Seek and You Shall Find

A verse-by-verse study of the book of First Corinthians

Several Keys to this Study

Within this study we must be aware of, and use these simple rules of Bible interpretation.

Rule #1 Scripture interprets scripture.
Discuss how and why this works.

There are five contexts we must consider when interpreting biblical passages.

1) The context of the passage.
2) The context of the entire book.
3) Other books by the same author.
4) The entire Testament (Old or New).
5) The entire Bible.

Rule #2 The Bible is a progressive revelation.
Discuss the reasons and importance of this rule.
Rule #3  **The Bible is to be interpreted literally.**

Why must the Bible be interpreted literally, and can there be more than one application to a particular scripture (give examples)?

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The Bible contains 3 different styles of literature:
   a) Prose: Includes all history and teaching.
   c) Apocalyptic: Prophetic; meaning is hidden in symbolism.

Rule #4  **The Bible must be interpreted in light of custom and culture.**

Explain how custom and culture play a role in Bible interpretation (give examples).
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Rule #5  **The Bible must be interpreted in light of who is doing the talking and who they are talking to.**

Explain the importance of this rule.
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**Armed with these basic rules of Bible interpretation, we will begin to explore the book of First Corinthians. As we study, we will incorporate these rules in order to gain a greater understanding of the book and its teaching. While this study can be beneficial for an individual, it was written with a small group in mind. Within a study group, discussion is always appropriate, especially concerning other scriptures or items of custom and culture not mentioned in this study.**
The apostle Paul established the church at Corinth around 50-51 AD when he spent eighteen months there on his second missionary journey. First Corinthians is a pastoral letter written to resolve doctrinal and practical issues within the local church. At the beginning of the letter Paul asserts his apostolic authority as he addresses the letter to “all the churches of God.”

Scripture — Read First Corinthians 1:1-9

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

1. Discuss who is doing the talking, who they’re talking too, and why that information is important to us today.

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2. What does Paul say is the purpose of this letter?

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 1:10-17

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

3. What issues do we see Paul addressing in verses 10-17?

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4. Does the church today still fight the same types of issues, or was this just a matter of custom and culture?

5. Through incorporating the rules of Bible interpretation, discuss whether or not Paul is suggesting we should have one universal church with an autonomous human leader (i.e. Catholicism), or whether he was saying that within individual local churches there should be no divisions. (Also discuss supportive or parallel passages.)

6. In verse 17 Paul ends his discussion concerning contentions within the church with an exclamation point by stating, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.” That phrase coincides with one of Paul’s main themes in many of his letters. Discuss what Paul meant when he said, “Lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect,” and name at least one other letter (i.e. book of the Bible) where the cross of Christ is the main theme.

Scripture — Read First Corinthians 1:18-25

Cultural Insights

The Greek culture produced many intellectual prodigies (e.g. Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato) who looked to statues, myths, and humanism (within themselves) as their gods. One of the three sayings carved on the Temple of Apollo was “Know Thyself.” Socrates summed up the Greek philosophy well when he said: Man is the being whose nature is to ask, “What is his nature?” This type of intellectualism was a large part of what the early church encountered when preaching the gospel.
Jewish Culture

The Jews had lived for thousands of years looking to the kings, priests, and prophets for guidance and deliverance. The Jews of Paul’s day had ancestors who had witnessed many signs, wonders, and miracles. Between the Old and New Testaments there was a period of 400 years commonly referred to as the silent period. (“Silent” because there was no prophetic word or divine direction.) During that time Persia (who had already been in power) remained in power for 100 years, after which Alexander the Great and his Greek army conquered the known world. Following the Greek period, came the Roman period from 63 BC until the time of Christ.

The Jews of Paul’s time had been conquered for many centuries, and during the early days of the church they had learned how to live under Roman rule. Even though the traditional Jews were very legalistic in their interpretation of the Law (the first five books of the Bible), they did hold strongly to the belief that their Messiah would someday come and conquer their enemies and set up His earthly kingdom. However, the Jews could not accept that Jesus (a carpenter from Nazareth) was the promised Messiah, and as a result they were constantly demanding “a sign” from Him. Because the Jews sought after a sign, Jesus called them “an evil and adulterous generation.” (See Matthew 12:39.)

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Interpretation Principles

We’ve gained some insight into the historical and cultural background of Paul’s day. When interpreting a passage within the New Testament, we’ve also learned how helpful it is to consider context number four of proper Bible interpretation, which is the context of the entire ________________.

In light of that basic rule, read Matthew 12:38-40 where Jesus tells the religious leaders about the “sign” they will receive.

