

The Canadian *Lord's Day* Association

Bible Course

Acts to Revelation

Lesson 17

Name: _____

I Corinthians

Corinth was a principal city in Greece. It was situated on the 4-mile wide isthmus (or neck of land) that joined Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece, on the southern side, and had two ports adjoining, one on the bottom of the Corinthian Gulf, called *Lechaëum*, not far from the city, from which they traded to Italy and the west, the other at the bottom of the Sinus Saronicus, called *Cenchrea*, at a more remote distance from which they traded to Asia. [It was 250 miles around the isthmus in often dangerous waters. Instead ships were often rolled across the

stretch of land. Today, there is a canal in this location.] From this situation, it is no wonder that Corinth should be a place of great trade and wealth; and, as affluence is apt to produce luxury of all kinds, neither is it to be wondered at if a place so famous for wealth and arts should be infamous for vice. It was in a particular manner noted for fornication, insomuch that a *Corinthian woman* was a proverbial phrase for a strumpet, and **korinthiazein**, **korinthesesthai** - to play the Corinthian, is to play the whore, or indulge whorish inclinations. Yet in this lewd city did Paul, by the blessing of God on his labors, plant and raise a Christian church, chiefly among the Gentiles, as



seems very probable from the history of this matter, Acts 18:1-18, compared with some passages in this epistle, particularly 12:2, where the apostle tells them that they *know that they were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols*, though it is not impossible that many Jewish converts might also be among them, for we are told that *Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house*, Acts 18:8. Paul continued in this city nearly 18 months, as is plain from Acts 18:11,18, and labored with great success, being encouraged by a divine vision assuring him that God *had much people in that city*, Acts 18:9-10. (Adapted from Matthew Henry).

I Corinthians is the fourth letter in the Bible written by Paul (after Galatians, I and II Thessalonians). I Corinthians, the longest letter of Paul, is sent from Ephesus to address some concerns about divisions in the church, immorality, and lawsuits, and also to answer a number of their questions about marriage, singleness, food sacrificed to idols, spiritual gifts, and special contributions which the Corinthians were making. Paul provides practical instruction that includes correction, rebuke, and love for the Corinthian church. The book of I Corinthians can be divided into three sections. First Paul focuses on clarifying the Christian message – what is the core of Christianity (1:18 – 3:4). The Paul speaks of Christian ministry and ministers (3:5 – 4:5). Finally, a lengthy section addresses the life of a Christian person and some specific, practical applications (4:6 – 13).

1. Corinth is (was) a principal city located in: _____.
2. Infamous= of evil fame or reputation.
3. Corinth was famous for _____ and infamous for _____
4. To be a Corinthian woman was proverbial for a _____.
5. Paul continued in this city for nearly _____
6. Considering the topics of this letter and the reason for writing it, do you think it applies to us today? _____

Read I Corinthians 1

Paul begins chapter 1 by bringing greetings. Despite all problems in this church, Paul expresses his thankfulness for this church which stands in a very pagan culture. Paul writes this practical discourse to help give guidance to the church on how to deal with these sins/problems.

7. The failure of man's wisdom is seen in the many problems in the Corinthian church.

Paul first addresses the heart of the problem: strife. I beseech you, brethren, by the

name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak _____,
and that there be no _____ among you (1:10).

8. Paul did not want to see these _____ in the church (I Cor. I:10) This was shown by different people choosing favorite ministers, “ I am of _____; and I of _____; and I of _____; and I of _____.” When God works by one minister in a person’s heart, it is natural for him to be a favorite. Yet God may use a different minister for another person, and this different minister will be his/her favorite. Paul seeks to show the folly in this by saying, “Is Christ _____? Was Paul _____ for you? For this reason, Paul is glad that he _____ only a few people. Now most of Corinth could never say Paul did this in his own name. (I Cor. 1:10-14)
9. Paul spends some time now clarifying the true Christian message. For those who have no desire of the things of God, preaching is a boring lecture, and here Paul notes that the preaching of the cross to them that perish is _____. This is contrasted with those who are saved (by the Word of God) it is the _____ of God (I Cor. I:18). To a believer, salvation by Christ alone, through faith alone, without any works is amazing grace. For a society that worships power, influence, and wealth, the message of Christ’s dying 2000 years ago for sins of chosen people seems foolish and irrational. Paul writes, “I will destroy the _____ of the wise, and will bring to nothing the _____ of the prudent” (1:19).
10. How do you explain the seeming contradiction in I Corinthians 1:17-28 (which seems anti-wisdom) and Proverbs 3:13-14 (which seems to glorify wisdom).

11. What is God’s normal way to save a soul? (I Cor 1:21) _____

This key means that God has provided is more and more ignored and even despised in today’s world - even among those brought up in the church.

12. Paul relates how the Jews did not believe Jesus was the Messiah. The Jews required a _____ (I Cor 1:22). Some Jews were still looking for a Messiah who was a conquering king. They doubted that Jesus was the Messiah because Jesus was executed as a criminal. However, Jesus refused this for the unbelieving Pharisee and said that none would be given except which one? (Matthew 12: 39-40). _____

Explain _____

13. The Greeks on the other hand sought after _____ (i.e. their salvation was in their knowledge). Before Paul's time, great philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle sought to explain worldly happenings through very logical rhetoric (defined as wisdom by the world of their day). Paul's preaching of _____ (v. 23) was not according to man's logic, but founded in the infinite wisdom of God.

14. To the Jews this preaching was a _____ (meaning they fell over its truths, but did not believe it), and to the Greeks, it was _____ (v. 23).

15. Give an example from today that is called foolish by the world but we know as the wisdom of God. _____

16. In the last section of 1 Corinthians 1, Paul writes about who God calls. This is in reference to the "inward call" which W. Brakel describes as the irresistible work of God in those who are converted, conquering all the opposition of their evil nature, and translating from a state of spiritual death to spiritual life. Paul uses generalities in this part. In general, who does God not call (save)? _____

17. We know there are exceptions such as _____ (1 Kings 3: 28) _____ (Gen 13: 2) _____ (1 Kings 10: 1,2) yet normally God doesn't save such people because they are self-sufficient; they don't need God.

18. God hath chosen which types of people? Give Paul's reason for each:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

19. Paul then points believers to Christ who is their _____, _____, _____ (v. 30).

Evaluator: _____