

## SLOW FOOD: 1 CORINTHIANS (SEL) (37 STUDIES)

**Introduction.** Paul's first visit to Corinth, a major seaport city in Achaëa (southern Greece), is recorded in Acts 18:1-18 and can be dated to c.AD 50-52, about twenty years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. He subsequently moved to Ephesus, where in c.AD 53-55 he wrote a series of letters, including 1 Corinthians, trying (not completely successfully) to deal with issues which were troubling the church in Corinth. While some of these issues are particular to this one church, others (e.g. the dangers of pride in spiritual gifting and knowledge, the supreme value of self-giving love and the meaning and importance of the resurrection) will refresh and challenge any Christian fellowship anywhere. This sequence of studies therefore concentrates on chapters 1-4, 13 and 15. Where 'teaching' is concerned, Paul's primary thoughts are for the spiritual growth of his family of believers; with allowance for context, we may find much of it applicable to our role as teachers in a broad educational sense, whether in the classroom or lecture-room, or other place of work, or in a Christian fellowship, or within the home.

Useful commentaries include: David Prior *The Message of 1 Corinthians* (BST 1985); Tom Wright *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians* (SPCK 2003); Gordon Fee *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Eerdmans rev ed 2014). A 'Slow Paul' version of these chapters is available on this website, with the text of *The New International Version* (rev ed 2011).

Slow Food studies, which are suitable for busy teachers and others, break down a sequence of Scripture into short manageable sections with one leading question on each section. They are not designed, though they may be adapted, for detailed expository analysis. Cross-references (listed in Biblical order, and normally restricted to three) chase up ideas in the section. The first person singular is normally used, in order to encourage personal application; for group study it can be pluralised. Studies may be combined as desired.

### CHAPTERS 1-4: WISDOM HUMAN AND DIVINE

- 1:1-3** If I live 'in Corinth' and believe in Jesus Christ, what distinctive attributes do I have which might mark me out from most of the other members of my society? *2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Eph 2:11-22.*
- 1:4-9** 'Grateful for grace.' How does God's gift of Jesus affect my past, my present and my future? *Rom 8:30; 1 Cor 15:10; Phil 3:20.*

- 1:10-17** What has caused the in-fighting in the church at Corinth? Am I guilty of similar attitudes? *Eph 4:1-16.*
- 1:18-25** Whatever I might be reading or studying at the moment, has it replaced the cross as my central source of wisdom and spiritual strength? *Gal 6:14-15; Col 2:6-15.*
- 1:26-31** We naturally celebrate human achievements – but does that lead us to undervalue apparent losers and no-hopers? *1 Sam 16:7; Prov 3:5-10; Zech 4:6-10.*
- 2:1-5** What gifts of human wisdom or oratory has God given me? What are their limitations? *Jn 6:63; Acts 10:39b-44; 1 Th 1:5.*
- 2:6-10a** How does the cross of Christ turn the world's assumptions upside down? *Ps 22:6-8, 27-28; Isa 52:13-15; Jn 18:36.*
- 2:10b-16** What part does the Spirit play in my understanding and teaching of the Bible? *Acts 8:26-40.*
- 3:1-4** What is the distinction between 'milk' and 'solid food', and how might I apply this to my teaching? *Heb 5:11-6:2; 1 Pet 2:1-3.*
- 3:5-9** What is the secret of growth? How relevant is this to enterprises to which I am committed? *Isa 55:10-13; Ezek 36:37; Mk 4:26-29; Jn 4:35-38.*
- 3:10-15** How can I make sure that my life-work is fireproof? *Mal 3:3; Mt 13:36-43; 1 Pet 1:6-7.*
- 3:16-17** How much of my life do I allow the Lord to inhabit? *Isa 57:15; 1 Cor 6:19-20; 1 Pet 2:4-5.*
- 3:18-20** How might I be tempted to value human insights above God's revealed wisdom? *Ps 94:8-11; Mk 7:5-9; Rom 11:33-36.*
- 3:21-23** Am I too narrow-minded in my preferences? *Mk 9:38-41; Eph 1:17-22.*
- 4:1-5** Who am I working for? *Lk 12:42-44; Rom 14:4; 1 Tim 4:13-16.*
- 4:6-7** Do I pride myself on the originality of my teaching? *1 Chr 29:14; Jn 5:39-44; 1 Pet 4:10-11.*