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

7. What “sign” was Jesus referring to in Matthew 12:38-40?
8. In First Corinthians 1:18-25 Paul gives a powerful rebuke to many of the wise men and religious leaders of his age who would not accept the foolishness of the cross, and who were continually seeking after a sign. Discuss the following in light of the insights into the cultural atmosphere of Paul’s era.

a) Without a doubt Jesus gave the Jews, the Greeks, and the entire world a miraculous sign which proved He was the Messiah! What does Paul mean when he says it became a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks?

b) Obviously the foolishness of the cross was contrary to the intellectualism of the Greeks and the self-righteous and legalistic religion of the Jews. Why do you think we fight the same battles today?

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**Interpretation Principles**

In First Corinthians 1:21(b)-25 Paul makes two statements which might be somewhat difficult to understand: “It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe...because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” One way to help us gain a more complete picture or understanding of what the apostle Paul was saying is found within the first rule of Bible interpretation: ________________ interprets ________________.

Scripture — Read First Corinthians 1:26-31

9. In First Corinthians 1:27, what is one reason Paul gives as to why God chose the “foolishness of the message preached” to save those who believe?

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10. In First Corinthians 1:29-31 Paul explains the greatest reason for receiving the “foolishness of the message preached.” Explain what this reason is and why it is so important.

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 2:1-5

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

11. Discuss why Paul says in First Corinthians 2:2 that he determined not to know anything among them except “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (Take into consideration what we’ve learned about divisions in the church as well as cultural and historical insights.)

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12. One of the devil’s most evil tactics is to cause strife and division within the church. Discuss some practical ways we can put Paul’s words into action in our modern-day church.

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13. Discuss Paul’s words in verses 4 and 5 in light of what we’ve learned about the Greek culture.

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14. In First Corinthians 2:4(b)-5 Paul talks about demonstrations of the Spirit and of power. Other than the gospels, what book(s) of the New Testament can we readily point to in support of the words of Paul concerning demonstrations of power causing people to believe in God? In addition, list at least one parallel passage from another book that includes the apostle Paul within this context.

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 2:6-16

Interpretation Principles

Earlier we discussed five contexts we must consider when interpreting a biblical passage. The first one mentioned was the context of the __________. In other words, we cannot pull one verse out of a passage and make it say something different than what is meant in the meaning of the entire passage.

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

15. Within the context of the passage we just read, what is Paul speaking of when he says “we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained [predetermined] before the ages for our glory?” (Verse 8 is a clue to the mystery.)

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16. In First Corinthians 2:10-16 Paul makes several observations concerning how the wisdom of God is revealed. With that in mind, discuss the following:

a) Two spirits are talked about in these verses—the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. What does Paul say the spirit of man knows verses the Spirit of God?

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b) Discuss what Paul means when he says “comparing spiritual things to spiritual things.”
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17. What sharp rebuke does Paul give the Corinthian Church in First Corinthians 3:1-2?
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18. Discuss what is meant by the phrase “mere men.”
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19. Paul names several carnal attitudes that will cause Christians to act like mere men. Discuss how and why envy, strife, and division will stunt our spiritual growth.
   a) Envy
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   b) Strife
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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 3:5-17

19. In First Corinthians 3:5-9 Paul describes the part each Christian plays in bringing belief and spiritual growth to others. Describe some of the characteristics and actions of the following types of individuals.

a) One who plants.

b) One who waters.

20. Which is more important according to the apostle Paul—the one who plants or the one who waters?

Interpretation Principles

We know scripture interprets scripture. This first basic rule of Bible interpretation is invaluable when attempting to gain a better understanding of a passage or a biblical concept. Using ___________ passages (other passages which address the same principles or concepts) will also help us obtain a clearer view of doctrine and how it applies to our lives. Read the following scripture in light of this principle of Bible interpretation.
Solid Scriptural Interpretation


a) How are the two different kinds of seeds planted?
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b) According to Luke 8:6 and Luke 8:13 what happens if we do not water the seed of the word of God?
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22. In First Corinthians 3:11 Paul says, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” How does this truth apply to our “field” of labor?
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23. In First Corinthians 3:5-17 Paul speaks of planting, watering, and working. Paul also gives us a warning. Discuss the importance of the warning he gives us.

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 3:18-23

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

24. What does Paul mean when he says if anyone seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise? (Remember to interpret the Bible in light of the context of the passage. Many times the question will answer itself.)

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25. First Corinthians chapter 3 ends with Paul giving an appeal. Discuss what he means when he says, “Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours.”

