***Built for Victory***

God Gathers and Gifts His Church

**Discovering the Kingdom Series – (1st Corinthians A) - Part 1**

Introduction & 1st Corinthians 1:1-9

January 8-9, 2022

* **Brand New Series Kicks Off Right Now! –** A walk through the first 10 Chapters of 1st Corinthians line by line.
* ***Discovering the Kingdom* –** The Kingdom of GOD,
* **What’s the Kingdom of God?** – the reality where He is King and we are living in what He created and where He is Supreme. His ways dictate how we live. His heart dictates who we are.
* **Examples of what it means to live in the Kingdom of God –** truly that’s a lot of what this series is about so I’m just going to throw out some examples to give an idea while the rest of this series lays out more detail.
* In the Kingdom of God…**God makes the rules** of what’s important and not, good and bad, right and wrong. The Bible is more important that the laws of the land.
* In the Kingdom of God…**Supernatural is more real** than the natural which means that not only are miracles possible, but spiritual reality is our reality. Faith is our lifeblood and prayer is our voice that matters.
* In the Kingdom of God…**All people are the same**, human beings humbled to be created by God and noble since we are made in the image of God. There is no elitism, classism, race, superiority, or any of that nonsense.
* In the Kingdom of God…**Purity and Goodness are the standard**, not wealth and advancement.
* **Kingdom of God vs. Kingdom of this World**
* **Fledgling Corinthian Church living in a pagan culture** (New & relatively-strange). Although we may say that we are the same, a Christian church in a secular society, there is still a significant amount of Judeo-Christian values running in America. Corinth was thoroughly Greek and Roman when Christianity came into it. that means that Christians were not only the minority but strange on a variety of levels. However, in the Ancient world at this time, religion and belief in gods and the supernatural was still very present in secular society. Rationalism and religious fervor stood side by side. Western civilization was fused with the Eastern mysticism of Asia and Egypt as well bringing in the mystery cults. There were 26 devoted buildings of worship there. But at the same time it was a seaport. It was known for fulfilling every vice and sin, like many port towns. So there was wickedness and religion on every corner.
* **Citizenship (Christian First; National Second)** – For every Christian in Corinth they needed to determine their identity and how they would function day to day. Are they Greek in nature? Roman in nature? Are they National? Are they Corinthians? Or are they Christians? That battle is true today for us in America. In today’s climate people have tried to merge Christianity with Civil American Religion, and it’s distorting both the Bible and the image of God in the Church. We have to determine who we are and in what order, just as they did. Paul called them to be Christians first, and Corinthians second. We are calling you to be Christians first, and Americans second.
* **Clash of Cultures** – Kingdom Values vs. Cultural Values – you and I will be expected to adhere to the cultural values that are set around us. But sometimes those values clash with the heart and will of God. In those circumstances you will be called to live ‘counter-culturally’, since your primary citizenship is heavenly.
* **What are practical examples** of how we are living according to our culture instead of according to the Kingdom of God today.
* **We fight about politics** because we believe that relationships are expendable for the search for truth. But relationships are part of the truth.
* **We don’t want to go to church** because we organize our lives around ourselves instead of God’s glory.
* **We work hard to make money to isolate** when community is what we are built for. Etc.
* **This Message**
* **Anytime we enter into a new Book of the Bible we want to** find out who wrote it, to whom and why. CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT
* **Paul wrote this first letter to the Corinthians c. 54 AD,** beginning the final decade of his life[[1]](#footnote-1) which was about[[2]](#footnote-2) 24 years after Jesus died[[3]](#footnote-3) as well as Paul’s own conversion[[4]](#footnote-4). The Corinthian church was only roughly 4 years old at the time.
* **Weird sidenote** – Just think about this for a moment: At the time that this letter was written, there was no one on the planet that had been a Christian longer than 27 years (Apostles/Disciples called at the beginning of Christ’s earthly ministry)! Almost[[5]](#footnote-5) any Christian or church that Paul launched was at the most (47AD = 1st missionary journey) 7 years old.
* **What’s in Your Bag?**

