughout this week's passage (14:28, 30, 34). What does this instruction reveal about their gatherings, and why would this be counterproductive for having a gathering that is 'orderly' (14:40) and works to 'build up' others (14:26)?
4. What might you personally take from these instructions about speech in the church? How might you also seek to use your tongue in an orderly way that is for the good of others?

Prayer: Pray that our church gatherings would be orderly, with each of us respecting one another – listening and speaking to one another to build our church in maturity.

Gatherings That Love: Ordered

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 14:26-33

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

1. After giving instructions on the use of tongues in verses 26-28, what topic does Paul now turn to?
2. What boundaries does Paul set around the practice of prophesying in church? How does the character of God determine these requirements? Verse 33
3. Prophecies (i.e. messages that build up the church) need to be weighed carefully (verse 29). What does this teach us about the nature of prophecy and how we ought to approach a 'prophetic message' that a person might share with us?
4. Does verse 29 teach that every church throughout the world has to have two or three prophets speak at every service? Why, or why not?

Prayer: Pray that our church gatherings might honour the character of our God, as a God of peace and order. Praise God that this is our how He is and ask for peace in your own relationships.

WEEK 6: 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40

DAY 3

In a culture that is sensitive to equality between men and women in every way, these verses might be quite confronting. We trust, however, that our God is good and that they are given for our good. We will spend the next two days thinking about their teaching.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

1. Throughout this passage, Paul has been urging the church to have orderly and edifying gatherings (see 14:40). This has meant that in certain scenarios, holding back from speaking has been important (verses 28, 30, and now, 40). As we come to this occasion particularly, it will be helpful to review two bits of context:
 - a. What topic has Paul been giving instructions on in verses 29-33?
 - b. Come over now to 1 Corinthians 11:4-5. Granted that this is also a passage that we may need to work at to understand(!), what types of speaking are obviously fine for women to participate in here?
2. Come back to chapter 14. Consider verse 29 and then verse 35. Given that Paul is not a misogynist (Romans 16:1-15), is not stuck in his culture, and is not against women speaking in church (1 Corinthians 11:4-5), how might the context of verse 29 (as well as verse 35) help us understand what sort of 'speaking' he is referring to here?
3. It seems that the kind of speaking Paul is prohibiting women from engaging in is the public weighing of prophecies (considering 11:5 and the context of 14:29). From this, what do we learn is of great importance as we gather together in church? How might this teaching apply today?
4. Write down any other questions you have from these verses and discuss them in your growth group, or with a person you trust from church.

Prayer: Give thanks to God for the good order to which He has called men and women. Pray that men and women together might honour God and each other in the way we relate. Pray also that the truth might also be heard and accepted in our church, as we go about sharing God's word together.

Gatherings That Love: Ordered

DAY 4

Today we will read some further biblical-historical context to better understand the place of women prophesying in church.

Read Joel 2:28-32

1. In this prophecy to Israel, what different groups of people are mentioned, and what was promised for them?
2. In Acts 2, the Apostle Peter explains the coming of the Spirit, the accompanying tongues-speaking, and salvation made available in Jesus as the fulfillment of this prophecy. Despite the real distinctions in roles that are upheld in the Bible, how does this prophecy demonstrate a genuine equality among all God's people?
3. (If you have time:) Read Acts 21:7-11 for an account of both men and women prophesying in the New Testament age.

Prayer: Give thanks to God that both young and old, men and women, slave and free are all given the Holy Spirit when they trust in Jesus for salvation. Praise Him for the Spirit's work in our lives to know, believe and speak the word of God.

WEEK 6: 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 14:36-40

1. What is the implied answer to Paul's rhetorical questions in verse 36?
2. In verse 37, how does Paul view the authority of the things he has been writing to the Corinthians?
3. Consider verse 35 again: How are Paul's writings different to prophecy spoken in the church?
4. Imagine someone claims to have a prophecy from God that contradicts something Paul has written in 1 Corinthians. How does verse 38 teach us to think about that scenario?
5. Verses 39-40 are a neat summary of the big thing Paul has been saying in this whole chapter. How has this chapter of the Bible reshaped or sharpened your thinking about church life together?

