



1 Corinthians Bible study guide

A clear 6-session guide for personal study, small groups, and churches

Read 1 Corinthians as a whole before working through the sessions. Let its own structure set the agenda.

Every question sends you back to the biblical text. The guide helps you observe the passage, follow the author's argument, interpret it in context, and respond faithfully.

CHOOSE YOUR DEPTH

- Short: Read the book overview and discuss the first and final question in a session.
- Study: Work through all 6 sessions and answer each question from the passage.
- Deep: Open the free chapter commentary and dictionary links while you study.

protos-app.com/commentary/1-corinthians

1 Corinthians at a glance

BIG IDEA

In this fascinating letter to a multiethnic church, we see some of the everyday problems the early Christians were dealing with. [1]

HISTORICAL SETTING

Author: Paul. Date: AD 53-56. Setting: Written from Ephesus during Paul's third missionary journey, in response to reports and questions he had received from the church in Corinth (see 1 Cor 1:11; 5:1; 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1). [1]

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Read this letter as sustained pastoral reasoning. Track the argument, audience situation, repeated words, and the move from God's work to the response asked of believers.

MAJOR THEMES

- To clarify some questions the Corinthian church had raised and to address a series of specific problems that had arisen in the church there
- The book's literary movement and central claims
- Faithful response within the people of God
- Hope, judgment, grace, and obedience in their proper context

INTERPRETIVE CARE

- Follow the letter's argument instead of isolating a familiar verse.
- Distinguish what the writer says God has done from the response asked of believers.

1 Corinthians 1-3

70 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Paul · Apollos · Corinth · Gentiles · Wise

Questions

- Try to state the argument in one sentence before anyone reacts to it.
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- The word wise is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What problem was this letter written to solve, and does knowing that change how the instruction lands?
- Where does this cut against something you already believe or already do?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Corinthians 4-6

54 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Apollos · Passover · Satan · Timothy · Kingdom

Questions

- What is the writer trying to get these readers to do or stop doing?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- What does the writer assume the readers know about Timothy, and how is that knowledge being used?
- Define kingdom from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- Is this a command, a description, or an argument? They are not read the same way.
- What would actually be different this week if you took this seriously?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Corinthians 7-9

80 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Barnabas · Moses · Satan · Wife · Husband

Questions

- What has the writer already established that this section is building on?
- Which single verse carries the weight of this section?
- What is left unsaid that you expected to be said?
- Which detail about Barnabas matters to the argument here, and which familiar details do not?
- Where else have you heard wife used, and is it being used that way here?
- What did the first readers face that we do not, and what does that change?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this, and what stops you saying it?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Corinthians 10-11

67 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · LORD · Moses · Woman · Cup · Blood

Questions

- Where does the writer expect pushback, and how do you know?
- Where does the tone shift, and what causes it?
- What question does this section answer that you had not thought to ask?
- Trace the sentence or paragraph that mentions Moses. What conclusion does the writer want the readers to reach?
- The word woman is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- Where does the writer move from what God has done to what we should do?
- What is the hardest thing in this passage to accept, and why that one?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Corinthians 12-14

84 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Church · Prophecy · Faith · Miracles · Pray

Questions

- If you disagreed with this, where would you push first?
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Define church from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- What problem was this letter written to solve, and does knowing that change how the instruction lands?
- If this is true, what have you been getting wrong?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Corinthians 15-16

82 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Jesus · Adam · Ephesus · Achaia · Apollos · Aquila

Questions

- What would be missing from the letter if this section were cut?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- What does the writer assume the readers know about Adam, and how is that knowledge being used?
- Where else have you heard dead used, and is it being used that way here?
- Is this a command, a description, or an argument? They are not read the same way.
- What would you want to be reminded of from this section in six months?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

Sources, method, and reuse

Protos created this guide to help readers understand 1 Corinthians in its literary and historical context. Questions are designed to be answered from the passage, not from guesswork or personal opinion alone.

REFERENCES

[1] Tyndale Open Study Notes

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<https://tyndaleopenresources.com/>

[2] Protos study guide editorial

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A Bible dictionary, 1,129 entries [_protos-app.com/bible-dictionary](https://protos-app.com/bible-dictionary)

Printable Bible reading plans [_protos-app.com/reading-plans](https://protos-app.com/reading-plans)

Protos is also available on iPhone and Android, with verse-by-verse study help beside the passage you are reading.

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