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 4:1-5

Definition

STEWARD, oikonomos (oy-kon-om-oss); Strong’s #3623: Compare “economy.” From oikos, “house,” and nemo, “to arrange.” The word originally referred to the manager of a household or estate, and then in a broader sense denoted an administrator or a steward in general. In First Corinthians 4:1 and Titus 1:7 it refers to Christian ministers; but in First Peter 4:10 it denotes Christians in general using the gifts entrusted to them by the Lord for the strengthening and encouragement of fellow believers.
Cultural Insights

In ancient times a steward was an administrator of the affairs, household, and property of a person of means. The steward’s duties usually included such responsibilities as the oversight of meals, household finances and servants, children of the family, flocks and herds, and the tilling of the fields. An Old Testament example is Eliezer, the steward of Abram (Gen. 15:2). In the New Testament the term is used of Christian leaders such as pastors and apostles. It is also applied to Christians in general relative to their accountability to God for all He has given them and their management of those gifts and abilities in the kingdom.

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

26. Discuss what is required of stewards, and why this is such an important quality in a Christian’s life.

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27. Name several other qualities of a good steward.

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28. Discuss what it means that we should judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes.

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 4:6-13
29. Discuss what is re-emphasized to the Corinthians in verses 6-8. (Consider what Paul said in First Corinthians 1:12-13.)

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30. Discuss the contrast found in verses 9-13 between the Corinthian’s lifestyle and Apostle Paul’s lifestyle.

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 4:14-21

31. In First Corinthians 4:14-15 Paul reveals the heart of a loving father. Discuss what Paul means when he says, “Though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers.”

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32. Paul instructs us to imitate him. Are we to imitate a person, or God alone?

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33. Discuss what scripture means when it says that the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.

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34. What choice does Paul leave the Corinthians with concerning his upcoming visit (see verse 21)?

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 5:1-8

35. According to First Corinthians 5:1 there was a known case of sexual immorality in the Corinthian church. How did the Corinthian church deal with this immorality?

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36. How does Paul instruct the Corinthian church to deal with this situation (see verses 3-5)?

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Quote: “The only Bible the world will read is the daily life of a Christian. What the world needs to see is a revised edition.” - Anonymous

Solid Scriptural Interpretation
The slaying of the lamb and the blood of the Passover in the Old Testament pointed to Christ as God’s perfect Lamb who would take away the sin of the world. On the night of the first Passover in Egypt, the Hebrews removed all the leaven from their houses, a practice still carried on among Jewish people. (See Exodus 12:15.) Leaven has a fermenting action that illustrates the corrupting power of evil. During the Feasts of the Passover and Unleavened Bread the Israelites were not to have any leaven in their homes (leaven symbolizing sin). This continued for the week following the slaying of the lamb.

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread pointed to the life of holiness that would follow the slaying of the Lamb of God. Since Christ (our Passover Lamb) has been sacrificed, the church ought to have an unleavened house; otherwise the leaven of sin will spread if unchecked.

### Solid Scriptural Interpretation

37. When Paul says “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” he is speaking to an entire church body (the Corinthian church). How is it possible that a little leaven in a local church can corrupt the whole church?

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### Parallel Passage


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### Cultural Insights

The meal-offering typifies “the hospitality of the soul to God, and hospitality of God to the soul.” Christ is the Bread of Life, and His doctrine is the Church’s most precious deposit. The maintenance of doctrinal purity is her responsibility.

There is a distinct relationship between the “three measures of meal” and the meal offering of which it is distinctly commanded, “No grain offering which you shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven.” (See Leviticus 2:11.) Therefore, when the woman hid the leaven in the meal, she was doing something God prohibited. She mingled a foreign element with the meal. In the parable of the kingdom in Luke 13:20-21 the Church’s fellowship has been adulterated with leaven.
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

38. Discuss how we follow Paul’s command in First Corinthians 5:8: “Therefore let us keep the feast, *not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness*, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

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 Scripture — Read First Corinthians 5:9-13

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

39. In First Corinthians 5:9-10 we see Paul correcting a misunderstanding. Explain what this misunderstanding was all about.

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40. Explain and discuss the stern instructions Paul gives in First Corinthians 5:11.

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41. In First Corinthians 5:13 we see that God judges those who are *outside*, which means outside of God’s covenant. Discuss what Paul means in First Corinthians 5:12 when he asks, “Do you not judge those who are inside?”

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 Scripture — Read First Corinthians 6:1-11
Parallel Passages
☞ Scripture — Read Matthew 19:28 and Revelation 20:4

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

42. What matter among the Corinthian Church does Paul begin to address at the beginning of chapter 6, and why is this harmful to the church body?
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43. What irony does Paul bring out in verses 2 and 3 concerning the Corinthian’s ability to judge the matters at hand? (Keep in mind the parallel passages.)
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44. What is the “shame” Paul speaks of in First Corinthians 6:4-6?
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45. Discuss what Paul means in First Corinthians 6:7 when he says, “Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?”
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☞ Scripture — Read First Corinthians 6:12-20
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

46. Discuss what Paul meant when he said, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.”

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47. In First Corinthians 6:13-20 Paul addresses several things concerning glorifying God with our bodies. Discuss the meaning and implications of the following statements.

a) “Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.”

