

# 1 CORINTHIANS

*Messy Church*  
MERCIFUL GOD



**daily devos**

RADIATE STUDENTS



# Welcome!

Dear Students,

Welcome to the Daily Devos! Our team has produced devotions for you to read every day over the next two weeks to grow in your walk with the Lord. Wherever you've been in terms of your spiritual life with Jesus, today can represent a fresh new start when it comes to connecting with God one-on-one.

If you jumped in with us for James, you probably have an idea of the flow of how this works. If not, or if you need a refresher, here's what to expect:

Every other Monday we will drop a 14-day discipleship guide on the Website. You can go through it on your phone or tablet; or print it off and stuff it in the pages of your journal. It shouldn't take more than 15-20 minutes a day, so don't let time be an excuse not to join us! Each day, you will find the same format: Read, Reflect, Respond, and Real Life.

**Read:** Bible reading for the day

**Reflect:** a breakdown of biblical principles from the passage

**Respond:** challenging questions to think through

**Real Life:** action steps or mission moments to live it out

During this two-week series, we will be walking through an entire (fairly long!) book of the Bible. There will be both a daily chapter to read and a "Spotlight" Scripture that your Daily Devo will focus on. But by the end of the two weeks, if you commit to the Daily Devos and Bible readings, you will have read the whole book of 1 Corinthians! It's unfortunate that time doesn't allow us to specifically discuss each verse or section, because God's word is so rich. That's why we encourage you to do the full daily Bible reading. There will be some passages we "skip" talking about in Daily Devos that you may have questions about - reach out to us! Let's chat.

What you put in is what you will get out of this. You can skim the paragraphs in a minute and move on, or you can learn to enjoy taking your time digesting the richness of God's Word. We are praying for you as you learn to love Jesus and his Word more and more! We love you, and we are available for any questions you may have along your journey. Let us know what you think!

The RADIATE Staff



## WEEK 1 | DAY 1

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 1](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [Acts 18:1-11](#)

### REFLECT:

Welcome to Day 1! We begin our journey through 1 Corinthians in the book of Acts. Why? Acts is a brief book of history that tells us about the start and spread of the Christian church. At the start of the book, Jesus had just risen from the dead, then he tells his disciples to "be my witnesses" in the surrounding areas and ultimately the world (Acts 1:8). In Acts 9, a Christian-hater named Saul meets Jesus, and his life is radically changed. (Even his name was changed from Saul to Paul!)

What does Acts 18:1 say? "After this \_\_\_\_\_ left Athens and went to \_\_\_\_\_."

In Acts 18, we find out that Paul was a missionary, absolutely sold-out for Jesus, taking the gospel to people all over Asia and Europe. He stayed with other Christians, worked a job to support himself, and tirelessly spent the rest of his time telling the Corinthians about Jesus for eighteen months.

When he left Corinth for his next missionary destination, he started writing letters to the Christians in Corinth that he had gotten to know. He loved these people, and he knew them well. But we don't really know much about them!

### Quick Facts about Corinth (relevant to our devos):

- Corinth was a port city in Greece
- It was a small land bridge between Italy and Asia
- They were worldly, rich, and modern
- Known for heavy alcohol use and sexual immorality
- Corinth hosted the Isthmian Games (the original Olympics)
- Their thinking was heavily influenced by false religions



As you can see from today’s reading, Paul was leading people to Jesus left and right. A guy would get saved, go home to tell his family, and the whole family would accept Jesus! The gospel was spreading like wildfire. This was all going on in the middle of an immoral town where worldly, temporary pleasures were king. Make lots of money. Do whatever feels good. Look the part. This is what the Corinthian culture was telling its citizens every single day.

# WEEK 1 | DAY 2

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 2](#) **Today’s Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 1:10-12](#)

**REFLECT:**

What did Chloe and her people report to Paul, according to 1 Corinthians 1:11?

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This word “quarrels” or “rivalry” is pretty straightforward in English. They mean “fighting”. But the word in the original language describes a readiness to quarrel.

Do you know someone like this? Always ready to pick a fight, always on the defense, always twisting your words. The tension that a person like that brings to a room is a lot to handle. Imagine a church that gets a letter and it starts out like this: yall are always picking fights with each other and looking for something to argue about, and it’s honestly what you’re known for. Ouch!

It was easy when you were asked to point the finger and say, oh that person is definitely like this. But be honest. Are you at all like this?

