

**Assemblies of God Theological Seminary**  
**November 11—December 16, 2004**

**BNTD 533 – Studies in Paul: 1 Corinthians**

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Fall Semester 2004

**Course Syllabus**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A study in the English text of 1 Corinthians, one of the universally acknowledged first century letters of the Apostle Paul. Attention will be given to historical and cultural backgrounds as well as the major theological and ethical themes of the book.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES--GLOBAL**

Upon completion of this course, the student should have demonstrated in papers, classroom discussions and presentations, and examination/s accomplishment of the following global domain objectives:

***Knowledge***

1. A preliminary understanding of the formative influences that came to bear on the Apostle Paul and are significant for understanding his writing in general and the first Corinthian letter in particular.
2. An understanding of the historical and cultural backgrounds of Corinthian life during the period reflected in 1 Corinthians.
3. An ability to outline from memory the basic contents and ideas of the letter.
4. A thorough grasp of the major theological and ethical issues reflected in the letter.

***Attitude***

1. A demonstrated appreciation of the nature of the book as sacred Scripture.
2. A willingness to lay aside previous biases and understand the book on its own terms.
3. A desire to be personally shaped by the message of the book..
4. A desire to explicate the universal truths of the book in contemporary ministry and church life.

***Skill***

1. The ability to critique modern life in terms of the ancient biblical message.
2. The ability to bring the ethical insights of the letter to bear on contemporary issues.
3. The ability to bring the theology of the letter to bear on modern formulations of similar

theological questions.

## TEXTBOOKS

### **Required**

*The Bible* (Modern version as NIV, NASB, NKJV, NRSV, ESV, *et al.*)

Witherington, Ben III. *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids/Carlisle, Cumbria: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 1995.

[CCC]

Grant, Robert M. *Paul in the Roman World: The Conflict at Corinth*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001. [RPW]

### **Recommended**

Fee, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1 - Paul the Apostle: Christian, Jewish, and Roman in Pagan Corinth—Chapters 1:1-3; 4, 9.

Unit 2 - The Corinthian Christians: Charismatic and Carnal—Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

Unit 3 - Marriage, Idol Feasts, and Christian Communion—Chapters 8, 10, 11

Unit 4 - Charismatic Gifts and Worship Among the Corinthians—Chapters 12-14

Unit 5 - The Resurrection of Christ and His People—Chapter 15-16

## METHODOLOGY

Unit Outline	Assignments	Session Outlines
<p><b>Unit 1 – Paul the Apostle in Pagan Corinth</b></p>	<p><b>Read:</b> 1 Cor chs 1:1-3, 4, 9; PRW, 3-107; CCC, 1-48, 71-81, 136-150 203-216.  <b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe what we know of Paul’s early life.</li> <li>2. Discuss what is distinctive about each of Paul’s three worlds: Christian, Jewish, Roman?</li> <li>3. Explore the historical and cultural backgrounds of Corinth for relevance to interpretation of the letter.</li> <li>4. Assess what may be learned of the apostolic office by reviewing Paul’s writings in the letter?</li> <li>5. Explore the implications of each of the above for contemporary Christianity.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Paul: Early Life and Conversion</li> <li>2. Christian, Jew, and Roman</li> <li>3. Corinth: Historical and Cultural Backgrounds</li> <li>4. Paul in Corinth</li> <li>5. Apostles of Christ, ch 4, 9</li> </ol>
<p><b>Unit 2 – The Corinthian Christians: Charismatic and Carnal</b></p>	<p><b>Read:</b> 1 Cor chs 1,2,3,5,6; PRW, 107-114; CCC, 82-135; 151-169.  <b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe both the nature of the Corinthian divisions and their ethical implications.</li> <li>2. Determine the nature of the Gospel in Paul’s understanding.</li> <li>3. Assess the nature of wisdom, both human and divine, in Paul’s thinking.</li> <li>4. Describe the sexual immorality as referenced in the letter against Corinthian backgrounds and assess its Christian ethical implications.</li> <li>5. Explain what may be known about Corinthian Christian lawsuits against Corinthian practice.</li> <li>6. Explore the implication of each of the above for contemporary Christianity.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Scandal of Division</li> <li>2. The Power of the Gospel</li> <li>3. Wisdom: Worldly &amp; Spiritual</li> <li>4. Sexual Immorality</li> <li>5. Lawsuits Among Believers</li> </ol>
<p><b>Unit 3 – Marriage, Idol Feasts, and Christian Communion</b></p>	<p><b>Read:</b> 1 Cor chs 7, 8,10,11; PRW, 115-133; CCC, 170-202, 217-252.  <b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore marriage practices in the Corinthian church and Paul’s concerns and counsel regarding marriage.</li> <li>2. Research idolatry in Corinth and use it to better explain the temptations of idol worship/feasts.</li> <li>3. Explain the problems in Eucharistic practice at Corinth and the theological correctives Paul attempted to enjoin.</li> <li>4. Explore the implications of each of the above for contemporary Christianity.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marriage in the Corinthian Church</li> <li>2. The Temptation of Idol Feasts</li> <li>3. The Nature of the Lord’s Table</li> </ol>
<p><b>Unit 4 – Charismatic Gifts and Worship Among the Corinthians</b></p>	<p><b>Read:</b> 1 Cor chs 12-14; CCC, 253-290.  <b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draw out Paul’s teaching about the Body of Christ.</li> <li>2. Explain the importance of the “Love Chapter (13),” especially in context.</li> <li>3. Explore the nature of spiritual gifts.</li> <li>4. Articulate the function and abuse of spiritual gifts in worship at Corinth.</li> <li>5. Articulate the correctives that Paul attempted to impose.</li> <li>6. Set forth the implications of each of the above for contemporary Christianity.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Body of Christ</li> <li>2. The Primacy of Love</li> <li>3. Importance of Spiritual Gifts</li> <li>4. Charismatic Worship at Corinth</li> </ol>
<p><b>Unit 5 – The Resurrection of Christ and His People</b></p>	<p><b>Read:</b> 1 Cor ch 15,16; CCC, 291-324.  <b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Study the place of the resurrection in Paul’s recitation of the cardinal elements of the Gospel.</li> <li>2. Explain the connection between the resurrection of Christ and that of His people</li> <li>3. Note the nature and significance of the resurrection body.</li> <li>4. Discuss the personal and spiritual elements in the conclusion of the letter.</li> <li>5. Set forth the implications of each of the above for contemporary</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Centrality of the Resurrection</li> <li>2. Christ’s Resurrection—and His Peoples’</li> <li>3. The Resurrection Body</li> <li>4. Conclusion and</li> </ol>