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b) “Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For ‘the two,’ He says, ‘shall become one flesh.’ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 7:1-9
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

48. In First Corinthians 7:1-5 Paul clearly says that sexual relations are meant only for marriage, and that husbands and wives should not deprive each other of intimacy. What is the only exception Paul mentions concerning depriving one another of marital relations?

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Parallel Passage

Scripture — Read Ephesians 5:25-31

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

49. Within Christianity there can be an abuse of one scripture if we do not balance it with other passages concerning the same subject. Ephesians 5:25-31 helps us obtain a balance to First Corinthians 7:3-5. With Ephesians 5:25-31 in mind, discuss the following:

a) Name several ways a husband can love his wife just as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for her.

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b) Discuss the importance of Ephesians 5:28 where it says, “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.”

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c) Discuss the correlation made between the natural and the spiritual realms in Ephesians 5:30-31.

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50. In First Corinthians 7:6 Paul says, “But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.” What concession (or admission) was Paul talking about?

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**Interpretation Principles**

Rule #5 (as discussed at the beginning of this study) was: “Interpret the Bible in light of who is doing the ___________, and who they are talking too.” It is important to note that in First Corinthians 7:10-16 Paul gives specific instructions to two specific groups—brothers and sisters [believers] and unbelievers. Keep that in mind as we discuss this passage.

 Scripture — Read First Corinthians 7:10-16

**Solid Scriptural Interpretation**

51. Discuss the specific instructions Paul gives concerning divorce in the following situations:

a) What are Paul’s instructions in verses 10-11 to *Christian* married couples? (We must assume that in context Paul is speaking to believers in the Church at Corinth in verses 10-11. We make this assumption based upon the beginning of verse 12 when Paul says, “But to the rest...” after which he goes on to address situations in which non-believers are involved.)

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b) What are Paul’s instructions in verses 12 and 13 to a brother or sister who has an unbelieving spouse?

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c) What instructions are given in verse 15 to the believer if the *unbeliever* departs?
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52. First Corinthians 7:14 can be used incorrectly if taken out of context. In the New Covenant we know that salvation is an individual decision based upon Romans 10:9 and 10. With that in mind discuss what Paul means when he says, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband.” (Use the context of the passage. Verse 16 might help give more clarity.)
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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 7:17-24

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

53. In verses 17-19 the apostle Paul stresses one of the major themes evident in so many of his letters to the churches—circumcision versus un-circumcision. What does Paul lay out as the “bottom line” to this issue?
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54. Discuss what Paul means when he says “let each one remain in the same calling in which he is called.”
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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 7:25-40
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

55. In First Corinthians 7:27-28 Paul seems to contradict himself by saying, “Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But even if you do marry, you have not sinned.” Discuss what Paul is saying in these verses.

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56. Discuss what Paul means in First Corinthians 7:28 when he says, “Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.” (Consider what Paul says in verse 32: “But I want you to be without care.”)

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57. What instructions does Paul give to widows in verses 39-40?

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 8:1-13

Cultural Insights

In Paul’s time sacrificing food to idols was a routine pagan ritual. These rituals caused much confusion and division within the church. Being in a culture where these things were routinely practiced raised questions amongst Christians. Should they eat foods that were somehow connected to pagan rituals? Or, should they even buy meat from a local butcher who supplied food for idol worship?
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

58. Why does Paul begin a discussion concerning food offered to idols with statements like “knowledge puffs up, but love edifies,” “if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know,” and “If anyone loves God this one is known by Him”?

59. What is Paul’s response to the Corinthian’s question concerning eating food that has been offered to idols? (Is it right or wrong?)

60. Even though food does not condemn us, should we be cautious when eating or drinking foods that some people might consider wrong for a Christian to partake of? If so why?

61. What responsibility do those who have more knowledge of God’s word accept toward those who are weak, and how does God view their actions if they cause those who are weak to stumble?