**4:8-13** Should I be experiencing continual victory in Christ's service? *2 Cor 1:8; 2:14; 4:7-12; 12:7-10.*

**4:14-21** Does the way I exercise my authority commend the gospel of love? *2 Cor 12:15; Eph 6:4; 1 Th 2:7-12.*

### CHAPTER 13: THE KING'S HIGHWAY

**12:31b-13:3** Am I so super-spiritual that I don't really care about the ordinary needs of other people around me? *Isa 58:1-12; Mk 7:11-13; Jas 1:26-27.*

**13:4-7** (A) Looking at the life Jesus lived on earth, how did he manifest this kind of love? *Mt 26:47-50; Lk 9:51-56; Jn 8:3-11; Acts 10:38.*

**13:4-7** (B) Looking at the life I am now living on earth, where am I falling short of these qualities of love? *Phil 2:19-21; 1 Th 4:9-10; Jas 2:1-6a; 1 Jn 3:16-18.*

**13:8-10** What gifts are particularly prized in my community or fellowship? How important are they? *Song 8:6-7; Mic 6:8; Rom 12:3-13.*

**13:11-12** How much am I supposed to understand? *Isa 40:27-31; Jer 9:23-24; Jn 13:7.*

**13:13-14:1a** If I am convinced that love is the one supremely desirable thing, what difference will that make to me today? *Col 3:12-14; 2 Pet 1:3-11; 1 Jn 2:9-11.*

### CHAPTER 15: THE RESURRECTION PRINCIPLE

**15:1-2** How central is Christ's resurrection to the 'gospel' I am currently passing on? *Acts 2:24-32, 3:15, 4:2, 10, 33, 5:30, 10:40, 13:30-37, 17:31 etc.*

**15:3-4** What pre-echoes of Christ's death and resurrection could I point to in the Old Testament? *Gen 22:13; Isa 53:10-11; Jon 1:17/Mt 12:40.*

**15:5-7** As I revisit some of the well-known stories of Jesus'

appearances on the first Easter Day and beyond, how credible do I find them? *Mt 28:16-20; Lk 24:34; Jn 20:11-18, 24-29; Acts 1:3.*

**15:8-11** How much credit can I claim for the work I have done for Christ? *Mt 25:21; 1 Cor 4:7; Eph 2:1-10.*

**15:12-19** How would it affect me today if Christ's resurrection were shown conclusively to be a total myth? *Jn 20:30-31; Rom 4:25; 1 Th 4:13-14.*

**15:20-24** In what sense is Christ's resurrection the guarantee of my own? *Job 19:25-27; Isa 26:9; Rom 8:11.*

**15:25-28** How great is the Lord Jesus Christ? *Ps 110:1; Jn 5:18-27; Phil 2:9-11.*

**15:29-34** How does the hope of resurrection affect my attitude (a) to personal danger (b) to worldly behaviour? *Lk 12:19; Rom 8:35-39; 1 Cor 6:12-14.*

**15:35-41** If I am experiencing 'death' in some shape or form in the present, what is there to encourage me? *Ps 130; Jn 12:24-26; 2 Cor 1:9-10; Heb 12:4, 11.*

**15:42-49** Is the way I am behaving right now 'earthly' or 'heavenly'? If so, what am I going to do about it? *2 Cor 3:17-18; Gal 5:16-17; Col 3:10.*

**15:50-57** (A) What kind of victory has been won by Christ? *Rom 7:24-25; 2 Tim 1:10; Rev 3:21-22; 5:9-10.*

**15:50-57** (B) If I have been 'born again', what further transformation is there for me to look forward to? *2 Cor 5:1-4; Phil 3:21; 1 Pet 1:3-5.*

**15:58** Why not just give up? *Ps 126:5-6; Jn 15:8; Gal 6:9; Heb 10:35-36.*