Prayer: Praise God that in the Bible we have His very words spoken through the Apostles. Praise Him that in the Bible we can therefore know God's intentions for us as His people. Also, ask for our church to always conduct ourselves in a 'fitting and orderly way'.

Gatherings That Love: Ordered

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 7: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

At the beginning of 1 Corinthians, Paul speaks of the cross (chapters 1-4). Towards the end, he speaks of the resurrection (chapter 15) – and in the middle (as we might have expected!) he speaks about life between the cross and the final resurrection. Christians are to be pure in our living (chapters 5-7) and to glorify God in our worship (chapters 8-14). But here, he returns to that which is of first importance for Christianity: the death and resurrection of Jesus. This week we will see that Christianity – and indeed our hope for salvation – hang on the reality of these events.

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

1. Today we will focus on verses 1 and 2. It's helpful to remember that these verses come right after 14:36, where Paul has just asked the Corinthians sharply 'did the word of God originate with you?' What is the answer according to these verses?
2. How does Paul describe the Corinthians' relationship to the gospel?
3. Verse 2 contains both a message of hope and a message of warning. What are they?
4. How would you describe your current standing in relation to the gospel? Have you 'taken your stand' upon it? Is today's passage more of an encouragement or a warning for you?

Prayer: Thank God for the gospel by which we can be saved. Pray that you might 'take your stand' upon it, holding firmly to the word until the end. Pray this for other people in your life also.

First Importance: The Gospel

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

1. What is the meaning and significance of Jesus having died for sins?
2. Why might this fit into the category of being 'of first importance'? (Consider verse 2 again.)
3. Paul says Jesus' death and resurrection was in accordance with the Scriptures. When Jesus spoke to His disciples of His impending death, He also said, "everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him, insult Him and spit on Him; they will flog Him and kill Him. On the third day He will rise" (Luke 18:31-33). How does Jesus' death and resurrection being in accordance with the Scriptures strengthen your confidence in the gospel, and your confidence in the Scriptures themselves?

Prayer: Give thanks to our gracious Father for not only sending His one and only Son to die for our sins, but also for His provision of the Scriptures where He spoke ahead of time predicting and confirming for us His saving work in Jesus' death and resurrection.

WEEK 7: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

DAY 3

In verses 3-4, we saw that Jesus' death and resurrection were in accordance with the Scriptures. Similarly, Jesus says in Luke 24:46-47, 'This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' Today we will consider one place where the Old Testament predicts His death and resurrection.

Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12

1. Written some 700 years before the coming of Jesus, how do these verses predict the death and resurrection of Jesus?
2. How might 53:5-6 and 11 help us understand what Paul may have meant by Jesus dying for sin? (1 Corinthians 15:3)
3. This prophecy is known as the song of the 'suffering servant'. How might verses 10-12 encourage us to also see it as a song of the suffering and glorified servant?
4. How does this prophecy encourage you to trust in our promise-keeping God?

Prayer: Give thanks to God for the Scriptures, which so wonderfully testify to His providential and purposeful work in our world to save sinners. Pray that more people would come to know our amazing God through Jesus.

First Importance: The Gospel

DAY 4

Imagine that a friend at work asks you what reasons there are to believe that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. What would you say?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

1. What different pieces of evidence does Paul give for Jesus' resurrection?
2. Why might Paul bother including details about how most of the witnesses are still living but some have died ('fallen asleep')? Why was this worth mentioning?
3. Which piece of evidence for the resurrection do you find most compelling: the prophetic witness of Old Testament Scriptures, the multitude of the eyewitnesses, or the radical transformation of those witnesses?
4. Ultimately, people believe the gospel message because the Spirit of God has given them new birth (John 3:5, Titus 3:5). He does so, however, without bypassing our mental faculties, and so the evidence for the resurrection is important for our faith; our faith is never 'blind faith'. How might this passage strengthen your confidence in the historic reality of the resurrection?