**We must REMEMBER what we’ve been GIVEN**

**Lesson**

* **Discovering Paul the Apostle**
* **Learning About the Authors of This Letter**
* **1 Cor 1:1 –** “*Paul, called by the will of God to be[[6]](#footnote-6) an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,*
* **Paul as a Person (Paul/Saul) –**
* **Called by the Will of God[[7]](#footnote-7)** – Called and God’s Will are BEFORE any authority.
* **An Apostle of Christ Jesus[[8]](#footnote-8) -**
* **Paul would have been in Ephesus during this correspondence.**
* **Sosthenes as a Person[[9]](#footnote-9) -** We are not sure who this man is. He isn’t tied to Paul’s ministry as a partner prior to this or after. It’s not even clear whether he was a secretary for this letter so his inclusion here only means that the Corinthian Church knew him. Since this is the case, it may be very possible that he is the same Sosthenes mentioned in Acts 18:17. That would suggest that the synagogue ruler got saved and now with Paul in Ephesus.
* **Discovering the Corinthians**
* **Learning About the Recipients of This Letter**
* **1 Cor 1:2 –** “*To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place[[10]](#footnote-10) call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:…”*
* **Understanding Corinth** – Corinth is a major city in modern-day Greece that has a long and important history. Because of where it’s situated it was a hub of international travel and that made it wealthy and prominent. The country of Greece today is actually 2 large parts held connected by a small land bridge. Corinth is at that land bridge[[11]](#footnote-11). Corinth was important in the Greek Empire and then at the end it was destroyed by the Romans (146 BC) and left dormant for just over 100 years. Then Julius Caesar re-founded it in 44BC as a Roman colony. That means that it was about 40 years before Jesus Christ was born. After Paul founded a church there, it became the center of Christianity in Greece.
* **The Church[[12]](#footnote-12) of God in Corinth[[13]](#footnote-13)** - It’s God’s church, not the Corinthians. That’s an important distinction. Too often we treat the church like it’s our house that we run. It’s not. It’s God’s house that we steward for Him. That means He’s always in charge and we do things according to His Word and Will. It happens to be in Corinth, just as Bridgeway happens to be in Roseville.
* **When it was Founded by Paul** - Paul founded the church in Corinth during his **second** missionary journey, the one he took with **Silas**, which was around **50-51AD**[[14]](#footnote-14).
* **Early Problems** - It appears that soon after planting the church Paul wrote a letter to them to address certain issues (we don’t have that one[[15]](#footnote-15)). They wrote back with their own concerns and opinions and more questions for him, which was brought to Paul by Stephanas & Co[[16]](#footnote-16). At the same time Paul was visited by more Corinthians from Chloe’s house giving him an update of their concerns. He is now writing back to them again[[17]](#footnote-17). Things are tense between him and the church. **They are battling his leadership**. Form what scholars can gather, the tension seems to be from the church having access to very articulate leaders like Apollos and being influenced by their cultures desire for fancy wisdom and they are losing confidence in Paul’s basic gospel and simplistic way of talking. **They want fancier**. They believe what they have experienced with the Holy Spirit is an indicator that they are more special than everyone else. They want to go deeper and talk about more important things.
* **Future Increased Tensions** - After this letter things get even worse and Paul comes and makes what he calls, ‘a painful visit’. When things continue to go wrong after that, he writes 2nd Corinthians and threatens another ‘painful visit’ if they don’t shape up.
* **Description of Corinthian Believers = Believers SANCTIFIED in Christ Jesus –** The word actually means Holy[[18]](#footnote-18) (*hagiozo* in Greek). The idea is that something is set aside for special use by God. The only way that God is going to use something special to Him for noble purposes is if it’s purified. So this is saying that Jesus Christ did something to these Christians (and all true believers) that transformed them in such a way so that they could be used special by God for His holy purposes.
* **Description of Corinthian Believers = CALLED to be saints –** again the word translated here for saints is Holy (*hagios*). It’s an adjective meaning the holy ones. It became a common name for Christians (saint/holy ones), which we use now as saints. The word for *called* is actually ‘invited’ but when it comes to the effectual call of God[[19]](#footnote-19), it’s not just an invitation but to those whom God calls, God saves.
* **Ro 8:28–30** – “*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.* ***29****For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* ***30****And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”*
* **That’s a Lot of Holy –** It says that the church in Corinth was made holy by Jesus Christ and called to be holy… that’s a lot of holy. Why the focus on Holiness so much? Because Christians are called to be God’s special ones, different from the world.
* **Metaphors of the Church (special to 1st Corinthians) –**Paul introduces and camps on two major metaphors for the church not just at Corinth, but everywhere: **1.) The Church is the Temple of God** – indwelt by the Spirit, the sanctuary of the living God; **2.) The Church is the Body of Christ** – must be unified and every part matters so that we can carry out the Lord’s ministry and will and kingdom on earth on His behalf.