Obviously, there are things that are super non-negotiable when it comes to matters of Jesus. If someone were to get up and spread a false gospel in LifeGroup for example, I hope you WOULD argue with them. And like we talked about in James, it’s ok to get mad about something, especially when there is injustice. But there’s a difference between disagreeing on serious matters and a person known for being hyper-critical.

**Pray:**

*Speak to me through your Word, Lord Jesus. Teach me to enjoy the Bible and learn from it every time I read it.*

**RESPOND:**

Write down some messages culture tells you about yourself. Do these messages line up with what God says? What might it look like for you to follow God’s messages instead?  
(click to type or write your answers)

**REAL LIFE:**

Reach out to a friend you know that is struggling with confidence. Tell them what you appreciate about them. Encourage them with what God says, not what the world says.

**Ephesians 4:1-3**

*“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*





You will see over and over again in this series that the church at Corinth had some issues. Honestly, the letter may seem a little scatterbrained at times, jumping from one subject to another. Here's why: this letter was written to address the quarrels.

What are some ways the church disagrees? Do non-Christians see your Christian friends as a united front?

**Pray:**  
*You are the reason we gather to worship, and you are the common bond among people at church. I'm sorry for how I've contributed to division and tension between Christians. I pray that you would show me how to be a person of peace.*

**RESPOND:**

What do you think it looks like when the world outside of the church sees the people inside the church constantly fighting? How are you part of making peace? *(click to type)*

**REAL LIFE:**

Who was the last person you disagreed with - were you gentle and patient? Next time you disagree, pray for gentleness and patience and see if it turns out differently.

# WEEK 1 | DAY 3

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 3](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 2:11-16](#)

**REFLECT:**

Scroll to the top of this Daily Devo series. What is the title? \_\_\_\_\_ Church, \_\_\_\_\_ God.

If you commit to the daily Bible readings, you're about to read about lawsuits, marriage, church discipline... a variety of topics. But just remember Paul was writing to settle disputes. They were heavily influenced by other religions, so Paul is setting the record straight. Sometimes, he seems to go really far on an issue, but it's to make sure they stand out for Christ in their corrupt culture.

The people already sent Paul the questions; we hold in our hands his reply. In the middle of the mess, God is merciful to these people. He doesn't want them to be confused ([1 Cor 14:33](#)). That's why Paul said, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" ([1 Cor 2:2](#)). We can always set our focus on Jesus; we can always circle back to his salvation.

Look up [Philippians 2:3-8](#). What is the word that is repeated in [1 Corinthians 2:16](#) and [Philippians 2:5](#)? \_\_\_\_\_

We are to have the mind of Christ, so what does that mean? It does not mean that Jesus is your genie - ok, God, I need your help on this test really quick, give me your mind! No - Paul says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition." Humility. That is who we should be, the mindset we should have. You have Christ, here was his mindset, make that your mindset too.

*Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less.*  
-Rick Warren





Being a humble person means simply thinking more about other people than you do about yourself. It's not about thinking you're scum. In other words, selfishness is arrogance and pride. It also looks like self-loathing and self-centered insecurity. Because at the center of both sides of the same coin is the Self.

# WEEK 1 | DAY 4

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 4](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 3:1-3](#)

**REFLECT:**

Today, let's talk about food (amen)! If money is no object, and you can have anything you want: What is your favorite meal? \_\_\_\_\_  
What does Paul say the infant Corinthians were eating? \_\_\_\_\_

When a baby is first born, they will drink milk. A grown up will sit down to eat a well-balanced dinner that probably includes protein, carbs, maybe some veggies, and hopefully a dessert. The point is, you probably didn't write the same response for both of those last two questions. That would be crazy! A baby isn't eating steak, and a grown man isn't drinking milk for dinner. It's not natural.

Paul is drawing a comparison between "spiritual people" and the physical person. He's saying the Corinthians are still acting like babies in the faith, and he wants them to move on to solid food. The problem is they aren't ready; they don't have the basics down! (This is not describing how to become a Christian. This topic is describing personal worship involved in a Christian's life.)

When a baby starts eating food, a lot of times parents will introduce a little at a time and work up to a solid meal eventually. The milk is good, there's a time and place for that. But eventually, we are to start "introducing" more and more depth and complexity to our spiritual pallet. We get to enjoy the depths of the gospel!