Prayer: Praise God for the resurrection of Jesus from the dead! Ask God to deepen your convictions about the truthfulness in this claim, and to help you be able to recall the evidence so that you may be able to 'give the reason for the hope that you have' (1 Peter 3:15).

WEEK 7: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 15:9-11

1. How does Paul think and feel about himself as an Apostle? Why does he feel this way?
2. Once again (as in verse 6b), Paul seems to give details that may not appear to us as immediately relevant to reminding the Corinthians of the reality of the resurrection. How might Paul's history as both a persecutor of the church and as an effective preacher of the gospel be relevant to this topic?
3. Paul 'sums up' his reminder of the gospel in verse 3 by stressing that 'this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.' Why is he stressing this to the Corinthians? What is the danger if they don't stand firm in this message of the resurrection? (See 15:2)

Prayer: Just like in Paul's day, our hope for salvation comes from hearing and believing the gospel through the Apostles. Pray that we as a church would hold firmly to the gospel, which saves us, heeding the words of the Apostles in the Bible.

First Importance: The Gospel

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 8: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-49

In 15:1-11, Paul reminded the Corinthians of the foundational pillars of the gospel message – that Christ died, was buried, was raised, and was seen. He particularly stressed the reality of Christ's resurrection (15:4-8). Now, in this week's passage, we find out why it was so necessary for Him to do this.

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

1. What are some people in Corinth saying about the resurrection of the dead?
2. Make a list of the implications Paul lays out if these people are right (verses 13-19).
3. Why would we still be 'in our sins' if Christ has not been raised from the dead? Was His death not enough to deal with sin?
4. Our society does all it can to make little of death and keep our minds clear of the thought of it. But any encounter with death floods the heart and mind with all the despair and hopelessness it brings. Paul has reminded us of how things would be if Christ hadn't been raised from the dead (15:13-19). And yet, He actually has (15:20)! How does the resurrection of Christ counter all these effects and bring hope?

Prayer: Pray these words, adapted from Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:18-21: *Father God, I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened in order that I may know the hope to which you have called me – the riches of your glorious inheritance in your holy people, and your incomparably great power toward us who believe; that same power and mighty strength by which you raised Christ from the dead.*

Really Raised

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

1. In 15:17-19, Paul considered the implications of Jesus' resurrection not being true. In verse 20 he affirms that it is true. What are the positive implications of this truth for those who are 'in Christ'? (Verses 20-22)
2. The Jews in Jesus' and Paul's day did believe in the resurrection of the dead, but they had no conception of someone rising again before the end of history – the 'day of the Lord'. What do we learn about the timing of the resurrection of the dead from verses 23-26?
3. From verses 24-28, what do we learn about what God is doing now in the world, and what will happen at the end of the world?

Note: The first-fruits were the portion of the harvest that appeared first and were immediately presented to the Lord as an offering. They were not separate from the harvest, but the first portion of the harvest. Their appearance meant that the harvest had begun, and, just as surely as it had begun, so it would also finish soon. Jesus' resurrection, then, was not a separate event to the resurrection expected on the last day, but was the first-fruits of that resurrection.

Prayer: Pray that as the Christ reigns over all things, God might continue putting His enemies under Christ's feet. Pray that the Christ might return soon to do away with death once and for all, but that many more people might bend the knee now while there is still time.

