

# cultivate

## 2026



**Week 1**

1 Corinthians

Brighton Community Church

# Overview

A 20-Day Devotional Reading By Rev. Dr. William Wan



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## The Anchor in the Storm of Voices

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-9

### 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. <sup>11</sup> My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is this: one of you says, 'I follow Paul'; another, 'I follow Apollos'; another, 'I follow Cephas'; still another, 'I follow Christ.' <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul?

### 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

<sup>1</sup> Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly — mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. <sup>3</sup> You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? <sup>4</sup> For when one says, 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos,' are you not mere human beings?



<sup>5</sup> What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe — as the Lord has assigned to each his task. <sup>6</sup> I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. <sup>7</sup> So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. <sup>8</sup> The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. <sup>9</sup> For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.



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## DEVOTION

**The Anchor in the Storm of Voices**

There are many voices calling us to take sides. Many placards identifying opposing positions. The cacophony is deafening. Our feeds on our devices overflow with hot takes, our chats buzz with competing agendas, and even our churches can echo with subtle (or not-so-subtle) competitive “we-are-better-than-you” divisive teachings and positions.

We are tossed on waves of rapid social change and bombarded by a relentless barrage of conflicting political narratives. It feels easier to grab onto something — a charismatic leader, a compelling ideology, a familiar tribal position — just to find some stability. But Paul’s urgent plea to the fractured Corinthian church cuts through our modern chaos: “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.” (1 Cor 1:10).



The Corinthians had fallen into the very trap we face. They anchored their identity and loyalty not primarily to Christ, but to the messengers — “I follow Paul,” “I follow Apollos,” “I follow Cephas” (1 Cor 1:12). They formed factions, elevating human leaders and their distinct styles above the unifying Lordship of Jesus.

Paul’s diagnosis is stark: This is worldly thinking, evidence of spiritual immaturity — “mere infants in Christ” acting “according to the flesh” (1 Cor 3:1-3). Their divisions betrayed a fundamental misunderstanding. Paul and Apollos were not rival leaders to pledge allegiance to; they were “servants through whom you came to believe” (1 Cor 3:5). The foundation, the source of life, the centre of everything, is “Christ alone”.

In our polarised world, the pressure to pick a side is immense. We are tempted to define ourselves by our political position, our theological camp, our company loyalty, or our social media echo chamber. We rally behind personalities, ideologies, or brands, seeking security and identity. But Paul warns this leads only to quarrels, jealousy, and the tragic fracturing of the body of Christ (1 Cor 3:3). It makes us spiritual infants, tossed by every cultural wave and wind of doctrine.



Caught in the centre of the storm, we need an anchor in Christ himself. Unity is not found in uniformity of opinion on secondary matters or blind loyalty to human figures. It is found when we consciously and deliberately root our primary identity and allegiance in Jesus Christ. He is the unshakeable foundation (1 Cor 3:11). When Christ is the centre, our differences in perspective, gifting, or background become complementary parts of his body, not conflicting pieces for division. We recognise that we are all “God’s field, God’s building” (1 Cor 3:9), belonging ultimately to him.

Amidst the volatility and conflicting voices, choose the only anchor that holds. Fix your eyes, your loyalty, your very identity on Jesus Christ. Only then can we experience the true and unifying fellowship (*koinonia*), for which he died to create a mature, united and stable witness in a fractured world. Let Paul’s cry be ours: “Is Christ divided?” (1 Cor 1:13). May our answer be a resounding “No!”



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## Reflect

Do you elevate a leader, denomination, church or worship style above the core unity found in the gospel? Are you promoting understanding and common ground in Christ, valuing diverse expressions while maintaining essential unity?



## Journal



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# Pray

## Personal

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Pray for a heart anchored in Christ alone, not swayed by human leaders, trends or popular ideologies. May Christ direct our hearts and minds amidst all the competing influences.

Pray for unity in the body of Christ, that we may speak, act, and relate in ways that build peace rather than division.

## Corporate

### Leadership of the Church

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Pray that the pastors and Cell Group leaders will remain anchored in Christ amidst the many voices, pressures, and expectations they face.