* **TOGETHER with all those in every place with believers –** it’s bigger than just them. This Corinthian church isn’t the center of the world. There are lots of churches, lots of God’s kids all over the planet (even more now than then). We are part of a collective whole, not independent with our own opinions and perspectives. We need to think of ourselves corporately not individually.
* **Definition of BELIEVERS: Those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours… -** What a beautiful definition of what a Christian means. Today it’s been distorted to mean all kinds of things.
* **Discovering Blessings**
* **Learning About Words of Life**
* **1 Cor 1:3 –** “*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ[[20]](#footnote-20).”[[21]](#footnote-21)*
* **The Typical Letter Format –** letters from this same time period follow a very common introduction (salutation): They would begin by citing the Author, Addressee & Greetings. Then it would follow a thanksgiving or prayer to the gods for the health and well-being of the addressee.
* **Paul Proclaiming Blessing (from God)**
* **A Blessing of Grace –** Charis/grace. Nothing is deserved; nothing can be achieved. It’s all from God pouring out from His love.
* **A Blessing of Peace –** Shalom. Well-being, wholeness, welfare. The result of God’s love for those who will receive it is peace.
* **Discovering Our Identity in Christ**
* **Learning What God Gives to Believers to Thrive**
* **1 Cor 1:4-9 –** “*I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God[[22]](#footnote-22) that was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge[[23]](#footnote-23)-- 6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you-- 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift[[24]](#footnote-24), as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless[[25]](#footnote-25) in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
* **Paul’s thanks for the Corinthian believers (while at odds) –** If Paul is at odds with the Corinthian church and they are so difficult for him, it’s mature that he thanks the Lord for them right up front before he gets into a tough letter. Then again, they were the fruit of his ministry and they were products of God. That makes them highly valuable to Paul and he’s thankful for them no matter how much trouble they are.
* **Paul’s Thanks to God for What He’s Given to Corinthians (and all Believers) –** God has given them at least 9 gifts to empower them for victory[[26]](#footnote-26). Those things belong to us as well, today.
1. **Enriched in all speech –** Enriched means to be supplied abundantly. Speech = logos, or communication, or verbalizing intelligence in a word. In other words, they are abundantly blessed with what God speaks through them and shares through them supernaturally.
2. **Enriched in all knowledge –** Enriched means to be supplied abundantly. Knowledge is gnosis – meaning to ‘know’. In other words, they were abundantly blessed with what God has revealed to them supernaturally.
3. **Christ Confirmed** - The testimony about Christ was confirmed among them not just by their salvation and testimony, but by the evidence of the miracles and spiritual gifting.
4. **Full Gifting - Not lacking any spiritual gift –** a spiritual gift = *charisma*, which means a divinely given gift from God that you didn’t earn but was freely given to you.
5. **A Returning Savior & King -** Waiting for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ – That means He’s given us a joyful future to look forward to and a knowledge that all the bad stuff doesn’t win in the end, we will be victorious with our King.
6. **The Sustaining power of Christ until the end –** sustain in Greek is *babaioo* which means to make firm and reliable so you can be confident and secure in your strength. The enemy can’t win because God’s the Author, sustainer and Finisher of our faith. Yes, we have a responsibility to pursue the Lord and keep in step with the Spirit, but ultimately we are the sheep and He is the shepherd and He will get us home to heaven where He has prepared a place for us.
7. **Guiltlessness when we stand before the Lord at His return –** Guiltless is the word in Greek *anegkletos* which means free from accusation, unblamable, unblemished. It’s not just that we are sinners who have been forgiven, which is beautiful, but our standing in the spiritual realm, because of what Jesus did, is that we are free even from accusation. There’s nothing there to blame. Jesus paid it all.
8. **Faithfulness from God –** faithfulness = *pistos* in Greek which means worthy of belief, trust and confidence. God keeps His promises. He is not flaky or distracted. He does what He says He will do, every time.
9. **Invitation to Relationship & Partnership -** The Calling of God into Fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord **–** Fellowship = *koinonia* which means partnership and participation with. We have been invited to a personal relationship with our Creator. That’s incredible. He will continue to reveal so many things to us about our blessings in Him.
* **Identity** – Paul is simply expressing what he knows to be true for those who have been transformed by Jesus Christ. These things are our new identity. We used to be lost, now we are found. We used to be blind, but now we see. We used to be in the Kingdom of Darkness but now we are in the Kingdom of light. We used to be an enemy of God, and now He calls us child and friend. We used to be filled with and responsible for, our sin. Now we are free, forgiven and living in a state of grace. We have been saved, cleansed and called Children of God.
* **Foundation for Correction** - This letter is going to contain a fair amount of correction, and there are numerous instances where Paul is helping the Corinthians navigate some VERY challenging issues. But he starts with a reminder of their identity. They have been given so much in Christ. Do we know this is true? Do we begin our days with the knowledge of all God has given us?

