
UCM @ UBC Fall 2010 Core Study:

I CORINTHIANS

“How we Live What We Believe”

UCM'S VISION FOR CORES:

Our desire is that Core would be a place where students can grow in their relationship with Jesus and journey together in seeking to be more like Him. That's why we call it CORE, because it's central to who we are becoming. Our vision is that there would be Core groups in every corner of campus pursuing spiritual growth and transformation in community with one another.

COMPONENTS OF CORE:

Every Core will be made up of a unique small group of students, and consequently every Core will be different and have it's own identity. At the same time, our Cores are committed to these 5 core values that that keep us balanced and on track as we follow Jesus: discipleship, fellowship, outreach, prayer and worship.

With approximately 11 available weeks for group meetings in the Fall 2010 term, it's important that each Core leader and Co-leader plan ahead and through out the term to keep a balance in their Core. It's easy to fall into a routine of only studying scripture together and closing in prayer. But remember: this isn't a bible study, this is CORE!

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE:

First semester is a critical time for forming authentic and spiritually transformative Core groups. Every Fall semester we choose a book of the Bible that all of our Cores will study. This semester your UCM Staff have prepared 7 Core studies on the book of 1 Corinthians. We have purposely chosen only to prepare seven studies so that there is space in these eleven weeks for you as leaders to ensure your Core is balanced and pursuing all the essential components that make up Core.

We have prepared the following schedule as an example of how to plan to roughly incorporate our five values of prayer, worship, discipleship, outreach and fellowship in your Cores:

Week:	Core Focus:	Passage:
1. (Sep 20-22)	Core Vision & Share Personal Stories & Devotional	1 Cor. 1:10-2:16
2. (Sep 27-29)	Study #1 & Stories	1 Cor: 3-4
3. (Oct 4-6)	Community Building Activity (Dinner/Sports/etc)	
4. (Oct 11-13)	Study #2 & Stories & Prayer focus	1 Cor:5&6:12-20
5. (Oct 18-20)	Study #3 & Stories	1 Cor: 7
6. (Oct 25-27)	Study #4 & Prayer focus	1 Cor: 8, 9:19-27, 10:23-33
7. (Nov 1-3)	Study #5 & Worship focus	1 Cor: 11, 14:34-35 & 40
8. (Nov 8-10)	Core Date	
9. (Nov 15-17)	Outreach	
10. (Nov 22-24)	Study #6 & Prayer focus	1 Cor: 12-14
11. (Nov 29-Dec 1)	Study #7 & Worship focus	1 Cor: 15

PLANNING YOUR CORE SCHEDULE:

Trust me, these first 11 weeks will go by fast. Sit down with your co-leader, take time to pray and discuss the visions you have for your Core and schedule it out. Take a look at some of the suggestions below and then use this calendar to roughly plan your semester of Core meetings:

Week:	Core Focus:	Passage:
1. (Sep 20-22)	_____	_____
2. (Sep 27-29)	_____	_____
3. (Oct 4-6)	_____	_____
4. (Oct 11-13)	_____	_____
5. (Oct 18-20)	_____	_____
6. (Oct 25-27)	_____	_____
7. (Nov 1-3)	_____	_____
8. (Nov 8-10)	_____	_____
9. (Nov 15-17)	_____	_____
10. (Nov 22-24)	_____	_____
11. (Nov 29-Dec 1)	_____	_____

ESSENTIAL PRACTICES IN CORE:

Over the years students have found the following practices and experiences to be an essential part of a Core:

- Reading and studying scripture together with the purpose of personal and communal application.
- Authentically getting to know one another by sharing our personal stories/history and testimonies of coming to follow Jesus.
- Challenging one another and keeping each other accountable in our walks of faith and obedience to Jesus.
- Serving or planning an outreach project to do together each term (e.g. being a welcome team at a Thursday Night, dorm outreach, or serving at a mission downtown).
- Praying for one another, relationships in dorm, and for the campus.
- Incorporating time and space for worship.
- Connecting with another guys/girls Core (i.e. a "Core date").