This course will utilize lectures by the professor, audio-visual presentations, dialogue between the professor and students, and seminar-type presentations and critiques by the students.

## REQUIREMENTS

1. Bible Content Examination. Each student must sustain an examination over the content of 1 Corinthians that focuses largely on identifying subject matter by chapter. There will be a pre-test (non-graded) in the first session and a post-test (graded) in the last (using the same examination) to assist in assessing the student's learning and achievement of the class objectives.
2. Reading Report. Each student must submit a reading report at the end of the course that logs all class reading by author, book, date, time, and so forth (excluding the Bible text). A reading report form will be provided on the first day of class.
3. Presentation Reports. Each student will prepare a written paper, two to three (2-3) double-spaced pages in length, as a basis for discussion or a possible oral report (depending on the class size and quality of the papers) to one or more sessions of the class beginning with Unit 2. Topics from which students may chose may be identified from the unit objectives and assignments, from additional topics provided by the professor, or from special textual interests negotiated by the student. Each report must close with a brief, well-reasoned application to contemporary Christian life where application is possible and appropriate. Presentation papers are due at the end of each class period. Topics must be agreed upon with the professor one week in advance while in attendance at a class session so that the professor may weave them into the lesson plan for each succeeding session if appropriate. **Papers are due at the end of each class session (2-5).**
4. Final Paper. One of the presentation reports must be expanded into a research paper of not less than 10 pages, employing not less than 10 sources, and presented in standard Turabian form. **Due at beginning of last class session.**
5. Quizzes. The professor may administer up to 4 quizzes at the end of the class period covering information discussed in the class. Advance completion of assigned readings will be significant in preparation for and understanding of class presentations.

### ***Possible Presentation Report Topics:***

In addition to (or expanding upon) the topics that may be derived from the outline and objectives of Units 2 – 5, the student may wish to consider the following for a presentation report:

#### **Unit 2**

The role of other prominent Christian teachers in the Corinthian church.

The Greek philosophical schools and their potential influence in Corinth.

A sociological examination of the Corinthian church.

Paul's understanding of wisdom.

#### ***Possible Presentation Report Topics, cont'd:***

#### **Unit 2, cont'd**

The role of the Holy Spirit in Christian experience as reflected in chapter 2.  
 Paul's usage of the "temple" metaphor.  
 An examination of the case of incest in chapter 5 and Paul's judgment about it.  
 An examination of the "lawsuits" of chapter 6.  
 The nature of sexual immorality in chapter 6.

### Unit 3

An examination of "spiritual marriage" as a possible practice in chapter 7.  
 An examination of the varied interpretations of the "virgins" in 7:25ff.  
 The implications of 7:12ff. for divorce in the case of desertion by a spouse.  
 Corinthian practices regarding feasts in idol temples.  
 The problem of meat offered to idols.  
 Responsibility toward the weaker member in eating food sacrificed to idols.

### Unit 4

The role of women in the Corinthian church as reflected in chapter 11.  
 Male and female roles as reflected in chapter 11.  
 An ethical and sociological analysis of the problem at the Lord's table.  
 An analysis of each of the so-called nine gifts of 12:8-10.  
 An exposition of Paul's body motif in 12:12ff.  
 The role of chapter 13 in its setting between chapters 12 and 14.  
 An examination of Corinthian worship practices in chapter 14.  
 Paul's understanding of glossolalia and the limits imposed on its practice.  
 The nature of prophecy and the guidelines imposed in chapter 14.

### Unit 5

The centrality of the resurrection in the early church's *kerygma* as seen in chapter 15.  
 The significance of Christ's resurrection for that of believers.  
 The eschatology reflected in chapter 15.  
 The nature of the resurrection body.  
 An evaluation of the personal information in chapter 16.

## GRADING

Bible Content Examination	25%
Quizzes	25%
Presentation Reports	25%
Final Paper	25%
[Participation	10%]

Prompt and timely completion of assignments is essential to the degree completion program. Late work will be accepted only by pre-arrangement with the professor and only on sufficient grounds. Late work submitted beyond agreed-upon dates, if accepted, may be penalized by one letter grade

per week late. The professor reserves the right to allocate 10% of the grade for participation,

raising or lowering for significant lapses or contributions. Grades will be averaged using the following scale: F=1; D-=2; D=3; D+=4; C-=5; C=6; C+=7; B-=8; B=9; B+=10; A-=11; A=12.

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- Goulder, Michael D. *Paul and the Competing Mission in Corinth*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001.
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- “Resurrection”
- “Sexuality, Sexual Ethics”
- “Signs, Wonders, Miracles”
- “Strong and Weak”
- “Travel in the Roman World”

**SPECIFIC DATA:** Prepared by Edgar R. Lee, June 2004.