**Conclusion**

* **The Mind-Blowing Reality of the Present Kingdom –** If I were to put one thought on the table that we have DISCOVERED here together in this passage it would be that the Present reality of the Kingdom of God in the lives of true Believers, means that we have far more than we imagined ALREADY PRESENT in our lives and our job is not so much to go out and find it, or to work for it, but to use it, to engage with it[[27]](#footnote-27).
* **Many of us are WAITING for Something –**when in fact it’s likely that what you are waiting for has already been given by the Father, purchased on the cross by the Son, and present in your core with the Holy Spirit.
* **Yes, it’s True:Kingdom Now but Not Yet –** Yes, it’s true that we live in a dual reality of the Kingdom Now but Not Yet, meaning that the full revelation and the full consummation of the Kingdom of God in it’s full form has yet to occur. That will come at the Big Reveal of Jesus Christ, however He chooses to do that.
* **What We Do About It –** Any great revelation means something practically needs to change today. So, what do we need to do differently now that we know we have far more than we imagined from God and that we are front-loaded for victory?
* **Be Encouraged –**walk forward today knowing that whatever victory you have in your life right now, there’s more. God worked a long time ago to prepare your tomorrow.
* **Start Using What You’ve Got –**shift into a mode of no longer waiting, but now testing and trying what God has put into your pack.