5 PRACTICAL IDEAS:

1. Make time in the first 5 weeks of your Core meetings for each person in your Core to share their story. (One or two people each week depending on the size of your Core).
2. Take time to pray for the person right after they share their story.
3. Book one night early on in the semester to do a community building activity together, like eating dinner together, playing sports, or a game that allows getting to know each other.
4. Plan to have one or two Cores where there is space to worship together (e.g. through music or time of silent contemplation) or to have an extended time in prayer for one another (e.g. laying on hands and praying for anointing in mission and our callings).
5. Meet somewhere accessible in dorm and pray about a practical way to purposefully engage your dorm or neighborhood.

PASSAGES & THEMES:

Below are the titles, passages, and themes of the bible studies we are preparing as a resource that will be available on the website this fall semester (week by week):

[Addressing the need for unity and the source of unity]

Passage: 1 Corinthians 1:10-2:16

Themes: An introduction to why we are looking at the problems that the church faces. Highlights the meaning of the cross and urges us to have the mind of Christ.

[Addressing Causes of Division in the Church]

Passage: 1 Corinthians 3-4

Themes: Immaturity in our faith as a cause of disunity. Pursuing a foundation and maturity in Christ alone. Reminder we are to pursue being Servants of Christ and what that looks like.

[Addressing Sexual Conduct as a Christian]

Passage: 1 Corinthians 5 & 6:12-20

Themes:

[Instruction on Christian Marriage]

Passage: 1 Corinthians 7

Themes:

[Instructions on Christian Freedom]

Passage: 1 Corinthians 9, 9:19-27, 10:23-33

Themes: Principles guiding how we live out the liberty given to us.

[Instructions on Proper Attitudes in Worship]

Passage: 1 Corinthians 11, 14:34-35&40

Themes: Primarily about proper attitudes and conduct in worship. Looking at the role of women as well as the abuses surrounding the practice of the Lord's Supper.

[Instructions on the Spiritual Gifts]

Passage: 1 Corinthians 12-14

Themes:

[Instructions on the Resurrection]

Passage: 1 Corinthians 15

Themes:

READING STORY BY STORY:

Selecting these passages to focus our study time in Core is in no way to imply that this is all we are going to read. 1 Corinthians is a great book to be reading through out the week, story by

story. The best way for your Core members to engage the text during the Core meeting is if they have been reading the context through out the week. Encourage this by modeling it yourself.

BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW:¹

WHY 1 CORINTHIANS?

We will study 1 Corinthians with the goal to understand the letters in more depth to note the main themes/lessons from the letters, and then draw lessons which we can apply to solve similar situations/problems that exist in our churches today.

In this letter, we read about believers taking one another to court. The Lord's Supper has become a place of drunkenness for some while others are forced to go hungry. One member of the church is living in immorality and the church is allowing the situation to continue. There is serious division between members in the church. Some members favor one Christian leader while others favor another.

Even though various members of the church have the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it appears that the church fails to understand what it means to love one another. In fact Paul describes the Christians in Corinth as babies in their understanding of spiritual matters.

Some members think they are free to commit sexual immorality while others forbid people to marry and encourage husbands and wives to divorce. All of these problems, and more, existed in a church whose pastor for 11/2 years had been the Apostle Paul himself.

In 1 Corinthians the Apostle Paul answers a number of questions that the Corinthian believers have concerning the Christian life. Second Corinthians reveals to us the apostle Paul's heart. Paul is deeply hurt by his church, yet he reveals his deep love for them. In these letters, we learn much about the problems faced by the 1st Century church. We also learn about Paul and how we too should pastor our churches, how we should lead and help the church through its problems and struggles.

To help us understand 1 Corinthians, it is necessary for us to consider the sequence/order of events in Paul's ministry of letter writing and visits to the Corinthian Church. (see page 1050 of "The New Bible Commentary Revised")

Proposed sequence of events:

1. A previous letter (see 1 Cor. 5:9 and NIV study note) written from Ephesus. This letter has probably disappeared)
2. The Corinthians reply letter, asking further questions (1 Cor 7:1)
3. Our 1 Corinthians written from Ephesus (1Cor 16:8) in answer to the Corinthians letter.
4. Paul visits Corinth. But is is a short and emotionally painful visit (2 Cor 2:1)
5. Another letter by Paul to rebuke the Corinthians. The previous letters and visits had not resulted in change/repentance on the part of some of the Corinthian believers. (2Cor 2:3,4,9;7:8) again written from Ephesus.
6. A letter of reconciliation (our 2 Cor) written. From Macedonia.
7. Paul's third and last visit to Corinth, where he stays over the winter season before going on to Judea (via Macedonia) with the money collection for the Jerusalem church.