**Milk Examples:**

Praying before meals and bed only, reading the Bible once in a while, attending church on occasion

**Solid Food Examples:**

Memorizing Scripture, doing a consistent devotion, studying the Bible (not just reading passages), sharing the Gospel, learning the history of God's Word, consistently praying for people, encouraging others, committing to a Bible study or accountability group, reading the Daily Devos passages, asking Questions

**Pray:**

*You thought so much of me that you gave your life, Jesus! Wow! I am so undeserving. Thank you for your humility. Thank you for your example. Please show me today how I can put other people before me.*


**RESPOND:**

Does your selfishness look more like arrogance or self-loathing? Spend some time talking to God about how you can think of others more than yourself. *(click to type)*

**REAL LIFE:**

Next time there is a simple decision that doesn't involve right or wrong (like which pizza toppings to order), try choosing someone else's interest. Notice how hard or easy that exercise was for you. Talk to a friend about that decision and how you're trying to have the humble mind of Christ these days.





It is time to take a step toward steak (keyword: step). A one year old doesn't go from milk to a five-course dinner overnight. What two or three things is it time for you to start adding? Remember: we're messy, and God is merciful! There is a time and place for milk. Start right where you are! If you don't have the basics down of Bible reading and prayer, start with those.

**Pray:**

*God, I know I don't always spend time with you like I should. There is always room to grow! Thank you for the wild adventure of following you. I have a lifetime to learn about you, and I'm ready to add more "solid food" into my spiritual diet.*

**RESPOND:**

Read 1 Corinthians 13:11. How can you take off the training wheels? What is one thing you can incorporate to your private worship to go deeper? *(click to type)*

**REAL LIFE:**

RADIATE has always offered Bible studies, and this year is no different. Maybe that could be your additional step toward depth with God. If you aren't comfortable or able to join us in person, let us know and we can have you there on Zoom with us! Middle School guys and girls meet Sundays at 4 PM and High School guys and girls meets Mondays at 7 PM. [Click here for all the details.](#)




# WEEK 1 | DAY 5

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 5](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 3:16-17](#), [6:19-20](#)

**REFLECT:**

Have you heard this phrase before: "Your body is a temple"?  Yes  No

To be honest, the first thing that comes to mind is an authority figure telling you this so you don't smoke, do drugs, overeat, etc. Which is good advice, (don't get us wrong!) but somewhat taken out of context. And there is also a time and place to talk about body issues and being confident in your body. But what does it matter? Honestly, if you just tell me, "your body is a temple", I'm thinking, ok so what does that mean? Who cares?



*Context is huge, my friends... so is repetition. Paul writes about our bodies being the temple of God TWICE in his letter, which means it's something to pay attention to. To understand what he means, it's important to understand the surrounding verses. He's talking about divisions in the church in chapter three and sexual purity in chapter six.*

The idea that the Holy Spirit dwells in your body is the easiest way to identify with God's closeness and influence. The Holy Spirit should be the closest and most influential thing in your life. The amazing thing is, when you understand that, you'll want to treat your body better. So you don't start with "Your body is a temple, so have more self-confidence." You start with, "The Holy Spirit of God chose to be close to you, so let him influence your decisions, including how you treat your body and see yourself."

In the Old Testament, the Temple was the dwelling place of God. In chapter three, Paul is talking about building foundations for spiritual maturity; and in that context says, really your body is the building... you don't have to go to the temple to meet with God. This is why we say the church is not a building, it's the people. My body is not God, but it is made holy (aka set apart) because of God. If you're a little lost, that's ok. This is a mysterious topic. We are messy. God is merciful.



Honor God with your body because you've been bought with a price... that price was Jesus's death on a cross. If you look to your own health, body, and temporary pleasures for meaning, you'll never be satisfied. Yes, you should take care of your body. But do it for God, not yourself.

**Pray:**

*Thank you for the body you've given me, God. I pray that I will see it like you see me, and that you will show me that I am loved by you. Show me how I can honor you with my body today.*

**RESPOND:**

Examples of Honoring God with your Body: Use your body to hike mountains to tell people in remote villages about Jesus. Use your body to hone your singing/instrument playing skills in worship. Use your body to be the best athlete that you can be while telling your teammates about Who you perform for. Use your body to discipline your mind to be the smartest at whatever you study. Now your turn: I can use my body to...

**REAL LIFE:**

Take care of your body. Eat well, exercise, and drink water. But make it a missional moment! Take a walk with a friend, share your work outs with each other, or buy matching water bottles. Tell your friend about Jesus through the topic of health: God has chosen to live in me, so I want to honor him with my body!