WEEK 8: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-49

DAY 3

Once again, 1 Corinthians throws some head-scratching things our way! After considering the implications there would be if Christ had not been raised from the dead (15:12-28), Paul now raises some Christian practices that would be undermined if Christ had not been raised. The first one he raises, however, will take some thought to understand.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:29-34

1. What practice does Paul mention in verse 29, and what is your first impression of it?
2. Over the years; there have been over 40 different interpretations offered for what being 'baptized for the dead' means! One possible interpretation notes that the Greek word, which the NIV translates as 'for' could also be translated as 'on account of' (verse 29). Can you think of a reason why a person might get baptized on account of a Christian person who has now died?
3. Paul then speaks of his own experience as an Apostle of Christ in verses 30-32. How was Paul's life influenced and shaped by his convictions about the resurrection?
4. Would your life look any different if you had deeper convictions about the reality of our coming resurrection in Christ?

Prayer: Pray for a greater confidence in the resurrection of Jesus as the first-fruits, and so a greater confidence in the resurrection of all who trust in Him. Pray that you would be emboldened to live shaped by this truth.

Really Raised

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-41

1. Some people in Paul's day believed that after death only the soul 'lived on' and therefore that life after death was a body-less existence. What do these verses say about such a view?
2. How does Paul's agricultural illustration of sowing seeds help make his point about the resurrection of our bodies?
3. Here we get an insight into what our experience of heaven will be like. Does your view of heaven match what Paul says about our bodies?

Prayer: Give thanks to God that we can expect a physical resurrection of our bodies, far more glorious than our present earthly experience!

WEEK 8: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-49

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 15:42-49

1. Throughout these verses Paul makes three great comparisons. What is he comparing in:
 - a. Verses 42-44?
 - b. Verses 45-47?
 - c. Verses 48-49?
2. What is Paul's big point, and how does this answer the question raised in verse 35?

Prayer: Thank God for the hope we have for our future in Christ. Ask Him to know more deeply the hope to which He has called you.

Really Raised

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 9: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-58

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-52

1. What does Paul mean by 'the Kingdom of God' here? When does he envision it taking place?
2. Paul often refers to Christians who have died as being 'asleep' (see 15:6). In 15:51, what does Paul say will happen to both those who are living and those who are 'asleep', and what point does he make about the timing of this?
3. 1 John 3:2 says, 'we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' How does this match with your hope for heaven?

Prayer: Praise God that at the return of Christ, when the fullness of the Kingdom of God comes, 'we will all be changed' and 'will be raised imperishable.' Pray this may happen soon. Pray that your hopes would not be found in the here and now, but in the imperishable Kingdom.

The Death of Death

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-55

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

1. When push comes to shove, everyone wants there to be something more after we die. How does this passage offer the world the hope we desperately need?
2. Imagine a world without death! This is the incredible coming reality these verses are reflecting on. What changes will there be with the 'death' of death?
3. In 15:55, Paul asks, 'where, O death, is your sting?' Like a bee without its stinger, in the end, death will be utterly powerless and harmless toward us. How does trusting Jesus give you power to face even death itself?

Prayer: Pray that God might deepen your convictions of the reality of the death of death through Christ. Pray also that your hope might overflow in a confidence that might be a witness to others of the wonder of the promises of God to us in Christ.

WEEK 9: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-58

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

1. What connections does Paul make between death, sin and the Law (that is, the Old Testament's Mosaic Law)?
2. Turn over to Romans 3:20. What do we learn here about the Law?
3. So, how would removing the requirements of the Law (since Jesus fulfilled the requirements on our behalf) help lead to the removal of death from our world?

Prayer: Give thanks to God that as a Christian you are no longer counted guilty for your sins, since Jesus fulfilled the law in His life and death, taking away the power of sin, and granting us eternal life through Him!

The Death of Death

DAY 4

Read Ecclesiastes 9:1-10

1. The author of Ecclesiastes is reflecting on life 'under the sun', before the gospel of the Lord Jesus and all its blessings were made known. What conclusions does he draw about life in this chapter?
2. Why is death so devastating to the writer?
3. What do think Paul – living after the death and resurrection of Jesus – would want to say to the author of Ecclesiastes?
4. How does the hope of the resurrection also change the way we view life now?