Scripture — Read First Corinthians 9:1-18
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

62. Discuss the reasons Paul felt the need to defend himself (verses 1-3).
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63. Discuss the reasons Paul gives in the following three areas to justify financial support.

a) From a social standpoint (verse 7):
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b) According to the Law of Moses (verses 8-13):
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b) The Lord’s commands (verse 14):
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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 9:19-23

64. Discuss how we win people to the Lord by becoming a servant to all.
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65. Many times in scripture we read where Paul discourages born again Jews from trying to bring born again Gentiles back under the Old Testament Law. In other words, it is not our works that save us, but rather the free gift of grace. What then does Paul mean when he says, “To the Jews I became as a Jew, and to those who are under the law, as under the law”?
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66. Discuss how we become “all things to all men,” and yet not compromise our Christian values.
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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 9:24-27

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

67. What prize is given to those who run a successful spiritual race?
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68. Discuss the importance and the impact of the following characteristics of those who run the race:
a) Temperate in all things —
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b) Not with uncertainty, not as one who beats the air —
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c) I discipline my body and bring it into subjection —

69. Discuss what it means to become “disqualified.”

Definition

TYPE AND SHADOW: The English word “type” comes from the Greek typos, which is used sixteen times in the New Testament. It is translated in several different forms including figure, manner, pattern, and example. A “type” is best defined as a historical person, event or object which, as designed by God, has an essential feature which corresponds to another person, event or object in the future. The term “antitype” is used to describe the future fulfillment of the type. There are three other Greek words used in the New Testament that more closely express the idea of typology. They are skia (shadow), parabolé (figure or symbol), and hypodeigma (copy or pattern). An example would be the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness by Moses being a “type” or “shadow” of Christ being lifted up on the cross at Calvary. Jesus testified of this in John 3:14-16.

Scripture — Read First Corinthians 10:1-13

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

70. Explain the New Testament meaning of the following Old Testament types and shadows:

a) Moses —
b) The Israelites being baptized in the cloud and sea —
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c) The spiritual Rock —
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71. Even though we do not live under the Old Covenant as did the Israelites (whom God delivered out of Egypt), are the Israelite’s experiences relevant to us today? Why (verse 11)?
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72. Discuss how the following areas of sin and immorality cause believers to “die in the wilderness” (figuratively speaking).

a) Lusting after evil things —
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b) Idolatry —
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c) Sexual immorality —
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73. Discuss what it means to “tempt Christ.”

74. How did the Israelites tempt Christ? (See Exodus 17:2 and 7.)

75. In First Corinthians 10:10 we see that some of the Israelites were “destroyed by the destroyer” because they complained. Discuss why complaining is a form of testing or tempting Christ, and how a Christian can fall away or even be destroyed through habitually complaining.

76. What warning does Paul give every Christian in First Corinthians 10:12 that will help keep all of us on track?

77. According to First Corinthians 10:13, can any Christian claim that God is unfair in His judgments concerning our response to temptation? Why or why not?
Definition

There are four terms used in the New Testament for Communion.
2. The Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20)
3. Communion (1 Corinthians 10:16)
4. The Lord’s Table (1 Corinthians 10:21).

The belief of “transubstantiation” teaches that through the prayer of a priest the communion elements actually become the blood and flesh of Jesus. Scriptures used to support this belief are John 6:53-58 and Matthew 26:26-28.

However, proper Bible interpretation requires we examine teachings in light of the Bible as a whole, keeping in mind that God does not contradict Himself. God’s word expressly forbids the eating and drinking of blood (Leviticus 3:17 and Deuteronomy 12:16), therefore God would not instruct us to eat and drink the literal flesh and blood of Christ. Also note that in context Jesus clearly refers to the substance in the communion cup as the “fruit of the vine”—not real blood. (See Matthew 26:29.)

Scripture — Read First Corinthians 10:14-22

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

78. In reference to communion, discuss what it means in First Corinthians 10:17 when it says “we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.”

79. What correlation is Paul making between the Christian’s communion, the Jews Old Testament sacrifices, and idolatry?
80. What spiritual principle is clearly laid out in First Corinthians 10:21-22?

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☞ Scripture — Read First Corinthians 10:23-33

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

81. There are similarities between the statement Paul makes in First Corinthians 6:12 and what he says here: “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.” If something in our Christian lives is not helpful, or edifying (building us up), why isn’t it considered sin?

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82. Paul lays out several principles concerning eating and fellowshipping with others. Discuss the importance of each of the following.

a) “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.”

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b) “Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience sake.” (Paul is referring to meat and foods offered to idols.)

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c) “If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no questions for conscience sake.”

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83. Discuss the “liberty” Paul is referring to when he says, “For why is my liberty judged by another man’s conscience?”

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84. What is Paul’s ultimate goal in not giving believers or non-believers reason for offense even in areas such as the foods we eat?

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Cultural Insights

In Paul’s day a woman who appeared bareheaded in public was considered to be loose and immoral. According to the Old Testament Law, uncovered hair or a shaved head could symbolize an immoral or unclean condition. (See Leviticus 14:8-9 and Numbers 5:18.) In ancient cultures, and in many middle-eastern cultures today, a woman’s long hair and head covering was also viewed as a sign of submission to her husband.