# WEEK 1 | DAY 6

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 6](#) Today's Spotlight: [1 Corinthians 6:12](#), [10:23](#)

**REFLECT:**

"All things are lawful" was a common phrase at the time. The Corinthians were using it to get away with whatever they wanted.

Can you think of something that you're technically allowed to do, but it's probably not a good idea? What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

"Not all things are beneficial" means that even things that no one actually said are wrong, may be wrong. Even if you're not told "no", it's not an automatic yes. Why? Those things don't always build you up and make you closer to God.


The fact is, there are gray areas in life. There is technically not a Bible verse about copying someone's vocab homework. There is technically not a Bible verse about watching an R-rated movie. (But the Bible has more to say about real-life stuff than you may think; just start by reading Proverbs or Googling "Bible verse about..." You may be surprised about things you don't realize are actually in Scripture. That's why it's so amazing - you really could study it forever and not get bored.)

You may not want to admit it, but it's been in the back of all of our minds. We are free from the law, saved by grace... I can ask God's forgiveness anyway. Or I'll just apologize when it's over and God will let it go. He forgets my sin.

All those things are true. We are not under the law (Romans 6:14). We are saved by grace through faith, not works (Ephesians 2:8-9). God freely forgives (Colossians 3:13). If we confess our sin, he will forgive us (1 John 1:9). He removes our sin from us (Psalm 103:12).

BEWARE! At this point, if the conclusion is, "Ok I'll go ahead and do this thing that I don't feel right about." We are using Scripture as a free license to do wrong ([1 Peter 2:16](#)). And Paul says in Romans that we shouldn't sin just so that we can get grace ([Romans 6:15](#)). Don't manipulate the Bible.





Another time in the Bible when Scripture was twisted: when Satan tempted Jesus ([Matthew 4:1-11](#)). He used Scripture to try to get him to break his fast and disobey God. You don't want to be lumped into the category where you're twisting Scripture to make it say whatever you want. It's scary that this is sort of easy to do. That's why reading it on your own is so important, so you can be confident in what it does and doesn't say!

**Pray:**

*God, forgive me for when I chose the wrong thing and tried to justify it. I pray that you would show me how to use your word wisely, not for whatever I want it to say. Teach me to listen to your voice, not my own desires, the next time I'm tempted.*

**RESPOND:**

The next time you're in a "gray area" trying to decide, use this checklist for godly decision making guidance:

- Does the Bible have anything to say about this subject?
- Have I prayed about it?
- Would I want someone to treat me this way?
- Is this something that could potentially become a bad habit?
- Does it negatively affect someone else?
- If \_\_\_\_\_ found out, would I be proud or embarrassed for them to follow my example?
- Does it hurt my witness?
- Will it honor God?
- Will it bring me closer to him?

**REAL LIFE:**

Have you put off sharing your faith long enough? It may even be easy to say, "I'm a behind-the-scenes kind of Christian" and spiritualize your not wanting to share the gospel. Go for it! You can do it! We are all called to make disciples, so now is your chance.



# WEEK 1 | DAY 7

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 7](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 7:32-35](#)

**REFLECT:**

*Look. We get it. You are most likely not thinking about marriage on a consistent basis. Maybe you have never thought about it at all. Maybe you have your "list" of things you're looking for in a mate. Maybe you're in a relationship right now. We understand that from 6th through 12th grade, there is an incredibly wide spectrum when it comes to this subject. So we want to be sensitive to that. However, it's never too early to talk about it!*

Godly marriage involves a man and a woman committed to God first and then each other second. Paul talks about marriage in the context of commitment to God.

What are some of your current commitments? \_\_\_\_\_

What's cool is that Paul says it's a good thing to be single. You might think he's dogging on married people, but that's not true. It's just that the more commitments there are on your list, the harder it is to really go all-in with each of them. Not many people can be AMAZING at three sports, photography, grades, staying healthy, keeping up with friends, AND a part-time job. (I'm sure someone reading this can do it, but it's hard for the average person.) There is only so much of you to go around.

Focus on that phrase, "your undivided devotion to the Lord". At the end of the day, you are not married, Student. You may be single (we're talking in the married sense, not in relationship status) for two more years, twenty more years, or the rest of your life. And guess what - God is good no matter what. The earlier you realize that being unmarried is a gift, the better; and if you do get the blessing of a godly marriage, that will be a gift too. For now, enjoy the minimal distractions, because they will only compound the older you get. And don't compromise. Save yourself from the scars that come with temporary pleasure.





