

TAKING THE **WHOLE WORD** TO THE **WHOLE WORLD**

NONE OF US HAVE
ANYTHING TO BRAG ABOUT
WHEN IT COMES TO
OUR SALVATION.

*Jesus gets all
the credit.*

DR. J. VERNON MCGEE



THRU the **BIBLE**



WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

A NEW MESSAGE FOR AN ANCIENT CITY

Adapted from Dr. J. Vernon McGee



This article is an excerpt from
1 Corinthians Bible Companion.
Download the full digital booklet [here](#).

Traveling back to the world of ancient Corinth means you need to engage your imagination. You will see the sights and hear the sounds of a bustling eastern European city. Known for its sparkling culture and prominence in the world of trade, Corinth had become the envy of the Roman world when Paul wrote this letter.

Yet, because of all that, the Corinthian Christians had fallen too much in love with the world. They pursued sinful activities and had little regard for spiritual things, except for a fascination with idols and gods. Just like people today, the Christians at Corinth were trading their devotion to Jesus for sexual satisfaction.



Sound familiar? It should. Fast-forward about two thousand years. It's still hard to be "in the world but not of it" (1 John 2:15). But studying the letter to a group of Christians who needed to grow up in the Lord will help you redirect your priorities and turn the focus of your life away from satisfying selfish desires back to a devotion to Jesus Christ.

Likely written somewhere around 55 A.D., Paul's letter to the Corinthian church carries themes you'd expect in a letter from a concerned pastor to believers living in the sin capital of the world. Located on a narrow stretch of land between Peloponnesus and the mainland, Corinth hummed with dazzling commerce, lively entertainment options, lots of sex, and all manner of decadent possibilities imaginable. It must have been an incredibly hard world to live in and remain clean before the Lord.

Greeks, Jews, and people from all over the known world made up a diverse mix of sailors, merchants, adventurers, and refugees all converging on the alluring Roman province.

Yet, like in many dark corners of the world today, the gospel made a difference. People had come to know Jesus through Paul's preaching and teaching over the years. A church was born and started to grow right smack in the middle of all of Corinth's wildness. Still, Christianity struggled to penetrate the thick walls of that pagan culture. The attraction of doing anything and everything to satisfy personal desires and fulfill very sinful appetites began to take away the original impact of the message of Jesus on the Corinthian Christians' lives. Corinth was a tough place to be a Christian.

Religion itself was put to questionable uses. The Corinthians built a huge temple for the Greek goddess Aphrodite. In it were a thousand priestesses (prostitutes) who ministered to a base form of idol worship. Plain and simple, sex was religion in Corinth.

Perhaps that’s why Paul declared with urgency, “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Into the darkness of Corinth, Paul brought the shining light of the gospel. He founded a church there and later wrote two letters (epistles) to the congregation. Paul came to Corinth on his second missionary journey and near the end of his third journey (Acts 18:1-18). He also met who would become two of his closest friends, Aquila and Priscilla, in Corinth. Good things happen in dark places when Jesus is the focus.

On Paul’s third journey, he enjoyed a long stay in Ephesus. During that time, he became aware of some of the problems that had cropped up in Corinth. Paul wrote them to help correct some of their errors in doctrine and they, in turn, wrote to Paul asking more questions. Paul answered them and responded to more reports that were brought to him. We don’t have that first letter Paul wrote to Corinth. But the follow up letter to the Corinthians is what has come to be known as 1 Corinthians—this letter answers some tough questions about the Christian life. Aren’t you thankful the Lord is up for answering your questions? We all have questions from time to time, and God faithfully responds when we ask.

God invites those in Christ into an intimate “fellowship” with Him. That word “fellowship” is the Greek word *koinonia*, which means “being together” as one. To have *koinonia* is to enjoy an intimate relationship to God through Christ.

The Corinthians had many questions and certainly struggled to keep their spiritual footing. But they, like us, received from Paul the encouraging reminder that, despite the struggle, Jesus keeps His children in perfect standing before God.

FOR I DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW
ANYTHING AMONG YOU EXCEPT
Jesus Christ
AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:2

What a way to start a letter!

Take a moment to pause and offer praise to Jesus. What a great reminder of God's faithfulness to bring us salvation like this through His Son.

Now in his letter, Paul got right to the point. The Corinthians weren't getting along. That happens when people attempt to live together but do so focused on themselves. Divisions cause so much friction and pain.

The word for "divisions" is *schisma*. It means "fractures, or splinters." There should be none of that among God's people. Even in the most loving congregations, people are tempted to form cliques, argue over petty disagreements, and align themselves with important people rather than with Christ. Instead, God wants Christians to embrace the message of Jesus as the sole truth that keeps everyone together.

Since Christ is one Person, He is not divided. There is no division in Him so we all ought to share in that unity which comes from the Spirit. Even baptism, for Paul, was not that significant. In fact, he struggled to recall whom he had baptized at Corinth. Anything that draws attention away from Jesus has the potential to cause unnecessary and often destructive divisions in the church.