Scripture — Read First Corinthians 11:1-16

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

85. First Corinthians 11:3 states: “I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Briefly discuss how Paul’s statement should be interpreted in light of the following:

a) The mutual respect between husbands and wives —
b) In light of the varying roles of the husband and wife and how they accomplish different functions in the marriage relationship —

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c) In context of the love and “covering” a husband is expected to provide for his wife —

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86. Considering what we’ve learned from the Cultural Insights, discuss how much of Paul’s instructions concerning head coverings and hair applies to us today.

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87. Is there a parallel between the natural and the spiritual in Paul’s discussion of head coverings?

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 11:17-22

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

88. What does Paul identify in First Corinthians 11:17 as one of the major underlying problems of the Corinthian church?

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89. What does Paul allude to as one positive thing that will come out of divisions and factions?
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90. Paul specifically names several problems that existed in the Corinthian church concerning the Lord’s Supper. Discuss the problems indicated within the following statements by Paul.

a) For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others —
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b) One is hungry and another is drunk —
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c) Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing —
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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 11:23-34

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

91. In First Corinthians 11:23 Paul points out the irony of how on the same night that Jesus was betrayed, He took communion with His disciples. Discuss the example Jesus set for us (in terms of our attitude and spiritual focus) as we partake of communion.
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92. Jesus said, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood.” When Jesus instituted this memorial meal He had not yet gone to the cross. Why do think Jesus instituted this meal before He went to the cross and not after?

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93. What does it mean in First Corinthians 11:26 that when we partake of communion we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes?

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94. The verse directly following the statement “we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” begins with the word therefore. It seems obvious Paul is connecting the judgment mentioned in First Corinthians 11:27-30 with the previous verses. Discuss why a person drinks and eats judgment to himself when they do not properly discern the Lord’s body.

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95. Re-read First Corinthians 11:32. Discuss the importance of the principle mentioned, and the love and mercy shown within this statement.

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 12:1-11
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

96. In First Corinthians 12:1-3 Paul introduces a discussion concerning spiritual gifts by speaking of how the Corinthians had been carried away to dumb (mute) idols however they were led. Discuss the correlation between First Corinthians 12:3 (no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed) and being carried away to dumb idols.

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97. In First Corinthians 12:4-7 what point is made abundantly clear concerning the variations and operation of the gifts of the Spirit?

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98. Define (to the best of your understanding) the spiritual gifts listed.

a) Word of wisdom —

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b) Word of knowledge —

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C) Gift of faith —

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d) Gifts of healings —

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e) Working of miracles —
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f) Prophecy —
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99. What important principle do we see in First Corinthians 12:11 concerning the operation of the spiritual gifts?
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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 12:12-31
Definition

The word *body* (Greek *soma*) is related to *sozo*, meaning “to heal, preserve, be made whole.” Paul uses the natural body as a parallel of Christ’s spiritual body—the church. Clearly, the Greek word used presents the truth that the body of Christ should minister to each other, each joint supplying what the other needs in order to preserve and promote wholeness in His body.

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

100. What makes it possible for people of all races and cultures to be joined together as one in the body of Christ?

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101. Considering the context of this passage, how does Paul’s discussion of unity in the body of Christ relate to the spiritual gifts?

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102. Many times in the body of Christ we see people who are naturally gifted in a particular area (gifts that come from God), and yet they would rather serve in another area of *their* choosing. According this passage, if a person is called to be a hand in the body of Christ, do they have the right to say that they are going to be an eye rather than a hand?

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103. Describe God’s balance of “honor” in the body of Christ (e.g. who does God bestow the most honor on and why?), and discuss whether this principle often gets unbalanced in the church today.

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104. How do we avoid schisms in the body of Christ?
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105. We see that all in the body are to be honored. Discuss how Paul makes this point clear in First Corinthians 12:27-30.
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106. Does Paul contradict himself in First Corinthians 12:31 when he tells us to earnestly desire the best gifts?
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_scripture_scripture — Read First Corinthians 13:1-13

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

107. First Corinthians chapter 12 ends with the phrase: “And yet I show you a more excellent way.” What is the more excellent way?
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108. Many times teachers in the body of Christ have used First Corinthians 13:1-2 to teach that the spiritual gifts are not important in the church today. As we examine these verses in context, discuss whether or not that’s the message Paul is trying to get across.
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109. Discuss how and why the following elements of our Christian lives are affected by the love of God that is in us:

a) The operation of the spiritual gifts —
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b) Faith —
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C) Witnessing for Christ —
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d) Personal relationships —
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e) Worship —
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Classical Interpretation

A very popular interpretation of First Corinthians 13:10 espouses that the “perfect” spoken of was the completion of the New Testament scriptures. This interpretation asserts that when the New Testament scriptures were completed the spiritual gifts were no longer necessary due to the fact that we no longer “see through a glass dimly.”
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

110. First Corinthians 13:10 which says, “But when that which is perfect [complete] has come, then that which is in part will be done away.” Examine this passage in light of the classical interpretation, and discuss whether or not it is speaking of the cessation of the spiritual gifts.