**Understanding Ancient Corinth**

**Insights from NICNT Commentary on 1st Corinthians by Gordon Fee**

* Strategic location allowed a long and successful history
* 4 ½ mile isthmus where it sits that bridged the Peloponnese and the mainland (separating the Saronic and Corinthian gulfs)
* Control overland commercial traffic between Italy and Asia since traders found it safer to go on land through rather than all the way around the Peloponnese.
* In it’s Greek years it flourished for a long time (c. 5th century BC).
* It came into conflict with Rome and was destroyed in 146 BC. It lay dormant for 100 years and then re-founded in 44 BC by Julius Caesar as a Roman Colony.
* It had control of the Isthmian games which ranked just below the Olympian in importance.
* It was repopulated by freed men from Rome (status just above a slave, so Rome saw it as a way to rid itself of potential trouble – the freedmen took the opportunity for advancement). Prosperity came back almost immediately. The Romans flooded into it along with other nations in the area. The Roman world was thoroughly Hellenized (influenced by Greek philosophy) and since it had a Greek history it kept those ties of religion, philosophy and arts. From the East came mystery cults of Egypt and Asia. From the Jews their synagogue and monotheism.
* Vice and religion flourished
* Ancient Corinth had a reputation for sexual vice to such a degree that Aristophanes (c. 420 BC) coined the term *korinthiazo* = to act like a Corinthian meant to commit fornication (this was long before Paul’s day). (museum pieces from that period show statues of genitals that seems to be present as a temple piece to help people heal from Venereal disease). It was like a normal seaport.
* It had 26 sacred places devoted to gods. It was the New York, Los Angeles and Las Vegas of the ancient world.
* **The Church** was made up of a huge mixture of people types. Jew, Greek Slave, Free. Jews, Romans, Greeks. Wealthy, poor. Primarily Gentiles.
* **Paul would have set it up (AD 49-51) and left around AD 51-52 (mentioned in Acts 18).** This letter was likely 3 years later (this is the third dealing in letters with this church – the previous letter seems to have been written while Paul was in Ephesus mentioned in 1 Cor 5:9 for an unknown reason – portions seems to have been disagreed with by the church and disregarded so Paul repeats it in this letter. Their letter back to him seems to have been carried to Paul by Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus – probably responding to his first letter. Also it appears that Chloe’s folks spoke to him verbally with an update of what was going on in this church.). So, here we see his response to that addressing their questions. It appears that he addresses at least 11 different questions, ten of which are behavior, 1 theological. Although he always talks about the theological basis for behaviors. (by the time we get to 2nd Corinthians there is increasingly bad blood between the church and Paul and he had to make a ‘painful visit’ to them, which was then followed by the letter of 2nd Corinthians where he warns of not wanting to make ANOTHER painful visit – 2 Cor 2:1-4).
* **The main crux is that the whole church** (notice that the whole letter is addressed to the church as a whole and there is no mention of leaders) **is at odds with Paul, the founder and he’s bringing correction.** Things appear tense. It seems they are battling him on his leadership. The challenge here for Paul is to reassert his authority there (which has eroded) through servant leadership as well as adjust their theology to be more in alignment with what he taught them.
* **Where did the tension come from?** (see his introduction in the Commentary for the Biblical references and reasons why) – it seems to possibly be due to the ministry of Apollos (or some other eloquent speaker). The Corinthians seemed to be focusing a lot of ‘*sophia*/wisdom’. They seem to think of themselves as elevated in their thinking and that Paul’s ministry now sounded like ‘milk’ to them, too basic. They wanted to talk about fancy things. They didn’t like his basic way of talking, they preferred someone who spoke fancier (oratory skills). Paul is consistently having to defend his authority and warns that not only did he send Timothy to straighten things out but that he would come again and if he did, did they want it peaceful or ‘with a rod’? They were modifying the gospel toward Hellenism. They were seeing themselves as elite with *pneumatikos*. They liked the fancy speaking in tongues because it made them feel special. They wanted Sophia (wisdom) and Gnosis (knowledge). They felt they were so spiritual that their earthly actions didn’t really matter. They are “puffed up”, “boasting” and full of arrogance. They even had gross immorality in their midst but they were too fancy to deal with it. The distortion of their view of gospel seems to come from their prior paganism and not wanting to completely separate from it. It was informing how they lived in Christ too much. Remember these are Gentiles primarily, not Jews.
* **Two Main Images Paul Uses about the Church –** 1.) The Church is the Temple of God – they are to live alternative to the pagan temples and the society life around them. They are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, like a temple would be. They are the sanctuary of the living God. Anyone trying to destroy God’s Church will be destroyed by God Himself. 2.) The Church is the Body of Christ. That means we need unity which is only brought about by the Spirit. All members are essential one to another.
