

Called Into Fellowship: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 Explained

Scriptures for Today

""1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,
 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called
 to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs
 and ours: 3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
 4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;
 5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as
 the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for
 the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be
 blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the
 fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.""

Introduction: How Did We Get to 1 Corinthians?

I want to look at the big picture before we go over these verses. Before we walk into Corinth, we need to know **where we are in the Bible's timeline, who is writing, why he's writing, and what kind of church we're dealing with.** This isn't just another letter. This is a letter written into a **spiritual warzone.** Let's build the stage.

Who write 1 Corinthians? The apostle Paul wrote the book. He's writing with God given authority. He founded the church at Corinth. He lived among them for 18 months. He preached, prayed, disciplined, confronted, and cried over them. He knew their strengths and their weaknesses. He knew what they struggled with. Paul isn't writing as a stranger. He's writing as a spiritual father correcting his children.

This book was written around A.D. 55 during Paul's third missionary journey, most likely from Ephesus. Corinth is a young church just like this one. Christianity is spreading. Persecution is starting to rise. False teaching is already all over the place. Paul is shepherding multiple churches at the same time.

The city of Corinth was wealthy, immoral, idolatrous, corrupt, proud, sexually obsessed, spiritually confused. It was a port city, a trade city, and a sin city. Think of New York city, Las Vegas, and Hollywood merged into one. To live like a Corinthian was a common phrase meaning to live in open immorality or open sin. This church was planted right there in Corinth.

How was the church at Corinth born? Acts 18 tells the story. Paul preached the Gospel. The Jews rejected him. The Gentiles received the word. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, got saved. Many believed and were baptized. Paul stayed for a year and half teaching the Word. This was a

miracle church – born in a hostile city with supernatural power. Its supernatural beginnings didn't prevent human failures.

So, what was happening in the church? Corinth was saved but they weren't sanctified in their behavior. They had major problems like division, pride, immorality, lawsuits against each other, false doctrine, disorder in worship, abuse of spiritual gifts, confusion about the resurrection. They were gifted but unstable, enriched but immature, Spirit indwelt but flesh driven.

Paul writes here not to condemn them but to correct them, restore them, remind them, and rebuild them. Why did Paul write this? Reports of trouble had reached him. There are divisions. There's sin. There's confusion. They had many questions. Paul answers these one by one in this book. This is an awesome book that applies directly to this church.

So, please do not miss this today. And, as we continue through the Bible, don't miss any of the sermons. The book of 1 Corinthians is a letter from a spiritual father to a struggling church, calling them back to unity, purity, humility, doctrine, and fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Corinth was a messy church. A divided church. A proud church. A gifted church — but a worldly church. And yet, before Paul corrects a single thing, before he rebukes them, before he addresses their sin: He starts with **grace, thanksgiving, and identity**. Why? Because God always begins with who you *are* before He deals with what you've *done*.

Paul is about to write one of the strongest correction letters in the New Testament — and he begins by reminding them: You are sanctified, You are called, You belong to Jesus Christ, You are enriched by Him, You have spiritual gifts, God will confirm you to the end, You are called into fellowship with Jesus.

Before the fight comes the foundation. Before the rebuke comes the reminder. Let's walk through these first nine verses exactly as Paul intended.

Verse 1 — Paul's Calling Came from God, Not Man

""1 Corinthians 1:1

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,""

Paul begins by declaring his authority — not his pride. He was **called**, not self-appointed. He was **chosen**, not elected by men. Jesus Christ directly chose Paul. Not a man. Not a church. Jesus Christ chose Paul Himself. He was an apostle "**through the will of God**," not because churches voted him in. And don't ever let someone lie to you about that. Chosen by God.

Corinth needed this reminder because they questioned everything. They questioned Paul's authority. They questioned doctrine. They questioned gifts. They questioned morality. So Paul begins where every preacher must begin: "I am here because God put me here."

Sosthenes was the ruler of the synagogue in Acts 18 who was beaten before Gallio — and later became a Christian brother and coworker with Paul. Proof that grace can change anyone. That's a big sermon topic right there. "And Sosthenes our brother."

So, look, there were Jews that changed their mind about Jesus and believed. There are many of them. There are Pharisees that changed their mind and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord. We pray for all of them out there today to change their mind and believe.

Verse 2 — You Are Sanctified, Called, and United

""1 Corinthians 1:2

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called to be saints**, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:""

Paul gives them three identity pillars:

1. Sanctified in Christ Jesus. Not sanctifying themselves — **already sanctified** in Christ.

2. Called to be saints. Saints aren't super-Christians. Saints are **all believers** called out from the world.

3. United with every believer everywhere. Paul reminds them: "You're not the only church. You're not the center of Christianity. You are part of something bigger."

God's people, because they have believed already, call upon the name of the Lord. "With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." The Bible says in Romans 10: "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" We call upon Him because we have believed.

Corinth's pride needed this early punch of humility. That's what that is right there at the end of the verse. Look at the very end of the verse: "Both theirs and ours."

For example, Jesus Christ is not ours alone here at True Words Baptist Church. We are not the only ones who have Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Jesus of all believers. He is not ours alone. Don't be nasty to other believers and act like you are the only one who has Jesus. Many people tell me, "Well I have my own Jesus." No you don't. Jesus is the Jesus of all believers. If you have some other Jesus, you made him up and he's a false Jesus.