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112. Paul says, “Now abide faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” How can love be the greatest element if Hebrews 11:6 plainly says that without faith it is impossible to please God?

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 14:1-5

**Interpretation Principles**

At the beginning of this study we learned that the number one rule of Bible interpretation is scripture interprets _____________. Within this truth we’ve studied five contexts which must also be considered. One of the contexts we must consider is the context of the entire book.

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

113. In light of proper Bible interpretation, discuss how in First Corinthians 14:1 Paul ties First Corinthians chapters 12 and 13 into the discussion and truths of chapter 14.

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114. What important insight concerning speaking in tongues do we find in First Corinthians 14:2?

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115. Discuss the importance of prophecy and speaking in tongues according to First Corinthians 14:3-5, and discuss the spiritual impact it has on our lives.

a) Prophecy —
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b) Speaking in tongues —
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116. Under what circumstances is prophecy considered greater than speaking in tongues? Why?
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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 14:6-19

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

117. In First Corinthians 14:6-13 Paul uses a natural illustration (the sound of instruments) to make a spiritual point. Discuss the correlation he makes between the distinctive sound of instruments and the use of tongues and interpretation of tongues in a public setting.
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118. Some in the body of Christ have used Paul’s words in First Corinthians 14:6-12 and First Corinthians 13:1 to teach that tongues are not to be used at all, or that they are not important in the church today. Examine Paul’s instructions in context, and then name several key verses that would contradict the idea that speaking in tongues is not important in our Christian lives or in the modern-day church.

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119. Name several ways speaking in tongues can be used to build up ourselves and edify the church.

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120. Explain how Paul confirms from his own life (public and private) that there is a public use of speaking in tongues as well as a private use. (Refer to First Corinthians 14:18-19.)

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 14:20-25

Solid Scriptural Interpretation
121. Consider First Corinthians 14:20 and then discuss what the underlying reasons appear to be for Paul addressing the subject of spiritual gifts and speaking in tongues.

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122. In First Corinthians 14:21 Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12. What point is he trying to make by using this parallel passage?

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123. In First Corinthians 14:22 Paul explains, “Tongues are a sign not to those who believe but to unbelievers.” Then, in verse 23 he states: “Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?” If tongues are supposed to be a sign to unbelievers, then why would unbelievers say we are out of our minds if we speak in tongues?

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124. Discuss how prophecy causes an unbeliever to fall on his face and worship God.

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 14:26-40

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

125. In First Corinthians 14:26-40 we see many important principles concerning order in the local church. Discuss the importance of the principles described in the following verses and how they are meant to keep order in the local church.

a) First Corinthians 14:26 —

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b) First Corinthians 14:27 —

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c) First Corinthians 14:28 —

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d) First Corinthians 14:29 —

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e) First Corinthians 14:30-31 —

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126. In First Corinthians 14:32 Paul says, “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” Discuss how this statement relates to the discussion on order in the local church.

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127. If there is confusion in the local church where does it come from, and is there a difference between being unlearned (concerning spiritual things) and being confused?

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128. What qualifications does Paul give for a person who thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual?

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129. Discuss what is meant by the statement “but if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.”

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130. Scripture is clear that we should desire to prophesy, and that we should not forbid anyone to speak in tongues. At the same time, what is the clear guideline we find in First Corinthians 14:40 for the operation of the spiritual gifts?

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Historical Background

Historically the gospels were written as follows: Matthew AD 50-75, Mark AD 65-70, Luke AD 59-75, and John AD 85. The apostle Paul established the church at Corinth about 50-51 AD when he spent eighteen months there on his second missionary journey. Since Paul apparently wrote the letter near the end of his Ephesians ministry, it may be dated about AD 56.

Scripture — Read First Corinthians 15:1-11
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

131. In First Corinthians 15:3 we see Paul presenting a simple version of the salvation message: “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” More than likely, Paul established the Corinthian church before the gospels were completed or circulated. With that in mind, discuss what Scriptures Paul was referring to.

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132. What evidence is given in this portion of the letter to prove the resurrection of Jesus?

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133. Discuss what Paul means in First Corinthians 15:8 when he says “then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.”

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.Scripture — Read First Corinthians 15:12-19

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

134. What do we learn in verses 12-18 about the Corinthian’s beliefs concerning the resurrection from the dead?

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135. Most Christians should agree that hope in Christ is extremely important. However, in context of the discussion of the resurrection of the dead, why does Paul say that if in this life “only we have hope in Christ” we are of all men most pitiable?