By focusing on Jesus, we guard against fostering harmful divisions. That is such an important principle for Christians to embrace.

Discussion Questions

FROM THE BIBLE COMPANION

- 1 **Does the description of the city of Corinth sound similar to where you live? Why or why not?**
- 2 **In what ways did living in a city like Corinth make it difficult to be a Christian?**
- 3 **What does it tell us about God that He is faithful to answer our questions?**
- 4 **How could being surrounded by so much sin affect someone's identity as a Christian?**
- 5 **A focus on Jesus will help prevent division in the church. Where else do we tend to focus other than on Jesus? What about Jesus will unite us?**



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A LOVE LETTER FROM CANADA

Praise God for ministry partners in Canada! We've always had a fruitful partnership with our Canadian friends, and it just keeps getting better. The Bible Bus in Canada is getting bigger--and with it, their impact and vision is growing to take the whole Word to the whole World. All we can say is a sincere, *thank you*.

As a group, our Canadian Bible Bus family is in a unique position to sponsor several important ministry efforts this year.

 **Roman, a listener from St. Leonard, QC shares,** *"God is answering prayers in Montreal. Thru the Bible is on two radio stations and recently another less powerful radio station has been given the go ahead to broadcast Christian programs. I continue to pray the streets of Montreal will be flooded and saturated with the gospel in French and English!"*

Home Groups in India

The THRU the BIBLE Home Group ministry has become a primary area of focus and support for TTB-Canada.

The scope of impact has significantly expanded in India, especially with more than 10,000 registered Home Groups, though the number is likely much higher.



Ministry in Closed Countries

Exceeding expectations—that’s the short answer to, “How is ministry going in the places where the gospel is restricted?”

Because at times it’s safest to not share location details, we invite you to share in the excitement of some unexpected news. **Imagine our surprise to find out that we have over 5,000 Home Groups in closed countries?!** Through very simple digital technology, we are today taking THRU the BIBLE into homes and to individual’s phones. The story is often told about how someone plays THRU the BIBLE on a media player or on their phone so others can hear it across a field or in the next hut, and they eventually ask if they can listen together—and a new Home Group begins!

Now you may think this way of doing ministry is new. It isn’t—home groups are how the early church was built and thrived. We are simply using the technology available to us today to make this happen.

New Projects

Our Canadian listening family are also making several new projects possible, including:

- Expanding our reach and ministry in the Caribbean,
- Standing alongside resource program production and distribution in India,
- Increasing our reach into two closed countries in South Asia, and
- Growing ministry in East and West Africa.
God is opening doors beyond our expectations.

Ministry is only possible when we all work together. Not only does our Canadian family keep all the Canadian stations on the air, their prayer and giving support also invites people around the globe to hear the message of hope found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

FROM THE
 **WorldPrayerToday**
TEAM

“ Dear Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. **At 77 ... I’ve discovered how dear the people are around the world as I pray for them.**

I was amazed how much we all have our struggles together, which has brought me closer to each one of them. **I can’t imagine how wonderful it’s going to be when we all together, hand in hand, praise God for His goodness, strength, grace, and mercy.** Thank you for carrying on *Thru the Bible’s* ministry that helps us all to grow in Christ. ”

Donna | *Ottawa, Canada*



FAITH REPLACES FEAR

Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till He comes and rains righteousness on you. –Hosea 10:12

As we traveled through the book of Numbers on the Bible Bus, we learned that God doesn't let His children live in disobedience or indifference to Him. That's the lesson Agon from Albania is learning, too. Here's his story:

"At the beginning of the pandemic, the world was filled with fear, and so was I. Although I am a Christian, I did not feel strong and was unable to comfort and encourage my wife and children. I was paralyzed with worry and doubt. One day I heard your program and knew God was using Covid-19 as a wake up call from indifference to Him. To call me to action. To bring me back to righteousness.

"As I listened to your programs, I asked God to help me to grow. Not long after, I felt faith replacing my fears. There are still many uncertainties in this world, but now I feel sure that our Lord will lead us through them. I am able to teach and encourage my children to trust Him and know that our lives are in

His hands. May God protect you in these difficult times, and may He use you to awaken others before it's too late."

What a beautiful story of God's faithfulness. Today thank God He uses the circumstances in our lives to wake us up and call us to obedience. As we ask Him to multiply the numbers of His faithful in Albania, thank Him for His promise in Hosea 10:12 to one day pour out His blessings and His righteousness over us as we pursue Him.

This is an example of the email our World Prayer Team receives every weekday. Together, we travel the world on our knees, interceding for one country at a time. Join us in covering the entire earth with prayer every year.