# WEEK 2 | DAY 1

**Pray:**

*Thank you for the gift of singleness! You have allowed me to be in this season I'm in right now, and I pray that you would show me how to enjoy every minute of it! I pray that right now you would start teaching me what it looks like to have "undivided devotion to [you] Lord".*

**RESPOND:**

What would it look like for you to start praying for your future spouse?

**REAL LIFE:**

Have you ever liked someone, and said "but" when it comes to their faith? "She's a great girl, but I don't really know if she's a Christian." Not worth it! Are you tempted when it comes to the physical stuff? Run from sexual immorality. Are you in a relationship right now? Talk to your significant other about how you can both have "undivided devotion to the Lord" in the relationship.

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 8](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 9:22-23](#)

**REFLECT:**

Today's reading may seem a little all over the place. This is heavy stuff, and we are so proud of you that you've made it this far in your Daily Devos. We've covered some important concepts when it comes to living out our faith in the context of the church and in real life. Remember, the church is so messy, simply because it's made up of sinful people! But our God is merciful.

Remember the gray areas we talked about two days ago? We talked about when you're not sure whether something you're considering is wrong. Today we get to see the flip side of that. We have freedom in the Christian life to explore the creative ways we get to share the gospel.

What did Paul say in verse 22? "I have become \_\_\_\_\_ things to \_\_\_\_\_ people, that by \_\_\_\_\_ means I might save some."

Is Paul saying he would literally convert to Judaism in order to win a Jew to Jesus? Is he saying he would voluntarily become enslaved in order to share the gospel with a slave? Because if so, there are some crazy implications that we can take from that. Suddenly I get to do whatever I want, because wherever I go there will be people there that need Jesus. We just got done saying that if you're on the fence about something maybe being wrong, don't do it. Of course it's not the case that you should become a drunk to reach the party crowd. You probably know what we're about to say... Context is Key!

*"What makes more sense in the context here is that "the weak" refers to those Christians who cannot bring themselves to eat meat offered to idols (1 Corinthians 8:4-7). Such persons suffer unnecessary restrictions because their faith in God's grace and confidence that idols are imaginary is underdeveloped (1 Corinthians 8:8-11). Taken this way, it means Paul has opted out of eating such meat in order to win the weak. He not only saves them from sinfully violating their own convictions, he avoids offending them or giving them cause for spiritual confusion (1 Corinthians 8:12-13). He cooperates with their restrictive behaviors, to avoid placing any unnecessary barriers in their path."  
- From [Bibleref.com](#)*





If you, as a mature Christian, can do something within reason and within the limits of godly living as laid out in Scripture, that would help someone come to faith in Jesus, consider it. Here's basically what Paul did in personal terms: If you feel called to share the gospel to a friend that doesn't eat meat, give up eating meat for a time, so that they don't lose respect for you and you can gain some credibility in order to share Jesus.

Another example could be that you are not very tech-savvy, but the only way to talk to a friend about Jesus right now is online. Learn as much as you can in order to connect with them and share Jesus. Practically speaking, this is where finding common ground with someone before you share with them is key. It builds trust and respect FOR THE PURPOSE OF sharing the gospel. But remember, the kicker here is maintaining your godly values and closeness with Jesus. This is not a free pass to do whatever.

**Pray:**

*God right now, I pray that you would bring someone to my mind that you want me to share the gospel with. Who in my life doesn't know you in a personal relationship? How do you want to use me to be part of their story of turning to you? I pray for your peace and boldness as I commit to sharing with someone this week.*

**RESPOND:**

Verse sixteen in the New Living Translation says, "Yet preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn't preach the Good News!" Jeremiah 20:9 says, "But if I say I'll never mention the LORD or speak in his name, his word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones! I am worn out trying to hold it in! I can't do it!" On a scale of 1-10, 1 being not-so-much, 10 being on-fire, how passionate are you about the Lord and talking about his word?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

**REAL LIFE:**

Who did God put on your mind when you prayed? If you don't have a name that came to mind, pray for one. If you do, tell them about Jesus. You can find a gospel presentation in the James Daily Devos (Week 2 Day 2). You can also reach out to a RADIATE staff member for advice on how to do it.

# WEEK 2 | DAY 2

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 9](#)

**REFLECT:**

What are some qualities of a good athlete? \_\_\_\_\_

When you hear the word "discipline", you may think of getting a consequence when you're in trouble. This word in the original language involves beating his body, handling it roughly, and bringing it under submission. Yikes.