136. In First Corinthians 15:20-22 we see a foundational Christian truth. Discuss this foundational truth and why it is so important to understand.

137. In two verses (First Corinthians 15:23-24) Paul covers approximately 2000 years of time. Discuss the significant events covered in these two verses, and the order in which they occur.

138. First Corinthians 15:26 says, “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.” According to scripture, when does this occur? (Refer to Revelation chapter 20.)

139. Discuss the meaning of First Corinthians 15:28 where it says: “Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”
Scripture — Read First Corinthians 15:29-34

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

140. The Mormon religion interprets First Corinthians 15:29 to mean that those who are alive should be baptized for dead relatives who were not saved according their church doctrine. Discuss why this act of baptizing for the dead cannot be correct according to the word of God.

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141. What does Paul mean when he says he dies daily?

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142. Discuss what is meant in First Corinthians 15:32 which states: “If the dead do not rise, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

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143. Discuss the importance of understanding and implementing the following principles:

a) Evil company corrupts good habits —

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b) Awake to righteousness, and do not sin —

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Spiritual Insight

God’s creation reveals a life-giving principle. A seed must die in order for the life-giving process to be set in motion. In John 12:23-24 Jesus said, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.” Jesus spoke this about His own death. Further on in the same passage Jesus said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” Jesus became a grain of wheat that fell to the earth and was raised from the dead giving new life to all who believe.

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

144. If the Lord does not return in our lifetimes, our bodies will be sown into the earth like a seed is sown into the ground. Discuss why our bodies must be sown in corruption, and the hope that we have through this process.

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145. Discuss what Paul means in First Corinthians 15:49 where he says, “And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”

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Definition

The Greek word “moment” (used in First Corinthians 15:52) is *atomos* (at-om-oss). Strong’s Analytical Concordance #823 says: “Compare ‘atomizer’ and ‘atomic.’ Uncut, indivisible, un-dissected, infinitely small. The word is a compound of ‘a,’ ‘un,’ and *temnos*, ‘to cut in two.’ When used of time, it represents an extremely short unit of time, a flash, an instant, a unit of time that cannot be divided. A second can be calibrated to one-tenth, one one-hundredth, and one one-thousandth of a second. But how do you calibrate an atomic second? When we are changed, it will occur in an atomic second!”
Parallel Passages
Scripture — Read Revelation 11:15-19, First Thessalonians 4:16-17, First Corinthians 15:23, and Matthew 24:29-31

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

146. Discuss the time at which the gathering together of the saints and the transformation of believers from mortality to immortality takes place according First Corinthians 15:52 and the parallel passages.

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147. What is meant by the statement that the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law?

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148. What admonition does Paul give at the end of First Corinthians chapter 15?

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 16:1-4

Parallel Passage
Scripture — Read Romans 15:25-27
Solid Scriptural Interpretation

149. In First Corinthians 16:1-4 the apostle Paul is ordering that collections be taken up at the church in Corinth so that he may take them to Jerusalem. What can we speculate from the parallel passage that this offering is being used for, and what message does this send to the church today?
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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 16:5-12

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

150. Now that we’ve examined the content of the entire epistle [letter] of First Corinthians, discuss some possible reasons Paul desired to stay with the Corinthian church for a while after he arrived.
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151. It is clear that Paul made plans. Yet, what were his plans contingent upon?
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152. Read the following words of Paul and discuss the attitude of respect that those in Corinth were to show toward Timothy, and how Paul’s instructions relate to how we are to treat ministers of the gospel today.

a) “And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do.”
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b) “Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace...” (Also see First Timothy 4:11-12.)

Scripture — Read First Corinthians 16:13-18

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

152. Discuss what Paul means when he uses the following words or phrases, and how we should incorporate them into our spiritual lives.

a) Watch (Gr. gregoreuo, “to keep awake” — 1 Cor. 16:13).

b) Stand fast in the faith (1 Cor. 16:13).

c) Be brave, be strong (1 Cor. 16:13).

d) Let all that you do be done with love (1 Cor. 16:14).
153. In First Corinthians chapter 12 Paul paralleled the church with the human body and spoke of the importance of each member doing what God has called them to do within the body. In Ephesians 4:16 Paul says that each joint in the body should supply what the other needs. What is one noticeable result of this truth we can see in First Corinthians 16:17-18?

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Scripture — Read First Corinthians 16:19-24

Solid Scriptural Interpretation

154. Discuss the stern admonition Paul gives in verse 22 as he closes this letter to the Corinthian church.

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155. In retrospect, what importance would you place on the study of the book of First Corinthians and why?

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