Pray for spiritual unity and humility among all leaders, guarding the church from division.



## Embracing God's Scandalous Wisdom

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

### 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

<sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

<sup>19</sup> For it is written:

‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;  
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.’

<sup>20</sup> Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.



<sup>26</sup> Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup> God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one may boast before him. <sup>30</sup> It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. <sup>31</sup> Therefore, as it is written: ‘Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.’



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## DEVOTION

**Embracing God's Scandalous Wisdom**

We crave certainty. We demand clear answers, proven formulas, and data-driven strategies to navigate the relentless uncertainty and dizzying complexity of modern life. We idolise intellectual prowess, technological solutions, and charismatic leaders promising power and control. To this logical analytical ethos, Paul proclaims a message that seems utterly nonsensical: “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor 1:18).

The cross and power — it is an oxymoron. To the sophisticated minds of Paul's day — the Greek philosophers seeking elegant wisdom and the Jewish leaders demanding miraculous signs — the idea that God's ultimate power and salvation would be revealed through a crucified criminal was sheer madness. It defied every expectation of glory, strength, and worldly wisdom. They sought certainty through human intellect (*sophia*) or divine spectacle (*semeion*). God offered a bleeding Messiah nailed on a Roman cross, one of the civilisation's most cruel tool for execution of a human being.



Paul does not soften the blow; he leans into the scandal: “God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor 1:21). Human wisdom, despite its impressive achievements, ultimately fails to bridge the gap between a holy God and sinful humanity, or to provide true, lasting meaning in the face of chaos and death. Our complex systems crack, our certainties crumble, and we are left exposed.

“Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1 Cor 1:20). The cross stands as God's profound critique of human self-sufficiency and intellectual pride. It contradicts the expectations of the intellect.

Why is the cross true wisdom?

1. **It reveals God's nature.** It shows a God whose power is perfected in sacrificial love, not domination; whose wisdom prioritises redemption over retribution.

2. **It levels the playing field.** No human achievement qualifies us. “God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor 1:27). Our status, intellect, or power offer no advantage before the cross.

3. **It offers true power.** The power to forgive sins, conquer death, and transform broken lives — power accessible only through surrender, not self-exaltation. “Christ Jesus...has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30).



Paul himself is a witness to the power of the cross to transform lives. Many ex-offenders I work with testify to the power of the cross. You too can testify to how the old, rugged cross changed your life.

In a world demanding certainty that we cannot possess and complex solutions that often fail, the cross calls us to:

1. **Trust the “foolish” path.** When human wisdom reaches its limits, when complexity overwhelms, despair sets in. Resist it by turning to the “foolishness” of the cross. Cease strategising. Start praying. Choose forgiveness over retaliation, sacrificial love over self-preservation, even when it seems irrational. Trust that God’s way, revealed in Christ, is true power.

2. **Cultivate humility.** Acknowledge the limits of human understanding and control. Let the cross remove your reliance on your intellect, achievements, or status. Embrace dependence on God, recognising that true wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, not the confidence of the self-made.

3. **Find our true identity in Christ, not in our competence or achievements.** Your value is not rooted in having all the answers or mastering the chaos. It is anchored in being “in Christ Jesus” who is your wisdom, righteousness, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30). This frees you from the crushing pressure of worldly expectations.



The cross is God’s surprising answer to a competitive world. It does not offer simplistic solutions or remove life’s storms. Instead, it offers an unshakeable foundation: God’s unfathomable love demonstrated in weakness, his power perfected in sacrifice, and his wisdom that confounds the proud but saves the humble. When the world’s certainties fail and complexity overwhelms, those who embrace the scandalous wisdom of the cross find peace beyond human understanding. It is the only certainty that endures, the only wisdom that truly saves. “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord” (1 Cor 1:31).



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## Reflect

Do you take pride in your education, intellect or achievements?  
What does it look like for you to find your identity only in Christ  
and not in achievements?



## Journal



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# Pray

## Personal

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Pray for humility to embrace God’s “foolish” wisdom, especially when worldly logic feels more appealing or impressive.

