



STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, June 14, 2026

Teaching: *Identity Crisis*

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:1–9

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Friday: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (The Bible), what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Our culture today is fixated on identity, and it offers countless places for us to find our identity. Whether it's in our careers, accomplishments, sexuality, popularity, or wealth—we're searching for an answer to the question, "Who am I"? In the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul addresses a struggling church, but he begins with their identity. For Paul, this is an essential starting point. He's going to address a lot of problems in this church such as division, sexual immorality, and significant conflict, but he begins with who they are in Christ. Just like the believers in Corinth 2,000 years ago, we too must understand who we are in Christ, so we are not shaped by the shifting values of our culture. Our identity is found in the unchanging reality of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. True identity is not found; it's received.

Background to the letter of 1 Corinthians:

In Acts 18, during Paul's second missionary journey, he traveled to Corinth after ministering in Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. He stayed in Corinth for 18 months, where he met Priscilla and Aquila and devoted himself to preaching the gospel. Many people came to faith, but Paul also faced significant opposition.

About three years later, while living in Ephesus, Paul wrote what we know as 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:8). This letter represents Paul's third recorded interaction with the Corinthian church. The first was his ministry among them in Acts 18. The second was a letter he wrote a few years later, which is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9 but has not been preserved. Then, after receiving a letter from the

CEDAR VALLEY

MEMORY VERSE:

1 Corinthians 1:2

I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

Corinthians delivered by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:15–17), Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in response.

Throughout the letter, Paul addresses both concerns he had heard about through reports and questions the Corinthians had asked him directly. As you read, notice phrases such as, “It is actually reported...” and “Now concerning the matters you wrote about...” These statements help us see that Paul is responding both to issues he learned about and to topics the Corinthians themselves raised.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: All insecurities and doubts aside, what's something you genuinely like about yourself?

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 together. What do we learn about God's character and actions from this passage?
2. In verse 1, Paul describes himself as “chosen” or “called” to be an apostle by the will of God. He also describes the Corinthians as “called” in verse 2. What does this tell us about how Paul understood his identity and ministry? What should it tell us about ourselves? (see note below)
3. According to 1:2, what is the basis of a believer's holiness? Why is that important?
4. What does 1:3 teach us about who is invited to be a part of God's family?
5. Looking at verses 4-9, what blessings and promises has God already given the Corinthians despite their struggles and shortcomings?
6. How might your daily life change this week if you intentionally lived from your identity as someone called by God rather than trying to earn your worth or prove yourself?

NOTES

Question 2—

“Chosen” = Greek word *kletos* means “called, invited, appointed by God”

DIGGING DEEPER

Here is some background on the city of Corinth that will help understand their culture as you read this letter:

Corinth's history can be broken into two parts: (1) A Greek city-state and (2) a Roman Colony.

1) As a Greek city-state, Corinth flourished before and after the golden age of Athens (5th century BC). But it eventually came into conflict with Rome. When Rome was expanding their empire after Alexander the Great (140-150BC), Rome defeated Corinth and killed all the men in 146BC. Women and Children were sold into slavery, and the city was completely destroyed and deserted for 100 years.

2) Julius Caesar recolonized Corinth around 44 BC. It was settled by plebians and freedmen and became a very important travel hub. After it was destroyed, it was rebuilt incredibly quickly, and there were tons of people flocking to Corinth to make something of themselves. Corinth was loyal to Rome, and it had wealthy people and also lower-class people who could try to gain wealth through trades. There were many temples to worship other gods and with that came temple prostitution. Old Corinth and New Corinth had a Greek word *korinthiazō* “to corinthianize” – meaning to commit sexual immorality.

Paul's Corinth was like New York City, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world.

—paraphrased from Dr. Gordon Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*.