Verse 3 — Grace and Peace Always Come in That Order

""1 Corinthians 1:3

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.""

Grace first — peace second. No grace, no peace. You cannot have the peace of God without the grace of God. And this peace comes:

- from God the Father
- through the Lord Jesus Christ

Not from self-help. Not from circumstances. Not from the world. Peace is a Person — and His name is Jesus Christ. Saved by grace and then peace through Jesus Christ.

Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Verses 4–5 — You Are Enriched by Christ, Not by Corinth

""1 Corinthians 1:4–5

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;""

Remember who is writing to who here. The apostle Paul, chosen by Jesus, is writing to the entire church at Corinth. Paul thanks God for them — even though they're a mess at this time. We're a mess that needs to be cleaned up. And look at what he says:

"You are **enriched** by Him." Not enriched by wealth. Not enriched by Corinth. Not enriched by status. **Enriched by Christ.** In:

- their speaking ("utterance")
- their understanding ("knowledge")

They didn't lack talent — they lacked humility. Paul reminds them their gifts came from Jesus, not their own brilliance.

Verse 6 — The Testimony of Christ Was Confirmed in Them

""1 Corinthians 1:6

Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:""

Paul says: "Your salvation is real. The gospel took root. Christ's testimony is confirmed in your lives." This does not mean they were perfect. It means they were **genuinely saved**.

Corinth had issues — but Corinth had Christ. Their behavior needed correction, but their salvation was never in doubt. They were sanctified already IN the Lord Jesus Christ. Hey, all of us need to correct our behavior. I need to correct my behavior. All of us do. We need to do better. But we're saved because we've believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 7 — You Come Behind in No Gift

""1 Corinthians 1:7

So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:""

They lacked nothing spiritually. They had: preaching gifts, teaching gifts, serving gifts, supernatural gifts, and leadership gifts that God gave to them. They had it all.

They were gifted — but they weren't being godly. Gifts without character produce chaos. God gave them what they needed but they weren't using them. Gifts without humility produce pride. Gifts without love produce noise.

And Paul reminds them: "You have every gift you need — now wait for Jesus to return." He lifts their eyes upward. And this is for you too. Remember to wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus. We want this church here to continue to wait on the Lord. After I'm gone, I want this church to continue. I'm not working hard here for me. I'm working hard here for Jesus.

When I'm gone, I want the young men in here to take this over and continue until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then I want the young men after these young men to continue. I want this church to continue and continue and continue doing the work of Jesus Christ until He comes.

Verse 8 — God Will Confirm You to the End

""1 Corinthians 1:8

Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.""

This is eternal security in one verse. Who confirms you? **God**. How long? **Unto the end**. How will you stand blameless? **Because Jesus holds you, not because you hold Him**. We don't always. We drop at Jesus times, and it's sad. When we sin, we drop him. But Jesus doesn't drop us. He holds us up through it all. Corinth wasn't blameless in behavior — but they were blameless **in Christ**.

This is not a verse about performance. This is a verse about position. You are saved in Jesus Christ. You are the children of God Almighty because of faith in Jesus Christ. He says, "I've got you my child." And I won't quit on you. Everyone else might quit on you but God is faithful. That leads us unto into the last verse today.

Verse 9 — God Called You Into Fellowship with His Son

""1 Corinthians 1:9

God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.""

Here is the heartbeat of the entire introduction: You were not called to a religion. You were not called to a denomination. You were not called to a rulebook. Look closely there. You were **called into fellowship** — friendship, relationship, communion — with **His Son Jesus Christ**. Look, this is big and you need to understand this. You are called unto fellowship with Jesus.

This is the highest calling a human can receive. Paul starts the letter with a reminder: “You belong to Jesus. You walk with Jesus. You fellowship with Jesus.” Everything else Paul corrects later must be seen through this lens.

Application — What 1 Corinthians 1:1–9 Teaches Us Today

- 1. Your calling is from God — not man.** Don't let the world define what God has already declared.
- 2. You are sanctified and called — start living like it.** Identity comes before behavior. Now you are God's child. Now act like it and live like it.
- 3. Grace always comes before peace.** Stop seeking peace everywhere except the throne of grace. God's grace comes first.
- 4. Your gifts come from Christ — not your ability.** Use them humbly. Use them gratefully. Use them for Him.
- 5. God confirms you to the end.** Your salvation is secure. Your standing is secure. Your eternity is secure.
- 6. You were called into fellowship with Jesus.** Not religion. Not performance. Not popularity. **Jesus.** Walk with Him.

Closing — Called by Grace, Kept by Grace, Enriched by Grace

Paul opens this letter with a flood of grace because everything that follows flows from grace. Corinth needed correction — but they also needed comfort. Paul tells them: God called you. God saved you. God gifted you. God enriches you. God confirms you. God fellowships with you. And God will finish what He started.

I will say that again: "GOD WILL FINISH WHAT HE STARTED." Without a doubt. God started a GOOD work within you, and He will perform it. Where grace begins, confidence grows. Hey, have confidence in our God. He is a great God.

Let's walk in the calling God has given us. And let's do that with gratitude, humility, and fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let's pray.