Pray for freedom from pride in achievements, intellect, or status, asking God to root your identity in Christ alone.

## Corporate

## Church Staff and Service Teams

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Pray that every staff member and service team will operate with the wisdom of the Lord, not solely depending on human strength or cleverness.

Pray that those serving weekly will carry a spirit of humility, remembering that God is pleased with their service and that only he is their source of joy and rest.



## Discerning Truth in the Haze

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

### 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

<sup>6</sup> We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup> No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> However, as it is written:

'What no eye has seen,  
what no ear has heard,  
and what no human mind has conceived' –  
the things God has prepared for those who love him –  
<sup>10</sup> these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.



<sup>12</sup> What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. <sup>13</sup> This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. <sup>14</sup> The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. <sup>15</sup> The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, <sup>16</sup> for,

‘Who has known the mind of the Lord  
so as to instruct him?’

But we have the mind of Christ.



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## DEVOTION

**Discerning Truth in the Haze**

We are drowning in information overload yet starving for wisdom. Complex issues twist in the wind, contradictory voices shout for our allegiance, and charismatic figures promise easy answers. It is tempting to latch onto the loudest voice, the trendiest take, or the most emotionally charged narrative. But Paul, writing to a church dazzled by flashy rhetoric and worldly philosophies, points us to a deeper, surer source of understanding: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived” — the things God has prepared for those who love him — these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit (1 Cor 2:9-10).

Paul distinguishes between two kinds of wisdom operating in the world:

1. **The wisdom of this age (1 Cor 2:6).** The prevailing philosophies, power structures, and trendy ideas championed by the cultural elite (“rulers of this age”). This wisdom is fundamentally flawed — destined to pass away (1 Cor 2:6) and incapable of grasping God’s true reality (1 Cor 2:8). It often manifests as hype: simplistic solutions, personality cults, emotional manipulation, or intellectual arrogance.



2. **God's secret wisdom (1 Cor 2:7).** His profound plan of redemption centred on Christ crucified. This wisdom transcends human intellect and cannot be discovered through mere reason or observation. "The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God" (1 Cor 2:10). True understanding of God, his purposes, and his ways comes only through divine revelation in the scriptures and we received it by the illumination of his Spirit.

Why is the Spirit essential for discernment?

1. **He reveals.** The Spirit unlocks the meaning of God's revelation, particularly concerning Christ (1 Cor 2:10, 12-13). He illuminates Scripture and God's work in the world. It is the Spirit's spotlight on what God has done as recorded in the scriptures — the preparation of a people for the salvation of the world — how God preserved this special people, the Jews, till this day. Consider how Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in great details.

2. **He interprets.** Spiritual truths are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:14). Without the Spirit, God's wisdom seems like foolishness. The "natural person" (relying solely on human faculties) cannot grasp it. Consider how we feel and understand the word of God as we humbly read and listen to it and feel the prompting of the Spirit to obey.



3. **He imparts the mind of Christ.** This is the astounding outcome: “But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16). Through the indwelling Spirit, believers gain access to Christ’s perspective, values, and understanding — the ultimate lens for discernment. Consider how the modern emphasis on “mindfulness” echoes a deeply Christian impulse — to focus and fill our minds with Christ and his values, and to find peace and assurance in every moment of our lives.

In a world saturated with complexity and ambiguity, relying on “the wisdom of this age”, whether slick marketing, popular opinion, academic elitism, or spiritual hype, leads to confusion, deception, and spiritual immaturity. We mistake noise for substance, charisma for anointing, and complexity for depth.

Amidst the clamour and confusion, God offers not more information, but transformation through his Spirit. He grants access to the “mind of Christ” — the clarity, perspective, and wisdom we desperately need. Do not settle for the shifting sands of worldly wisdom or the seductive allure of spiritual hype. “The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things” (1 Cor 2: 15). Cultivate a life attuned to the Spirit. Seek his revelation. Submit to his teaching. Then, even in the densest fog of complexity and ambiguity, you will walk in the light of God's true wisdom.



