

1 and 2 Corinthians

1. *Authorship:* The 1 Corinthians letter acknowledges Paul as the author by both the letter itself (1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 16:21) and by the early church fathers. Clement of Rome attested to Paul being the author as early as A.D. 96. The second letter also attests to Paul's authorship (2 Corinthians 1:1; 10:1). The letter is written in his style and it contains more autobiographical material than any of his other writings.

2. *Background:* Paul spent 18 months in the city of Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-18). In this city Paul met his two close friends Aquila and Priscilla. 1 Corinthians was written from Ephesus when Paul was on his third missionary journey. This letter was triggered by a letter from the Corinthians which raised a number of questions which needed to be answered. The second letter to the Corinthians was also written on Paul's third missionary journey a few months after 1 Corinthians. After 1 Corinthians was written and sent, Paul traveled to Macedonia (Acts 20:1-2) where he met Titus who was returning from Corinth. Titus brought Paul good news and bad news about the situation in Corinth. On the one hand, the Corinthians had responded positively to the directions that Paul had given them in the first letter. The bad news was that some in Corinth were attacking Paul's credentials as an Apostle. From Macedonia Paul wrote this second letter to the Corinthians.

3. *Main Characters in the letters:* Sosthenes was with Paul when he wrote 1 Corinthians. Some of the leading Christians in Corinth were Chloe, Stephanas, Crispus, Gaius, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. In 2 Corinthians Titus is mentioned ten times in the book. Timothy, another key associate of Paul, is mentioned twice.

4. *Key theme:* In 1 and 2 Corinthians we see Paul's true shepherd's heart. There were serious problems of Christian conduct in the church brought on by worldly thinking and attitudes, and false teachers. He encourages the continuing development of holiness in the life of each Christian.

5. A Brief Outline of 1 and 2 Corinthians:

Chapters

1 Cor. 1-4	Divisions in the church
5-14	Moral and ethical problems and instruction on marriage and public worship
15-16	Instruction on the Resurrection and personal matters
2 Cor. 1-7	Paul defending his conduct and apostleship
8-9	Generous giving
10-13	Paul's continued defense of his apostolic authority

5. August Reading Guide

Week of Jul 31-Aug 6	1 Corinthians 1-8
Week of Aug 7-13	1 Corinthians 9-16
Week of Aug 14-20	2 Corinthians 1-7
Week of Aug 21-27	2 Corinthians 8-13