**Fun Fact:** The same word is found in Luke 18:5, when a persistent woman "wore out" a judge so that he would finally listen to her. Persistence is a common denominator. You don't work out once and get the body you want. You also don't pray once a week and get the closeness with God you desire.

The tension of freedom and discipline: the Messy church is "aimlessly beating the air"; Paul comes in announcing a Merciful God who says you are free within some loving boundaries. Winning a race takes purpose, hard work, preparation, and self-denial. And the same is true about the Christian life.

Remember the Quick Facts about Corinth on Day One? It mentions the Isthmian games, an original version of the Olympics that Corinth hosted every two years. They would have been familiar with athletic language and winning a physical tournament. He is saying we should have the same attitude toward our spiritual growth. No, this does not mean work as hard as you can to get to salvation, because remember this is for Christians. It's about understanding that the Christian life will require some effort to go deeper.

**Spiritual Disciplines are**...habits that are practiced with the intention of growing your spiritual faith and getting closer to Jesus; actions done solely for the purpose of growing in the likeness of Jesus; they are taught in Scripture and often modeled by Jesus himself.

**Examples:** fasting, confession, prayer, giving, hospitality, singing, meditating on Scripture, memorizing Scripture, thanksgiving, serving.

**Spiritual Disciplines are not**...an attitude like happiness or calmness; any pleasurable activity, like painting.





Read [1 Timothy 4:7-8](#). Remember the health/milk/steak conversation four days ago? Maybe it's time to discipline yourself for both bodily and godly health. The whole point of discipline is that it's not fun at first, but it becomes a habit that you enjoy over time, seeing the fruit of your labor.

# WEEK 2 | DAY 3

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 10](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 10:14](#)

**Pray:**  
*Father God, thank you for your kindness to give me a body that I can use for your service. Show me how I can train my body AND my heart today to be more useful for your kingdom.*

**Side Note:** *Verses 1-11 point out the fact that the Old Testament was basically written to instruct us. We were given examples in a lot of cases of what NOT to do, basically saying we can learn from the mistakes of the people that came before us. It can be harder to get "into" the Old Testament than the New Testament. But look at it from this perspective: it was written so we could learn more about God and how to be in a close relationship with him. When you read it that way, it's a lot more interesting! Try it. Don't be scared to dive in.*

**RESPOND:**

Which Spiritual Discipline listed above is something you can try today?

**REFLECT:**

Did you memorize the Ten Commandments as a kid? You can find them in Exodus 20. It's always good to have a refresher course on the things God asks of us, so you're welcome to go read that chapter and come back to us.

Exodus 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before me."  
1 Corinthians 10:14 "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."

What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of idolatry? \_\_\_\_\_

This seems like an easy one, because it's doubtful any of us have a little statue on the shelf in the kitchen that we light a candle for and pray to. But an "idol" can be anything that we put above God. Anything! You may say that Jesus comes before anything in your life, but take a step back and ask yourself if you are letting something else function as god in your life.

*"Could it be that desire for a good thing has become a bad thing because that desire has become a ruling thing?" - Paul David Tripp*

In other words: when a good thing becomes a god thing, it is now a bad thing. It could be a number of things like looks, the approval of others, money, etc. Even a GOOD thing. Listen - sports, school, jobs, even a loved one - these are all good and great things! And none of us are encouraging you to quit any of those things just because you may put too much weight on it.

**REAL LIFE:**

Take notice if you have a friend that seems to have that "aimless" feeling that Paul talks about. Maybe they are struggling to find meaning and purpose right now or feel lost in their faith. Reach out to that person and talk. Try to listen to and encourage your friend.





Ask yourselves these questions:

- Do I desire it more than God?
- Do I prioritize it before God?
- Does it control me?
- Do I seek validation from it more than from God?

Constantly ask yourself, am I letting anything other than Jesus function as a god in my life? Be brave to ask God, am I putting any other gods before You? He can not only show you what it is, but his strength can help you surrender anything in your life that you've prioritized over intimacy with him.

# WEEK 2 | DAY 4

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 11](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 11:17-34](#)

**REFLECT:**

**Q: What is the Lord's Supper?**

A: AKA "Communion". Representation of Jesus's body that he broke (like bread) and blood that he spilled (like wine) on the cross for us. It's a time to remember what he did for us. It began at the "Last Supper" (see [Matthew 26](#), [Mark 14](#), [Luke 22](#), or [John 13](#)), the night before he was killed on the cross.

"Do this in \_\_\_\_\_ of me": we participate to honor and remember him. Think about the cross (see [John 18-20](#)). Thank him. Serve him because of all he's done for you.

