

# Doctrinal Design of 1 Corinthians

A 2-Lesson Introductory Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®  
Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

## About This Series

"Doctrinal Design of 1 Corinthians" is an introductory study by Keith Blades that equips believers to understand the purpose, structure, and scope of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. Drawing on the doctrinal foundation already established in Romans, Keith shows how 1 Corinthians is specifically designed to address three categories of ungodliness that can adversely affect a believer's sanctified life: ungodly thinking (chapters 1–4), ungodly living (chapters 5–10), and ungodly labor (chapters 11–16). These two introductory lessons establish the essential framework needed to properly receive the corrective teaching of the epistle — including a clear understanding of how God's Word effectually works within the believer through doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.



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## Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
Lesson 1	The believer's sanctified position in Christ and the three components of godliness — how Romans establishes the foundation for 1 Corinthians
Lesson 2	The three major sections of 1 Corinthians and the four-fold pattern by which corrective doctrine effectually works within the believer

## Lesson Summaries

L1

### Introduction to 1 Corinthians *The Sanctified Position and the Effectual Working of God's Word*

- 1 Corinthians directly follows Romans in Paul's epistles — Romans establishes the believer's identity in Christ (justification, sanctification, sonship); 1 Corinthians applies that foundation practically
- Four hallmark features of the world's value system are addressed in 1 Corinthians: (1) the wisdom of this world, (2) the filth of this world, (3) fornication, and (4) the fashion of this world
  - These four features were actively controlling the Corinthian believers' lives and are a real danger for believers today

### Three Components of Sanctification (Romans 6–8)

- Dead to sin — the Holy Spirit baptized believers into Christ's death (Romans 6:3–4, 11)
- Alive unto God in righteousness — raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:11)
- Received the spirit of adoption — positional sonship given at salvation (Romans 8:14–15)

### Three Components of Godliness

- Think like God does — God designed the believer's mind to receive and operate upon His word
- Live like God does — sanctification enables a godly manner of life
- Labor with God in what He is doing — functioning in cooperation with God's purpose
  - Romans 1:18–32 documents the three-fold ungodliness of man by nature: wrong thinking (vv. 21–25), wrong living (vv. 26–27), wrong laboring (v. 28+)
- Doctrine defined: a body of information designed to materially affect the way in which you think, and thereby change the way in which you live, and thereby bring you into laboring with God
- God's Word is living and powerful — designed to effectually work within the believer to produce godly thinking, living, and laboring (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)

## The Structure of 1 Corinthians *Three Major Sections and the Order of Corrective Doctrine*

### Three Major Sections of 1 Corinthians

- Chapters 1–4: Problems of ungodly thinking — the wisdom of this world and the filth of this world dominating the Corinthians' minds
- Chapters 5–10: Problems of ungodly living — fornication and the fashion of this world controlling the Corinthians' manner of life
- Chapters 11–16: Problems of ungodly labor — abuse of spiritual gifts and assembly disorder reflecting ungodly labor in the local church
  - The three-section structure corresponds directly to the three components of sanctification and the three components of godliness

### The Four-Fold Pattern of Corrective Doctrine (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

- Doctrine — a body of information that changes the way the believer thinks about the issue
- Reproof — identifies the problem and its consequences; shows the believer what is wrong
- Correction — shows how to address and resolve the problem
- Instruction in righteousness — teaches the believer how to walk going forward
  - Example: 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 — reproof (vv. 17–22), correction (vv. 23–32), instruction in righteousness (vv. 33–34)
- The corrective doctrine does not effectually work unless handled in the order in which it is given — lifting verses out of context prevents the doctrine from operating properly
- The epistles Romans through Philemon are not in random order — each epistle builds on the previous, taking the believer from initial salvation truth

L2

through full maturity

- Problems addressed in later epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians) cannot be resolved until the corrective doctrines of 1 Corinthians are operative within the believer

## Key Doctrinal Distinctions

### Sanctification Has Three Distinct Components

Romans 6, 7, and 8 teach three components to the believer's sanctified position in Christ: (1) dead to sin — the Holy Spirit baptized the believer into Christ's death so that sin no longer has dominion (Romans 6:11); (2) alive unto God in righteousness — raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:11); and (3) received the spirit of adoption — positional sonship given unconditionally at salvation (Romans 8:14–15). These three components are not earned or developed; they are received at the moment of justification and provide the capacity for godly living.

### Godliness vs. Ungodliness: Three-Component Framework

Keith defines godliness as consisting of three components: thinking like God does, living like God does, and laboring with God in what He is doing. Man by nature is ungodly in all three respects, as Romans 1:18–32 demonstrates. The three major sections of 1 Corinthians address each dimension — chapters 1–4 deal with ungodly thinking, chapters 5–10 with ungodly living, and chapters 11–16 with ungodly labor. God's Word is specifically designed to effectually work within the believer in these three areas.

### Doctrine Defined: Information That Changes Thinking, Living, and Laboring

Keith draws a precise distinction between mere information and doctrine. Doctrine is a body of information specifically designed to materially affect the way in which you think about something, and thereby change the way in which you live, and thereby bring you into laboring together with God. This is why Paul teaches doctrine so extensively — it is not academic knowledge for its own sake, but purposeful content that produces transformation in the believer from the inside out.

### The Order of Corrective Doctrine Must Be Followed

Paul's corrective epistles follow a consistent four-fold pattern drawn from 2 Timothy 3:16–17: doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Keith emphasizes that this order is not incidental — the doctrine does not effectually work if verses are lifted out of context or handled out of sequence. A believer who applies the instruction in righteousness without first receiving the doctrine and reproof will not experience the transformative power God designed the passage to produce.

### 1 Corinthians Presupposes the Foundation of Romans

1 Corinthians does not stand alone — it is written to believers who have already been established in Romans truth. The Corinthians had learned their identity in Christ (justification, sanctification, and sonship

as set forth in Romans), yet the world's value system was still controlling their lives. This is the pattern for the Body of Christ today: Romans establishes who you are in Christ; 1 Corinthians addresses what happens when the world's four value systems corrupt the practical expression of that identity.

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## Key Scripture References

<b>1 Corinthians 1:1–3</b>	Opening verses reveal the epistle's design — written to saints sanctified in Christ Jesus, establishing that 1 Corinthians deals with the practical outworking of sanctification
<b>Romans 6:1–11</b>	Establishes the two primary components of sanctification: dead to sin and alive unto God in righteousness through Christ's death and resurrection
<b>Romans 8:14–15</b>	The third component of sanctification: believers have received the spirit of adoption — positional sonship given at salvation, not earned through maturity
<b>Romans 1:18–32</b>	Paul's three-fold documentation of man's ungodliness by nature: wrong thinking (vv. 21–25), wrong living (vv. 26–27), wrong laboring (v. 28+)
<b>Romans 12:1–8</b>	The opening of practical sanctification — doctrine given to renew the mind, followed by instruction on how to live as a functioning member of the Body
<b>2 Timothy 3:16–17</b>	The four-fold pattern for corrective doctrine: profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness — the order is essential
<b>1 Thessalonians 2:13</b>	Paul's affirmation that the Thessalonians received his word not as the word of men, but as God's Word, which effectually worketh in those who believe
<b>Hebrews 4:12</b>	The living and powerful nature of God's Word — cited in introduction to establish the capacity of the Word to effectually work within the believer (dispensational context: written to Israel's remnant)
<b>1 Corinthians 11:17–34</b>	Example of the four-fold corrective pattern: reproof of ungodly labor at the Lord's Table (vv. 17–22), correction (vv. 23–32), instruction in righteousness (vv. 33–34)

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