Prayer: Thank God for the resurrection of the dead and our hope in the face of death. Ask Him to grant the gift of eternal life to many, many more people, that they may also have this hope for both life now and in the age to come.

WEEK 9: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-58

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 15:58

1. '...Stand firm. Let nothing move you.' Why should the resurrection grant us a certain stability in life?
2. In yesterday's reading, Ecclesiastes 9:9, the author observed that death makes all of our labour meaningless. Why, then, might labour done 'in the Lord' not be in vain?
3. Are you giving yourself to the things in this life which will not be in vain (the work of helping people to trust Jesus)? How might you maximise your time and efforts in the 'work in the Lord'?

Prayer: Give thanks to God that because of the resurrection we can be involved with a work that has eternal significance. Pray that you might be able to use all that the Lord has given you to be part of the work of the Lord.

The Death of Death

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 10: 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-24

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

1. As we move into the last chapter of the book, the familiar words 'Now concerning' reappear (7:1, 7:25, 8:1, 12:1) indicating that Paul is raising a new topic. This 'collection for the saints' was for poor Christians in Jerusalem (see also Romans 15:26-27, Acts 24:17). What instructions does Paul give about this matter?
2. Consider verse 3. How does Paul take precautions so as not to be misunderstood to be personally gaining anything from their financial donations?
3. Paul assumed the Corinthian Christians would be willing to partner with other Christians in different places and different churches – particularly the poor. How might you be partnering with other Christians who are in need outside of our church?

Prayer: Pray that God might give you a heart of compassion and love toward others, especially needy brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray God might provide ways for you to be partnering in the gospel in this way.

The International, Interdependent Church

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 16:5-9

BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

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

1. From these verses, what do we learn about the way Paul made plans?
 - a. How does he think about making plans theologically? (See verse 7)
 - b. What appears to drive him in his decision-making process? (See verses 8-9)
2. What drives you in your decision-making process? Do you have the same priorities as Paul?

Prayer: Pray that you, like Paul, might seek first the Kingdom, making plans both in humility – recognising God’s sovereignty, and also according to what may help more people become disciples of Jesus and grow as disciples of Jesus.

WEEK 10: 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-24

DAY 3

Read 1 Corinthians 16:10-14

1. How would you describe Paul's relationship with Timothy and Apollos?
2. Why might Paul deem it necessary to urge the Corinthians to accept someone who is doing 'the work of the Lord'? What might this show us about the church? (Verses 10-11)
3. Consider the commands Paul makes in verses 13-14. How are they appropriate commands with what you know about the Corinthian church?
4. Which command do you most need to hear?

Prayer: Pray that you might honour those who are involved in the work of the Lord. Pray that you would stand firm in the faith, and that all you do would be in love.

The International, Interdependent Church

DAY 4

Read 1 Corinthians 16:15-18

1. What things do we learn about Stephanas from these verses?
(Note: Achaia is the greater region in which Corinth was the capital city).
2. How were the Corinthians to receive Stephanas and to relate to him, and why?
3. How have you seen the work of ministry to be a driving priority for Paul over the last two chapters?
4. Do you value the work of Christian ministry and those who lead in Christian ministry as Paul does?

Prayer: Pray that you might use your time, money and efforts to contribute to Christian ministry as you are able. Pray that you might humbly submit to your church leaders.

WEEK 10: 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-24

DAY 5

Read 1 Corinthians 16:19-24

1. In letter that has had some quite confronting corrections from Paul, what has been driving him in all that he has written? (Particularly consider verses 22-24.)
2. Verse 22 contains one of the only times in the New Testament where a prayer is directed to Jesus Himself (prayers are typically directed to God the Father). How does this prayer also show Paul's driving desires and hopes?
3. How have you been challenged and grown in your walk with Jesus from 1 Corinthians this term?

Prayer: Give thanks to God for the book of 1 Corinthians. Thank Him for the ways He has grown you, and pray that He might deepen you in your love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The International, Interdependent Church

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