**GO TO [TTB.ORG/PRAY](https://ttb.org/pray)
TO SIGN UP.**

J E S U S I N

1 Corinthians

WITH DR. J. VERNON MCGEE

In Corinth, as well as in most cities of that day, human philosophy reigned supreme. The apostle Paul knew that firsthand. **But the gospel challenged that focus on human achievement and offered so much more—changed lives.**

While he was in Corinth, Paul preached the Cross of Christ. But the Corinthian Jews rejected it, which just made him turn his focus to the Gentiles (Acts 18:6) and to anyone who would listen. And many people not only heard the invitation, they also responded in faith. **They found in the Cross of Christ the wisdom and power of God to change their lives, answer their deepest emotional questions, and give them a brand-new beginning in life** (1 Corinthians 1:24-26; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Some people enjoy aligning themselves with famous believers—the entertainment greats, leaders in industry, and the prominent in government. **But God majors in average people like you. He calls simple people like all of us to know Him through a relationship with His Son Jesus Christ.**

Does that mean you are foolish to believe in Jesus? No! You may appear weak to your unbelieving family but take heart: This is God's gracious way. That's why none of us have anything to brag about when it comes to our salvation. Jesus gets all the credit.

And He is everything we need. This is what God longs to communicate to you and to everyone who seeks Him. He is your wisdom. He is your righteousness. He is your sanctification and your redemption. **Whatever it is that you need today, you will find it in Him.**

Our glory should be in the Lord. We should make Jesus Christ famous every day by how our lives honor Him.

What are you boasting about today? In your degrees? In your wisdom? In your financial portfolio? In your children? Do you boast today about your position of influence? That's all emptiness until you find your glory in Jesus.

We can boast of Christ; He is everything we need.



Adapted from the **1 Corinthians Bible Companion**. Download your free copy [here](#).





He Loved Us First

In keeping with a common theme in February, let me write a love letter to you, my co-laborers in the faith.

As we study 1 Corinthians on the Bible Bus, I've often been reminded of how God equips ordinary people with spiritual gifts to accomplish His work in the world. That's you and me!

Dr. McGee said he was glad God is still calling ordinary folks to Himself. We haven't anything to glory about outside of Christ.

But God promises to be for us our wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (see 1 Corinthians 1). "Whatever you need today," Dr. McGee said, "you can find it in Jesus." And whatever the ministry of THRU the BIBLE needs, we'll find in Him, as well. We have a long history to prove God's faithfulness is true.

We love Him because He first loved us, and nothing is going to separate us from that. Our story in God is a love story, and it keeps getting better and better.

Here's to another chapter together this month. I'm grateful for the privilege of sharing the mission with you of taking God's whole Word to the whole world.

Let's keep writing the story.

Gratefully,



Gregg Harris
THRU the BIBLE, President

He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.

-1 Corinthians 1:31

WHY STUDY 1 CORINTHIANS?

Join in the studies on
THRU the BIBLE FEBRUARY 21—
MARCH 24 or anytime online,
by podcast, or by mobile app.

“The church at Corinth had serious problems. They had lost sight of the main objective: To share the person of Jesus Christ. They had forgotten about the centrality of Christ crucified and His rightful place as Lord of their lives. As a consequence, they felt overwhelmed. That was the problem then and it is the problem today.” —Dr. J. Vernon McGee

KEYVERSE

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. —1 Corinthians 1:18

TAKE THIS TO HEART FROM 1 CORINTHIANS:

- Why we have spiritual gifts—ch. 1
- Why give to the church—ch. 4
- Just because you can doesn't mean you should—ch. 6
- This is love ... —ch. 13
- Why an empty tomb matters —ch. 15

4 WAYS TO LIVE DESPITE THE STING OF DEATH:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, **1** be steadfast, **2** immovable, **3** always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that **4** your labor is not in vain in the Lord. —1 Corinthians 15:58

7 LESSONS FROM 1 CORINTHIANS:

- 1 Work for unity in your church (1:10)
- 2 Embrace God's principles for marriage and singleness (7:17)
- 3 Careful not to be a stumbling block to the weak (8:9)
- 4 Take the Lord's Supper seriously (11:29)
- 5 The goal of your spiritual gift is love (12:26)
- 6 Jesus Christ's resurrection removes the sting of death (15:55-57)
- 7 Live a life of love (16:14)



ON THE ROAD

Greetings FROM THE BIBLE BUS

“With a combination of health issues, my mobility is fragile. Enter the  WorldPrayerToday Team to my rescue. **It has opened my eyes and my heart to people around the world that have either never heard, or are physically threatened by listening to, the Word of God.** This has also opened a way for me to witness for and support others in prayer, for our Lord Jesus while at home!

“After I read the daily email, I type out the prayer that the Holy Spirit guides me in. I combine that to the daily email and text it out to friends and family and post it on my Instagram page for all to read each day and encourage them to add their prayer and pass it on for additional prayers.

“Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to minister and be ministered by the World Prayer Team.”

– From **Glenda** | Fair Oaks, California



Kathryn (“Kaye”) Jean Foster from Canterbury, New Brunswick, Canada, long-time traveler on the Bible Bus, recently stepped into eternity. Her obituary read, in part:



“Kaye’s deep faith gave her confidence in salvation through the shed blood of Jesus. Online radio broadcasts could be heard daily in her home as she continued *Thru the Bible* with J. Vernon McGee. Her thoughtfulness in sharing wisdom and commitment to prayer was reflective of her love for God and His truth.”

Glad you’re safely home, Kaye.



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