A BIBLE STUDY THROUGH 1 CORINTHIANS

BUILT DIFFERENT

DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

A deeper-dive overview of the letter behind the series — the city, the crisis, the argument, and the nineteen weeks ahead.

LAKEPOINTE CHURCH · LP GROUPS · AUGUST 8 – DECEMBER 13, 2026

THE CITY BEHIND THE LETTER

Why Corinth Feels Like Here

Of all Paul's letters, this is the one written to a church most shaped by its city — which is why it reads as if it were written to ours.

Corinth sat on the four-mile neck of land joining mainland Greece to the Peloponnese, with a port on each side. Cargo and travelers crossing between them made it one of the richest, newest, and most restless cities in the empire. Rome had leveled old Corinth in 146 BC and refounded it a century later as a colony for freedmen — former slaves who arrived with nothing and could become anything. The result was a boomtown with no old families and no old money: *everyone* was climbing, and everyone advertised the climb. Patrons collected followers. Orators sold eloquence. Status was the city's real religion, and the temples — with a reputation loose enough that "to Corinthianize" became a Greek verb for immorality — served it.

Paul arrived around AD 50 (Acts 18), stayed a year and a half making tents with Aquila and Priscilla, and planted a church out of that climbing, competing, status-hungry population. Then he moved on to Ephesus — and the city began to seep back into the church. Corinthian believers started rating their teachers like orators (Paul or Apollos?), suing each other before pagan judges to win face, parading spiritual gifts as status symbols, and tolerating immorality even the pagans found shocking — all while considering themselves the most spiritually impressive church in Greece.

Word reached Paul in Ephesus two ways: a report from "Chloe's people" about the quarrels, and a letter from the church itself asking questions — which is why, from chapter 7 on, the letter keeps turning on the phrase "*Now concerning…*" First Corinthians, written about AD 54–55, is his answer to both: not a calm theological essay but a pastor's letter to a church he loves, in a city that is discipling it harder than the gospel is.

> *"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*
>
> 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18 · NASB

That sentence is the engine of the whole letter. Corinth measured everything by impressiveness. Paul answers with the one thing in history that looked most like weakness and was actually the power of God — a crucified Messiah. Every problem the letter touches, from lawsuits to the Lord's Supper to speaking in tongues, is finally the same problem: a church still measuring by the city's scale instead of the cross's. Which is exactly what the series title means. A disciple is **built different** — not built *better* on the world's blueprint, but built on a different one entirely.

THE SHAPE OF THE LETTER

One Letter, Five Movements

First Corinthians is not a pile of unrelated topics. It is one sustained argument in five movements — and the nineteen weeks walk straight through them.

1 · A DIVIDED CHURCH (CH. 1–4 · WEEKS 1–4)

Factions around celebrity teachers. Paul's cure is not team-building but the word of the cross: God chose what is foolish to shame the wise, so no one may boast. Leaders are servants and field hands, not brands.

2 · A COMPROMISED CHURCH (CH. 5–7 · WEEKS 5–8)

Immorality tolerated, lawsuits paraded, bodies treated as private property. The answer: you are not your own; you were bought with a price. Then marriage, singleness, and staying faithful right where God placed you.

3 · A DEMANDING CHURCH (CH. 8–10 · WEEKS 9–11)

"I have the right" was the Corinthian anthem. Paul concedes the knowledge and then dismantles the attitude: love limits liberty, he surrendered his own rights to win one more, and pride before temptation goes before a fall.

4 · A DISORDERED CHURCH (CH. 11–14 · WEEKS 12–15)

The gathered church — the Supper, the gifts, the body with many members. At the exact center Paul sets chapter 13: gifts without love are noise. Everything in worship is measured by one word — does it build up?

5 · A HOPEFUL CHURCH (CH. 15–16 · WEEKS 16–19)

The summit: the gospel received, the resurrection defended, death swallowed up in victory — and therefore your labor is not in vain. Then a collection, travel plans, and a farewell that compresses the letter into five commands.

THE THREAD THROUGH ALL FIVE

Every movement contrasts two ways to be built: the city's way (status, rights, display, self) and the cross's way (service, love, order, hope). Nineteen portraits, one question — *which blueprint is shaping you?*

WORTH KNOWING GOING IN · A few passages ahead are famously hard — head coverings (11:2–16), tongues and prophecy (14), "baptized for the dead" (15:29). Faithful teachers differ on details. Hold the main line firmly (the cross, love, resurrection), hold the disputed details with humility, and let the hard weeks drive you deeper rather than making you a debater. Paul wrote chapter 13 between chapters 12 and 14 on purpose.

Series Map · Aug 8 – Dec 13

Each week is a portrait of a disciple. Read the passage before the weekend; the "listen for" line is the thread to pull.