**Q: Why did Paul need to talk to the Corinthians about it?**

A: They were abusing it. In the early church, communion involved a meal, and as you can tell from your reading, people were using it as an excuse to over-indulge. Quite frankly, at the heart of it, they were forgetting the true meaning of the act of remembering Jesus, and they just turned it into a big party. It would be ok if they were celebrating Jesus at this party, but Jesus was less and less the focus.

**Q: How do I participate?**

A: "Examine himself".

1. Participate only if you have a relationship with Jesus.

**Side note: Do you know that you have a relationship with Jesus? Has there ever been a time that you've given your life to Jesus in complete surrender? If not, let's make sure today is the day you know for sure! See James Week 2 Day 2. We would love nothing more than to walk alongside you as you grapple with those questions. Please reach out to a RADIATE staff member or LifeGroup leader today.**

2. Have a mindset of confession ([1 John 1:9](#)), examination ([Psalm 139:23-24](#)), and making things right ([Matthew 5:23-24](#)). This is an invitation for inward work.

**Pray:**

*Am I putting anything before you, God? If so, will you please reveal it to me? Show me the thing(s) that are fine in and of themselves, but that I've let become more important in my life than they need to. I want to put you first, so it's worth it to me to learn to prioritize those things less. How can I have a healthy view of the good things in my life? How can I be thankful but have those things in the right position (below you)?*

**RESPOND:**

What do you seek from God? Do you seek those things from other stuff?

**REAL LIFE:**

Find a friend or mentor that you trust that is walking with Jesus. Confess your idol to them and ask them to help you figure out ways to hold you accountable to keep God first.



**Pray:**

*Thank you God for built-in moments of our lives where we can confess our sin, examine our hearts, and make things right with others. I pray that the next time I enter the Lord's Supper at church, please let that be my attitude. But thank you for the fact that it doesn't have to just be then. I can have an attitude of confession right now.*

**RESPOND:**

Confession is one of the spiritual disciplines, like we talked about two days ago, and it can be a practice that moves you from milk to steak. Let's practice it today! Read [Psalm 51](#). What will you confess before God?

**REAL LIFE:**

After we've confessed sin to God, sometimes we still need to come clean to the person we wronged (see [James 5:16](#)). Who is someone you've hurt recently? Go apologize to that person and ask for their forgiveness. Even if they do not respond well or in the way you may hope, sometimes it's important to just go and try to make things right no matter the reply (see [Romans 12:18](#)).

# WEEK 2 | DAY 5

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 12](#)

**REFLECT:**

This is a fun topic. It's important to start with some teaching. There is controversy around the topic of Spiritual Gifts, because people, like the Corinthians, have been misusing them for centuries. They used a gift of God for personal gain or to make themselves feel spiritual, but not truly for the right purpose.

Here's What Spiritual Gifts Are Not...

- Natural Talent: someone may say "she has such a natural artistic ability". That may be true, but that is not a Spiritual Gift, according to 1 Corinthians 12.
- Age-Group Ministry: someone else may say, "he is so good working with the kids at his church". That may also be true, yet not listed with the Spiritual Gifts.
- For Just Anyone: yes, this passage talks about "many", but it is talking about those in the Spirit, meaning Christians.

Here's What Spiritual Gifts Are...

- Supernaturally given to Christians
- From the Holy Spirit
- For the purpose of the gospel
- For the purpose of encouraging other believers
- For the good of others
- To point people to God

What are a few of the gifts Paul lists? \_\_\_\_\_

It's about how you serve with the gifts that the Holy Spirit has specifically given you, wherever that place of service may be. Our bodies are made up of many different parts that all work together to keep us alive and allow us to walk, talk, think, and do all the actions and activities of our everyday life. Like parts of the body, our spiritual gifts make us different parts of Christ's body - the Church (1 Cor 12:12). The Holy Spirit decides what and how much to give me. I'm responsible to put it to use. I can take no credit at all.

If you are a Christian, you have a unique role in God's family. Don't let anyone tell you that you don't. How can God use you? You have a place to serve that God wants you. All believers should not only worship him but serve as well. Think about the functions of the church, even during the pandemic, we have LifeGroup leaders, people organizing meals for the grieving, worshippers on stage, teachers, greeters at the door, parking ministry. And much hope!