1. martyred in AD 64 in Rome [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. c.33AD [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. and rose again [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *“AD 33–36 Converted on the way to Damascus; spends three years in Arabia; returns to Damascus to preach Jesus as Messiah…”* <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-47/apostle-paul-and-his-times-christian-history-timeline.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Paul would have shared his faith many times prior to his official missionary journeys, but key figures that we know like Timothy were actually not activated until those missionary journeys. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *“Although the words “to be” are not in the Greek text, nothing else could be meant by the juxtaposed words “called apostle.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *“…with this phrase Paul grounds his apostleship, beyond its historical realization in his “call,” in its ultimate origins in the divine purposes. For Paul salvation itself has its point of origin, and therefore its certainty, in the divine will (cf. Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:3–11), as does the apostleship that through the Spirit’s effectual working announces that salvation to others. In all of this Paul is affirming that God’s action is always the prior one. His own position in Christ, as well as his ministry, is predicated on God’s call, which is but the expression of God’s prior will. Above all else, this sense of call based on God’s will is what fills the apostle with such confidence in his ministry.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *“…because this church is questioning that apostleship, he begins by asserting its divine origins. Since such an assertion would ordinarily be quite unnecessary (see, e.g., 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon), and given the considerable tensions between them and Paul, it seems unlikely that this emphasis would have escaped notice in Corinth.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *“…before he adds the name of Sosthenes to his own, he affirms that he himself is “called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” This word order almost certainly excludes the possibility of Sosthenes’s being an apostle;… To his own name Paul adds that of “our brother Sosthenes” (lit. “Sosthenes the brother”). Although Paul frequently is joined by others in the writing of his letters (eight times in all), this is a rare phenomenon in antiquity, and one cannot be certain what to make of it.13 In the letters to Thessalonica Silas and Timothy are probably to be regarded as joining in the actual writing of the letter, since the verbs and pronouns throughout are in the first person plural (“we give thanks,” “be imitators of us” [cf. 1 Cor 4:16!], etc.). So also with 2 Corinthians. But this letter has little or none of that. Sosthenes is not further heard from as a companion or coworker of Paul, either in this letter or elsewhere. That he is probably to be considered a coworker is suggested by the absolute use of “the brother” (cf. 16:12; 2 Cor. 1:1; etc.), although in this case, since Sosthenes seems to have had nothing to do with the letter as such, it may be merely the means of identifying one of Paul’s present companions who is well known to the Corinthians.16 Perhaps in this case he is also serving as Paul’s secretary (cf. 16:21), but that too is conjecture. The identification of this Sosthenes is also uncertain. It may be that he is the Sosthenes mentioned in Acts 18:17, the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, who was beaten in the presence of Gallio. If so, then he would have become a believer and was now with Paul in Ephesus. This identification is made the more probable by the simple designation of him as “our brother,” implying that at least he was known to the Corinthians.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *“The universal nature of the church is further emphasized by the phrase “everywhere” (lit. “in every place”). “Everywhere” is probably not quite the nuance of Paul’s Greek, which rather implies “in every meeting-place.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. separating two bodies of water: Corinthian Gulf/Ionian Sea – Saronic Gulf/Aegean Sea [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *The letter is addressed to the whole church, with no indication of parties or factions. Furthermore, one finds no mention of leaders, nor any appeal to them in the body of the letter, as one does in Phil. 1:1 and 4:3. Rather, the entire community is addressed, and what is said here and throughout is said to all.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *“If the superscription (v. 1) is subtly directed toward the situation in Corinth, even more so is the address proper. The letter is addressed to “the church of God in Corinth.” In his earlier two letters Paul had written to the church of the Thessalonians in God. Here they are the church of God in Corinth. The church belongs to God (cf. 3:9), not to them or to Paul (or Apollos), and by this slight change in the address Paul disallows at the outset one of their tendencies—to think too highly of themselves.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *“AD 49–52 Second missionary journey with Silas, through Asia Minor and Greece; settles in Corinth; writes letters to Thessalonians…”* https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-47/apostle-paul-and-his-times-christian-history-timeline.html [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 1 Cor 5:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Per Gordon Fee, it appears that Paul is addressing at least 11 different questions, ten of which are behavioral and 1 is theological (but Paul talks about all behavior being rooted in theology). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *“…to render clean in a moral sense, to purify, sanctify”* The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, by Spiros Zodhiates [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *“This distinction, however, vanishes in the epistles, the writers having in mind the divine greatness and force of the call and not the human acceptance or rejection of it (Rom. 1:1 [cf. Col. 3:12]). One who is called means one who is saved (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1). The called ones (klētoí) are those who have received the divine call (klḗsis [2821]), having conformed to God’s saving purpose (Rom. 1:6, 7; 8:28; 1 Cor. 1:2, 24); although they did not necessarily give immediate obedience to the call (Matt. 20:16; 22:14; Jude 1:1 [cf. Rev. 17:14]).”