

**Episode:** Paul's Letters Series No. 06

**Narrator:** Priscilla and Aquila

**Primary Scriptures:** First Corinthians 1-7

**Story Summary:** Paul's first New Testament letter to the church in Corinth

**Location:** Roman Empire; Greece, Corinth

**Time:** AD 30 Jesus crucified and resurrected; Pentecost; Holy Spirit arrives  
AD 48 Paul's "famine visit" to Jerusalem; First Missionary Journey starts  
AD 50 Council at Jerusalem; Start of Second Missionary Journey.  
AD 53 Start of Third Missionary Journey  
AD 56 Paul writes *1 Corinthians*

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** 1 Corinthians 1:7, 18, 25; 2:2-4, 7; 3:12-13, 16; 4:16; 6:9-10, 19

Paul probably wrote at least four letters to the church at Corinth. Two of them are included in the New Testament; there are no known copies of the others. First Corinthians 5:9-11 indicates that Paul had written a letter to the Corinthians previous to *First Corinthians*.

Paul arrived by himself in Corinth on the Second Missionary Journey. He made acquaintances with Priscilla and Aquila and began working with them; Silas and Timothy joined them later. Together, they established the church in Corinth. Paul stayed in Corinth for about a year and a half. There is no doubt he had strong relationships with the people and knew them individually.

*First Corinthians* was written about three or four years after Paul left Corinth, toward the end of the Third Missionary Journey. The letter is addressed from Paul and Sosthenes, a former resident of Corinth who was previously the leader of its synagogue.

By the time of the letter, the church at Corinth had become a disaster, forcing Paul to address a long list of problems. The church was divided over who they counted as their leader; rather than following Christ, some of them wanted to follow Paul, Apollos, or Peter. Paul had to convince them that Christ is the head of the church, and all others are followers who use their gifts to serve the Lord.

Once again, Paul found it necessary to prove his apostleship and show why he had the authority to teach and be followed. Apparently, the Corinthians were either being influenced by false teachers or were being so prideful they simply did whatever they wanted.

The Corinthians chose to overlook a case of shameful incest among their members. A man was sleeping with his stepmother, and that church did not mourn about it. In fact, the church members were proud of it. Paul insisted that they put the man out of their fellowship. Paul made it clear that they must not even associate with a church member who is sexually immoral, greedy, an idol worshiper, slanderer, or drunkard. As evidenced by this letter, the Corinthians had a lot to learn about living as Christians.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Paul lived about a year and a half in Corinth as he established the church there. How did his knowledge of the people there help him in addressing their problems? Do you think he knew things about them that they did not think he knew?
  2. How did Priscilla and Aquila help Paul as he dealt with the Corinthian Christians?
  3. How have you seen 1 Corinthians 1:18 exhibited in your dealings with other people?
  4. Based on 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5, what might other people have been preaching to the Corinthians?
  5. Do you think 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 is speaking about current earthly things, future spiritual things, or both?
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1. That they were wiser or had more knowledge than Paul. That they were getting their message heard by being persuasive, not by being truthful. That Jesus was not a man or that he did not rise from the dead.

### Application Questions:

1. Paul initially worked as a tentmaker while he established the church in Corinth. Do you think this is a good or bad model for missionaries to use? Why? Does your line of reasoning also apply to American pastors?
2. Paul often shows his desire that churches are unified and have no divisions in them. What can you personally do to keep divisiveness out of your church? What can you do to help it be more unified?
3. In 1 Corinthians 4:16, Paul urges the Corinthians to imitate him. Are you comfortable asking people to imitate your spiritual life? What could you change to make yourself more of a model for others to follow?
4. 1 Corinthians 5 and 6 talk about church discipline and behavior among Christians. Do you think Paul's words in those two chapters are still applicable today?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. It is easy to become morally influenced by teachers and professors who seem to be intellectually brilliant. Read 1 Corinthians 2:5 and 2:14 and think about how morally influential your teachers should be. Is it a good idea for celebrities, athletes, or social media stars to influence your thinking?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 6:12. Many young people want to be free from being told what to do. How does this verse help you avoid being mastered by anything not of God?
3. What can you do to get along better with other Christians? Are you willing to do that?