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## Reflect

Do you rely more on human reasoning and popular voices than on the Spirit's guidance? How can you deepen your discernment by engaging scripture prayerfully and listening to the Spirit?



## Journal



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# Pray

## Personal

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Pray for spiritual discernment to recognise truth amidst confusion, misinformation, and persuasive voices.

Pray for a listening heart that responds to the Holy Spirit's revelation rather than reacting impulsively to worldly noise.

## Corporate

## Missions

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Pray that the church's missionaries and mission partners will discern God's truth clearly amidst cultural, social, and ideological "noise."

Pray for the Spirit's revelation to guide them as they engage complex worldviews and bring the gospel with clarity.



## The Only Applause That Matters

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

### 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

<sup>1</sup> This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. <sup>2</sup> Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. <sup>3</sup> I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup> My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup> Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.



**DEVOTION**



## DEVOTION

**The Only Applause That Matters**

Our world is a noisy courtroom. Opinions are rendered instantaneously online, assessment at work is inescapable, and the pressure to perform, or be seen performing, is relentless. KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) are to be met to have a chance at being retained or promoted. We question our value when results are not readily visible. In this environment, the apostle Paul offers a radical reorientation: “This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

Paul faced intense scrutiny and criticism in Corinth. Factions judged his effectiveness, his speaking style, and his authority. Even his demeanour was judged. His response? He redefines his identity and the ultimate standard of evaluation:



1. **Identity.** Stewards, not celebrities. He is not the owner of the gospel or his ministry; he is a servant (*doulos*) of Christ and a steward entrusted with sacred “mysteries” (God’s revealed truth in Christ). His role is to manage and steward what is entrusted to him, not to claim ownership or promote himself.

2. **Standard.** Faithfulness, not flashiness. The core requirement for a steward is not spectacular results, widespread recognition, or crowd-pleasing tactics. It is faithfulness — reliability, integrity, and diligent care with what has been entrusted. Old Faithful is named for its predictability. The cone geyser in Yellowstone National Park faithfully erupts every 90 mins for 1.5-5 mins, expelling 3,700-8,400 gallons of boiling water.

3. **Judge.** God alone. Paul makes a stunning declaration: “I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself... It is the Lord who judges me” (1 Cor 4:3-4). He dismisses both external criticism and his own potentially flawed self-assessment. The only verdict that carries eternal weight comes from the Lord.

Why is God’s judgment the only judgement to be concerned about?

1. **He sees everything.** Human opinion is based on limited, often superficial, information — the visible results, the public persona. God sees the hidden sacrifices, the pure motives (even when mixed), the quiet obedience, and the struggles invisible to others.



2. **He knows the heart.** Humans judge outward actions; God examines the heart (1 Sam 16:7). He understands the “why” behind our service, the depth of our commitment when no one is watching.

3. **His verdict is final and true.** Human opinion shifts like sand — fickle and impermanent. God’s judgment is perfect, just, and based on the full picture, revealed in his perfect time: “He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God” (1 Cor 4:5).

In a world drowning in ambiguity and desperate for certainty through external validation, Paul calls us to a profound freedom: Serve Christ faithfully right where you are with what you have. Do the next right thing, even if no one notices. Pour yourself out even if you are misunderstood. Anchor your soul not in the shifting sands of public opinion or measurable outcomes, but in the solid rock of God’s perfect knowledge and his promise of ultimate vindication. Your worth is not determined by your visibility, but by your faithfulness to the One who sees you perfectly. Find your peace, your purpose, and your praise in him alone.



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## Reflect

How do you keep your sights on God amidst all the other things of the world that demand your attention (e.g. the “likes”, the performance reviews, the critics)? How can you continue to serve faithfully and love others even when your efforts go unnoticed or unappreciated?



## Journal



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# Pray

## Personal

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Pray for a renewed mind that understands and values what the Spirit reveals rather than what the world celebrates.

Pray for sensitivity to the Spirit, asking him to illuminate scripture and guide your decisions.

## Corporate

## Brighton Connection

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Pray that Brighton Connection will be guided by the Spirit's wisdom as they serve vulnerable families and communities.