WEEK	DATES	A DISCIPLE…	PASSAGE	LISTEN FOR
MOVEMENT ONE · A DIVIDED CHURCH — THE CROSS OVER STATUS				
1	Aug 8/9	**Knows Who They Are**	1 Cor 1:1–9	Nine verses of identity before one word of correction — saints, enriched, confirmed, called.
2	Aug 15/16	**Chooses the Cross Over Status**	1 Cor 1:10–2:5	God's deliberate choice of the foolish, weak, and low — so that no one may boast.
3	Aug 22/23	**Grows Up**	1 Cor 2:6–3:23	Milk vs. solid food; jealousy and strife as the tell of spiritual infancy.
4	Aug 29/30	**Serves Humbly**	1 Cor 4:1–21	Servants and stewards; "what do you have that you did not receive?"
MOVEMENT TWO · A COMPROMISED CHURCH — BOUGHT WITH A PRICE				
5	Sep 5/6	**Takes Sin Seriously**	1 Cor 5:1–13	A little leaven; why tolerance inside the church is not kindness.
6	Sep 12/13	**Belongs to Christ**	1 Cor 6:1–20	Your body a temple; you are not your own — the series' hinge verse.
7	Sep 19/20	**Is Faithful Where God Places Them**	1 Cor 7:1–24	Contentment in marriage, singleness, and station — "remain with God."
8	Sep 26/27	**Lives for Eternity**	1 Cor 7:25–40	"The form of this world is passing away" — holding everything loosely.
MOVEMENT THREE · A DEMANDING CHURCH — LOVE OVER RIGHTS				
9	Oct 3/4	**Surrenders Rights for Love** †	1 Cor 8:1–13	Knowledge puffs up, love builds up; freedom that wounds a brother is sin.
10	Oct 10/11	**Pursues One More**	1 Cor 9:1–27	All things to all people; disciplined like an athlete for an imperishable prize.

WEEK	DATES	A DISCIPLE…	PASSAGE	LISTEN FOR
11	Oct 17/18	**Flees Pride**	1 Cor 10:1–11:1	Israel's warnings, the way of escape, and doing it all for the glory of God.
MOVEMENT FOUR · A DISORDERED CHURCH — WORSHIP THAT BUILDS UP				
12	Oct 24/25	**Honors in Worship**	1 Cor 11:2–34	The Lord's Supper taken worthily; examining yourself before the bread and cup.
13	Oct 31/Nov 1	**Is Gifted**	1 Cor 12:1–31	One Spirit, many members; the gifts you'd hide may be the ones the body needs most.
14	Nov 7/8	**Is Defined by Love**	1 Cor 13:1–13	Not a wedding poem — a rebuke. Read it with "I am" replaced by your own name.
15	Nov 14/15	**Builds Up the Body** †	1 Cor 14:1–40	Intelligibility over spectacle; "let all things be done for edification."
MOVEMENT FIVE · A HOPEFUL CHURCH — RAISED, THEREFORE STEADFAST				
16	Nov 21/22	**Stands on the Gospel** †	1 Cor 15:1–11	The gospel in four beats — died, buried, raised, appeared — of first importance.
17	Nov 28/29	**Believes the Resurrection** †	1 Cor 15:12–34	If Christ is not raised, faith is worthless; but Christ has been raised.
18	Dec 5/6	**Labors in Hope**	1 Cor 15:35–58	Death swallowed in victory — therefore be steadfast; your toil is not in vain.
19	Dec 12/13	**Is Courageous and Loving**	1 Cor 16:1–24	The whole letter in five commands: be alert, stand firm, act like men, be strong — in love.

† Title reconstructed from the passage where the printed schedule was illegible — confirm wording against the LP Groups guide.

CARRYING IT

Verses Worth Keeping & How to Get the Most From the Series

"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

1 COR 1:18 · WEEKS 1–4

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit... you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

1 COR 6:19–20 · WEEKS 5–8

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able..."

1 COR 10:13 · WEEKS 9–11

"Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant... bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

1 COR 13:4, 7 · WEEKS 12–15

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."

1 COR 15:58 · WEEKS 16–19

"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love."

1 COR 16:13–14 · THE SEND-OFF

Before each weekend — read the week's passage once, slowly, and mark the single sentence that stops you. That is the sentence to bring to your LP Group. Nineteen weeks of one marked sentence apiece is a better record of a season with God than most journals.

- **Track the two blueprints.** Nearly every paragraph contrasts the city's way of being somebody with the cross's way. When a passage confuses you, ask which blueprint it is exposing.

- **Let the "Now concerning" verses orient you.** From chapter 7 onward, Paul is answering the Corinthians' own written questions (7:1, 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1) — it reads differently when you remember they asked.
- **Don't skip the hard weeks.** Chapters 11 and 14 are where casual readers drop out and disciples grow. Bring questions, not verdicts, to group.
- **Read chapter 13 monthly.** It sits at the letter's center because it is the letter's measure. Everything else in 1 Corinthians is diagnosis; love is the cure.
- **Aim at 15:58.** The whole series lands on *steadfast*, *immovable*, *abounding* — resurrection hope turned into Monday-morning labor. If December finds you steadier, the study did what Paul wrote it to do.

SCRIPTURE · Quotations are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB), © The Lockman Foundation. Dates and week titles follow the Lakepointe "Built Different" LP Groups schedule; two dates (Weeks 15 and 18) are inferred from the weekly rhythm where the printed card was unreadable.