

Bible Study

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together everywhere

Together with all those
everywhere who call
on the name of our
Lord Jesus Christ
1 Corinthians 1:2

Theme Verse: To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, **together** with all those **everywhere** who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ — their Lord and ours.” 1 Corinthians 1:2 (NIV)



Background: If you look at a map, you will see that Corinth was made for greatness. Corinth is described as: “a city-state (polis) on the Isthmus of Corinth, the narrow stretch of land that joins the Peloponnese to the mainland of Greece, roughly halfway between Athens and Sparta.” Its location made it a great commercial city that was populous, busy, growing and wealthy.

While Corinthians were known for their wealth and luxury, they also had a reputation for their evil living. They pursued every pleasure. The very name “Corinth” was synonymous with debauchery, drunkenness and idolatry all over the civilized world. The term “korinthiazomai” was well known in the Roman Empire, and it meant literally “to live like a Corinthian.” But everyone knew it really meant “to be sexually out of control.”

The city flourished until 146 BC when the Romans captured Corinth and it fell to ruins. By 46 BC Julius Caesar had rebuilt the city bringing a new wealth, commercialism and a very diverse population. In the days of Paul, there were Roman veterans who were granted land after their service to Caesar, merchants who came back when the city was back to its former glory, Jews who were taking advantage of commercial opportunities and a small group of people from the east.

It is to this context that Paul arrives. While there were many challenges, Paul did some of his greatest work in Corinth. Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months, longer than any other place with the exception of Ephesus.

Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians because he heard they had become a divided church — a church that instead of being united in Christ, had split into sects and parties who attached themselves to various leaders and teachers. Paul said they thought too much about human wisdom and knowledge and too little about the grace of God. They were immature and no better than babies.

Read Acts 18:1-17: Paul’s time in Corinth

God calls us to be a church and a people, serving in places that may be challenging but doing His work together, everywhere.



Break It Down:

Discuss the following phrases.

“To the church of God in Corinth”

Paul starts this letter addressed to the church of God.

- Why do you think he addresses this to the church of God instead of the church of Corinth?
 - ◇ *He was emphasizing that while they were an individual local church, more importantly they were a part of the one church of God.*
 - ◇ *To Paul the church was the church of God. Paul thought of the church in ways that unite us instead of the local differences which divide us.*
- What problems was the church experiencing that Paul was trying to address?
 - ◇ *He is reminding them the church is from God and not from an individual. The Corinthian church was divided because people were following different teachers in the church instead of God. Paul is trying to focus them back on God.*

“to those sanctified in Christ Jesus”

Sanctification — the definition according to the *Free Methodist Church Book of Discipline*:

“Sanctification is that saving work of God beginning with new life in Christ whereby the Holy Spirit renews His people after the likeness of God, changing them through crisis and process, from one degree of glory to another, and conforming them to the image of Christ.

“As believers surrender to God in faith and die to self through full consecration, the Holy Spirit fills them with love and purifies them from sin. This sanctifying relationship with God remedies the divided mind, redirects the heart to God, and empowers believers to please and serve God in their daily lives.

“Thus, God sets His people free to love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love their neighbor as themselves.”

In a spiritual sense it means we are to be holy or made holy:

- to be separate or set apart for God
- set apart for holy use

Sanctification comes through Christ. It is not possible to accomplish on our own.

“called to be his holy people”

- a person who is devoted to the service of God
- a person belonging to God
- a person who is different from others
- a person belonging to God and set apart for His service

- What does it look like to be a holy people?
- How do we live so that we show the world we belong to God?
- What makes us different than the rest of the world?

“together with all those everywhere”

- We are called into a community that has no boundaries.
- We need to look beyond our own circle of friends and see ourselves as a part of the church of God.
- We are to be united with the global church.

“who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ — their Lord and ours:”

- In the first 10 verses of this chapter, Paul says “Jesus Christ” at least 10 times. Why does he do this?
 - ◇ *He is dealing with a difficult situation. He is writing to a church that is divided and following people instead of Christ. He reminds them of who they are to follow by turning them back to Christ over and over.*
 - ◇ *He reminds them Christ is the Lord of all men not just a certain group or a certain church.*



Bring It Home:

One Church

We tend to be people who belong to one local church.

- How can we be “The church of God?”
- What would this look like?
- Do we allow people in the church to distract us from actually doing God’s work?
- Do we get too focused on the people of our church?
- How can we bring unity to the local church we belong to?
- How can we bring unity to the church at large?
- How do we, as a local church, small group or individuals participate in the global church?

One Call

Our call is to be holy.

- What if we all, together, lived as a holy people?
- What would it look like if we were to actually live as people who are set apart for Christ?
- When we live as people set apart, how would that impact our role in the world?

One Commitment

Everyone together:

- ◇ Our commitment should be to reach the world, to show the world Christ, to show our communities Christ.
- ◇ God wants to take us as individuals to work together to change the world.

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- ◇ Being united is when we can take different people, gifts, talents, personalities and cultures, and blend them into a beautiful picture.
- ◇ We are called to work together for the benefit of others.

- What do you do to work together with the body of Christ?
- What do you do to reach out to the people around you?
- What do you do to reach your community?
- How do you reach people who are not the same as you?
- What are some practical ways you can bring together a group of people who have little in common?
- How can you reach out beyond the walls of your home or church?
- How can you reach out beyond the U.S.?



List some practical steps you need to take to become a person who works together with others to make a difference for Christ:

*some of the background information came from *The Letters to the Corinthians* commentary by William Barclay

Barclay, William. *The Letters to the Corinthians*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975. Print.