Pray that those they serve will experience God's presence through compassionate actions and Spirit-filled discernment.



## Set Apart: Holy in a World That Is Not

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:9-11, 18-20

### 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

<sup>1</sup> It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: a man is sleeping with his father's wife. <sup>2</sup> And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? <sup>3</sup> For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. <sup>4</sup> So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, <sup>5</sup> hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup> Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? <sup>7</sup> Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.



<sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people — <sup>10</sup> not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. <sup>11</sup> But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.

<sup>12</sup> What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? <sup>13</sup> God will judge those outside. ‘Expel the wicked person from among you.’

### **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

<sup>9</sup> Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men <sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.



## 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. <sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.



**DEVOTION**



## DEVOTION

**Set Apart: Holy in a World That Is Not**

The moral landscape is like shifting sand. What was condemned yesterday is celebrated today; lines blur, definitions change, and “you do you” reigns supreme. The Corinthian church existed in a similar pagan culture saturated with sexual immorality. Shockingly, they were not just tolerating it; they were boasting about a man sleeping with his father’s wife (1 Cor 5:1-2). Their permissiveness was not tolerance; it was a failure of identity. Paul confronts this head-on, issuing a radical call to holiness: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?... For God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple” (1 Cor 3:16-17).

Why such a strong call to holiness?

1. **God’s nature demands it.** Holy means set apart, distinct. God is the Wholly-other. The God who dwells within his people (1 Cor 6:19) is utterly holy. His presence requires a corresponding purity in the vessel he inhabits. Sin, especially sexual sin (*porneia*), fundamentally violates this sacred space: “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body” (1 Cor 6:18).



2. **Christ's ownership of us establishes it.** Our bodies are not our own to use as we please. The cross changed everything: "You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies" (1 Cor 6:19-20). We belong to Christ; our bodies are instruments for his glory, not playgrounds for our passions.

3. **Sin's destructive power requires it.** Paul is not prudish; he is protective. Sexual sin has a unique power to destroy individuals, relationships, families, and the church's witness. Permissiveness is not loving; it allows spiritual poison to spread unchecked (1 Cor 5:6-7).

4. **The world's acceptance of immorality contrasts it.** Paul lists behaviours characterising those outside Christ (1 Cor 6:9-10), including various forms of sexual immorality, greed, and idolatry. But the Corinthians' identity had changed: "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:11). Their lives were now to reflect this transformation, offering a stark contrast, and a hopeful alternative to the surrounding darkness.

The challenge of faithfulness in a permissive culture:

1. **Moral standards shift rapidly.** What is acceptable today was taboo yesterday (and vice versa). Holding to timeless biblical ethics feels archaic, even offensive. Many young people consummate their marriage even before they are formally married, even in our churches!



2. **Love is synonymous with sexual intimacy.** “Love is love,” “Follow your heart,” “Don’t judge” — slogans promoting relativism drown out clear truth. Defining right and wrong becomes subjective, making God's standards seem rigid and unloving.

In a world shouting that anything goes, God whispers (and sometimes shouts through his word): “Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16). This is not legalism; it is the loving response of a redeemed people who know they belong to a Holy God. It is the courageous stand of those bought with a price, determined to honour their Savior with every facet of their being, especially in the sacred temple of their own bodies. When the sand shifts and the fog of relativism rolls in, anchor your life and your choices in the unchanging holiness of God and the redeeming ownership of Christ. You are set apart. Live like it.



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## Reflect

Do you compromise your holiness by conforming to cultural norms around ethics or sexuality? How can you honour God daily by treating your body and choices as belonging to him?



## Journal



**PRAY**

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# Pray

## Personal

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Pray for holiness, asking God to expose and purify areas of compromise, hidden sin, or divided affections.

Pray for a consecrated heart, remembering that you are set apart for God and called to reflect his character in all you do.

## Corporate

## Cell Groups and Members

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Pray that the members of the church will grow from spiritual infancy to maturity, moving away from jealousy, comparison, or division.

Pray for cell groups to be places of spiritual nourishment, where members help one another grow deeper roots in Christ.