¹ A great resource used for the content of this section was Arthur Howard's teaching notes from Malaysia Evangelical College and UCM. Many other commentaries on the book of 1 Corinthians can be discovered in the Regent Library. Ask one of the staff how to find these books in the Library.

Background of the City and Inhabitants of Corinth:

The apostle Paul reached the city of Corinth in 50 AD. We can read of the beginnings of the church in Acts 18:1-17 (see nap NIV study Bible pg. 1682)

In order to understand all that Paul writes in 1&2 Corinthians, it is important that we understand the world in which Paul wrote, especially the background of the city and the people of Corinth.

Corinth was an important city in what is now called Greece. (modern day Corinth is not the same city). The city of Corinth in the 1st Century was located on an isthmus, 6 km. in width. (see map on pg. 1682). This isthmus divided Greece into 2 sections, therefore making the city of Corinth an important commercial business center. Corinth was also important politically and militarily.

Rather than make the dangerous journey around S.Greece, trading ships would send their cargo through Corinth. Light/smaller ships would be pulled across the isthmus – heavier, bigger boats would be unloaded and the cargo carried across the 6km to a ship on the other side.

1. all this cargo and people passing through the city of Corinth.
2. This was an important trade route from Spain and Italy in the West and Asia in the East.
3. Because of this trading the city of Corinth had people of various races from many different countries. Along with these various cultures came many different religions.
4. Different languages, morals
5. Wealth. Corinth was a money rich city. Very few other cities were as important in the Roman Empire at Paul's time.
6. Corinth was also famous for its immorality. Close to the city was a Temple dedicated to the Greek goddess of love (Aphrodite)
7. As many as 1000 prostitutes worked in the Temple. Corinth had a reputation as a place of drunkenness and immorality (Corinthianize)
8. Corinth was also famous for its athletic games, 2nd only to the Olympics.

The Corinthian Church

Despite the immoral condition of Corinth, God called Paul to plant a church in this strategic place (Acts 18:9,10), so that through this city, Christianity might spread to other places. The church may very well have reflected the diversity of people found in the city. The background of the Christians would have varied. Perhaps this helped cause some of the problems found in the church.

1&2 Corinthians in summary

9. 1:1-9 The Apostle Paul begins with his usual greetings, but vs. 1:1 has special significance as he is later to defend his apostleship in the 2 letters.

10. 1:10-17 We read of the purpose of the letter. Some people from Chloe's household visited Paul and told him of the problems in the Corinthian church.

These problems were:

1. Divisions in the church (1:10-17; 3:1-23; 11:17-33). Members were splitting into groups based on their preference for certain teachers/preachers. Paul's teachings were perhaps not as polished/fine sounding as those of Apollos (1 Cor.1:12;3:4;4:6)
2. Immorality in the church. One man had married his father's wife (1Cor 5) bad example to both Christians and non-Christians.
3. Christians were bringing disputes to the courts (1Cor 6) rather than settle themselves – bad witness.
4. The Lord's Supper resulted in some members being left out (1Cor 11:17 ff) – lack of love.

Later Paul receives a letter from the Corinthian church (1Cor7:1). They had many questions to ask Paul concerning:

1. sex, marriage and divorce
2. could they eat meat offered to idols and then sold in the market?
3. how should women dress?
4. should women lead in church?
5. how should a church service be conducted when it was interrupted by people speaking in tongues and giving prophesy?
6. what does the resurrection from the dead mean?

Paul writes to answer these questions and to address the problems from Chloe's household have told him. This is 1 Corinthians:

11. Ch.1-6 deals with the problems mentioned by Chloe's household.
12. Ch. 7-15 deals with the questions of the Corinthian church
13. Ch. 16:1-18 is concerning the collection to be made for the Jerusalem church
14. Ch16:19ff final greetings

But, the situation in Corinth got worse. A brief visit to the church had caused him much pain. Probably no repentance and some rejected him as an Apostle. Later Titus took a letter from Paul and Paul then waited in Troas to hear from Titus (2cor 2:12,13) Most of the Corinthians had repented (2 Cor 7:5-7) Paul then wrote 2 Corinthians to prepare for his visit and to encourage them to prepare the donation.