* The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, by Spiros Zodhiates [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *“Almost all letters from the Greco-Roman period begin with a threefold salutation: Name of the Writer, to the Addressee, Greetings. Very often the next item in the letter would be a thanksgiving and/or prayer to the gods for the health or well-being of the addressee.2 Paul’s letters follow this standard form; however, in his hands even these formal items are touched by the gospel so as to become distinctively Christian… Here is a marvelous example of Paul’s Christianizing whatever he put his hand to. The traditional greeting in the Hellenistic world was chairein—the infinitive of the verb “to rejoice,” but in salutations meaning simply “Greetings!” (see Acts 15:23; Jas. 1:1). In Paul’s hands this now becomes charis (“grace”), to which is added the traditional Jewish greeting shalom (“peace”). Thus instead of “greetings,” it is “grace to you—and peace.” In a sense this sums up the whole of Paul’s theological outlook. The sum total of all God’s activity toward his human creatures is found in the word “grace”; God has given himself to them mercifully and bountifully in Christ. Nothing is deserved; nothing can be achieved. “’Tis mercy all, immense and free.” And the sum total of those benefits as they are experienced by the recipients of God’s grace is found in the word “peace,” meaning “well-being, wholeness, welfare.” The one flows out of the other, and both together flow from “God our Father” (see n. 16) and were made effective in human history through our “Lord Jesus Christ.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Side Question: Why Mention the Father and Son but not the Spirit? [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *“What is remarkable is that Paul should express such confidence about a community whose current behavior is anything but blameless and whom on several occasions he must exhort with the strongest kinds of warning. The secret, of course, lies in the subject of the verb, “he” (= God). If Paul’s confidence lay in the Corinthians themselves, then he is in trouble. But just as in 5:6–8 and 6:9–11, in Paul’s theology the indicative (God’s prior action of grace) always precedes the imperative (their obedience as response to grace) and is the ground of his confidence.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *“They “have been enriched,” he says, “in every way.” Yet it is clear from the phrases that follow that his focus is much narrower, namely, “in all your speaking (logos) and in all your knowledge (gnōsis)… What then is Paul doing here? He seems to be picking up on two of their own terms, items in their spirituality about which they are perhaps a bit too self-confident. In the places where they boast in such things as “utterance” or “knowledge,” Paul argues that they are acting in merely human ways, and thus are not “in Spirit” at all. Nonetheless, these same items appear as legitimate gifts of the Spirit that belong to the present age (12:8–11; 13:8–12), and set in proper perspective they will edify the church (14:1–6). Precisely because they are spiritual gifts (v. 7), given by God in Christ Jesus, Paul can be genuinely grateful for them.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *“It is not certain what precisely is intended by “you do not lack any spiritual gift.” The verb “lack” ordinarily takes a genitive for its object and in that case would mean, as the NIV has it, that they potentially have at their disposal all the gifts of God. But here the verb is modified by a prepositional phrase,30 as in v. 5 (“in every way”), and therefore could mean that they do not come short, either in comparison with others or with normal expectations of Christians who have the Spirit, in any of the gifts that they do possess. Although many prefer the latter option (because of the grammar), it is more likely that the syntax here is influenced by v. 5 (“enriched in every way”). Thus the clause merely repeats in a negative way what was already affirmed positively in v. 5. This also means that the word charisma (“spiritual gift”), which could be seen to refer more broadly to the gracious gift of redemption,34 is as in v. 5 to be understood more specifically to refer to those special endowments of the Holy Spirit mentioned in chaps. 12–14 (cf. Rom. 12:6).”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *the word “blameless,” which carries the sense of their being guiltless (with reference to the law) when appearing before God at the final judgment because Christ’s righteousness has been given to them.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. I considered making “Grace” the first of 10 gifts given, because certainly Grace is a great gift of God. But in context I believe Paul was using ‘grace’ as the catalyst for the list. In other words, the 9 things WERE the elements of Grace he was talking about. So grace wouldn’t be an additional ‘gift’ in this context but the foundation for what the 9 express. Does that make sense? The 9 were the grace gift. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. *“For much of its life the church has suffered through the opposite of the Corinthian problem, namely an “underrealized” eschatological perspective, in which very little is expected from God in the present age. The twentieth century, through both the traditional Pentecostal and more recent charismatic movements, has witnessed a resurgence of many of the more visible gifts of the Spirit. Among some Christians there has been a Corinthian-like focus on the more spectacular gifts, leading at times to spiritual pride, while others in their own form of pride have rejected altogether such gifting as a possibility for the contemporary church. From this thanksgiving we should learn both to be thankful for such gifts, as evidence of God’s confirmation of the gospel, and to make sure that our focus is Paul’s—on God and Christ, from whom and through whom are all things.”* NICNT, Gordon Fee [↑](#footnote-ref-27)