# WEEK 2 | DAY 6

**Pray:**

*Thank you, God, for giving gifts to people who follow you. I pray that you would show me what my gifts are and show me how to use them for you. They are from you, and I want to use them for your purposes.*

**RESPOND:**

We've repeated the title of this series several times at this point: *Messy Church, Merciful God*. How might the church get messy if its people do not use their Spiritual Gifts? Why is it merciful that God gives us Spiritual Gifts?



**REAL LIFE:**

What are your spiritual gifts? Did you know that we have someone on our staff whose job is to help you figure out the best places you may want to serve in the church? Reach out to us for a basic spiritual gifts test and some information about how to put your gifts to work for God.

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 13-14](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 13:1-7, 13](#)

**REFLECT:**

Have you ever been talking with someone and you want to tell them, "your words don't match your face"? It's almost comical when someone is telling you they are excited, but they have dead eyes. Or to watch someone type the laughing/crying emoji with no expression on their face. Tell it to your face, people!

Have you experienced this?  Yes  No

Compare that with what Paul is saying at the beginning of this chapter. If you serve people, have the most faith of anyone, tell the whole world about Jesus, but you don't have love, it's useless! Your heart needs to match your actions. Why would anyone believe you when you tell them about the gospel but you don't love them?

God is kind to us to explain love, which is another cool thing about the Bible. Paul doesn't just tell us to love and move on. He explains how.

*This is not a comprehensive definition of love, as you'll find out when you understand the context a little more. Here are some verses for more reading on love: John 15:12, 13; Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 John 4:8, 16-20.*

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Remember the context! Paul is answering questions about the functions of the church. He is showing the Corinthians that they are not being patient and kind. They are being envious and boastful. In other words, they are not loving.





# WEEK 2 | DAY 7

**Pray:**

*God you are love. Teach me to love like you do.*

**RESPOND:**

If Paul is pointing out how loving/not loving the Corinthians are, let's ask ourselves the same question. How loving are you? Replace love with your name, and write it out here:

Is what you said true? What areas of love do you need to let God work on in you today?

**REAL LIFE:**

Let's put it into practice. Do you show the qualities found in 1 Corinthians 13 to the people that you say you love? Maybe you need to confess to a loved one that you have been resentful. Maybe you need to tell your best friend that you tend to insist on your own way. Talk to your loved ones about how you want to love them better.

**READ:** [1 Corinthians 15-16](#) **Today's Spotlight:** [1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 14](#)

**REFLECT:**

Obviously Paul is setting straight some confusion from the Corinthians about resurrection (that rhymed!). But in the middle of this instruction to the church, he straight up shares the gospel! We're so excited that you've made it this far in our journey through 1 Corinthians. What is the gospel, based on verse three and four?

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was \_\_\_\_\_, that he was \_\_\_\_\_ on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

***Why would Paul make the point in the next few verses that Jesus appeared to Cephas, the twelve, 500 brothers, James, the apostles, and finally himself? It may be obvious, but it's to prove that Jesus really rose! There were so many debates, and still are today, about whether Jesus really rose from the dead. Was it a hoax, was there a group-hallucination, was it a double? Paul makes a bold statement that Jesus not only rose, but he has eyewitnesses of his resurrected body. He says, "most of whom are still alive". In other words, go ask them! They are reliable sources that can back me up on this accurate, historical event.***

This is the good news. Do you trust him? Because if this didn't really happen, Paul basically says in verse fourteen that we're all wasting our time here.

In the last section of chapter fifteen, he refers to the second coming of Christ. Jesus is coming back for you if you are his. That is good news! That makes this world a whole lot less of a priority and the hard times you're going through a whole lot less despairing, because this won't last long (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). We had a DNOW speaker a few years ago that said, "If you're a Christian, this world is the closest to Hell you'll ever get. If you're not a Christian, this world is the closest to Heaven you'll ever get." Let that sink in a second... I'd much rather this life be the worst that I go through than the best.

If you are in Christ, we have every reason to rejoice. Jesus is coming back. Are you ready for him? If you're not one of his followers, what is holding you back from committing to him today?






**Pray:**

*I trust you, God. Thank you for your promise that you're coming back for your children. I pray that I'll work hard to share your gospel with others. Show me how I can honor you, the Merciful God, today in the mess.*

**RESPOND:**

[1 Corinthians 15:58](#) says, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." When was the last time you felt like you were doing something for God that was wasted?



**REAL LIFE:**

Even if you got no praise, no reward, and no response...it's worth it to obey God. Keep living for him and don't think that one single second is wasted. Now go and tell people you finished this series! Share it with your friends, family, and social media if you want them to study 1 Corinthians too.