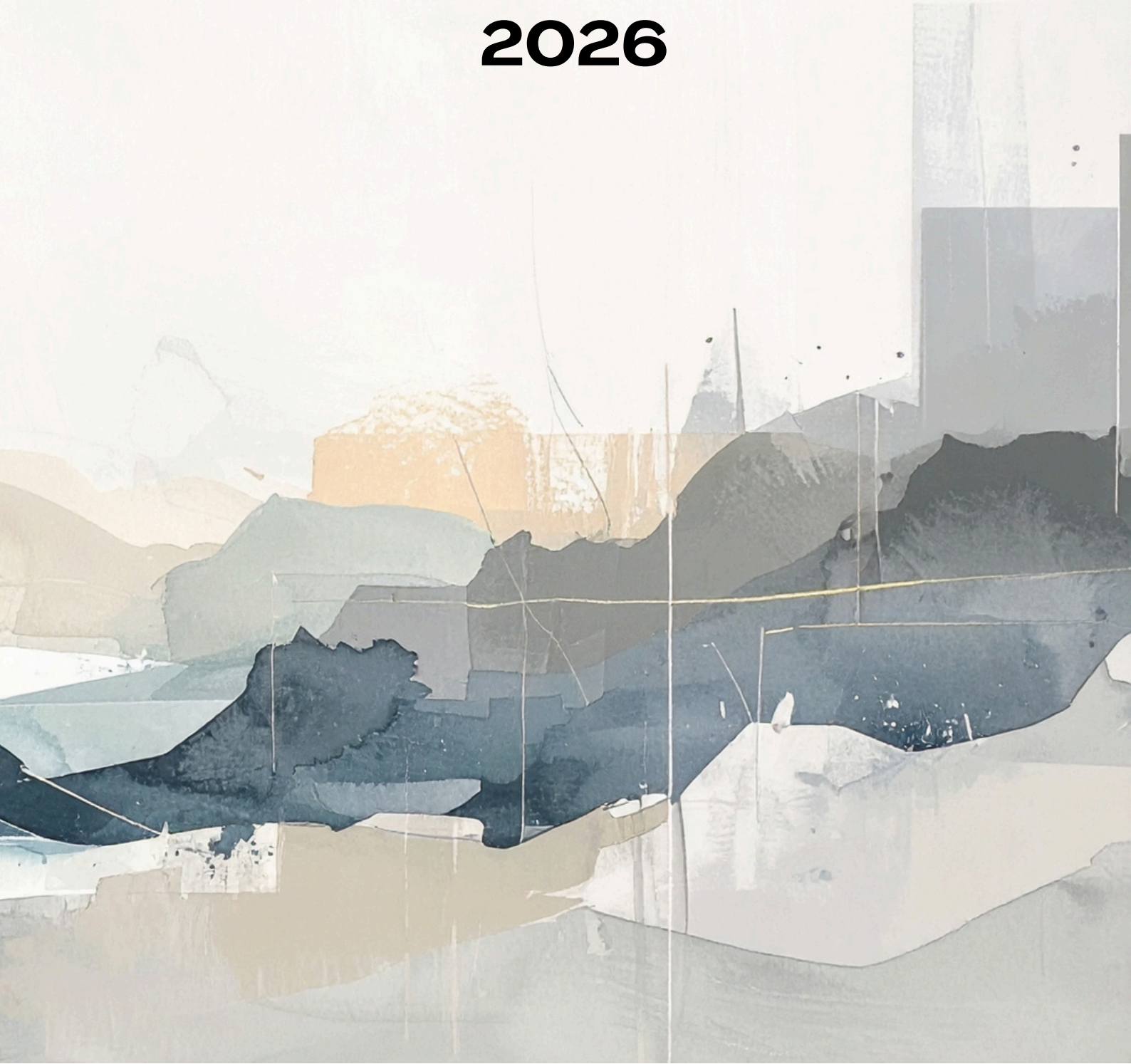


cultivate

2026



 **A Guide to Cultivate**
Brighton Community Church

Let's Cultivate!

Welcome to Cultivate 2026!

This year's devotional series will span over four weeks and is based on the book of 1 Corinthians, written by Rev. Dr. William Wan for our weekday devotions. We encourage you to use this series alongside the weekly devotional videos by Rev. Dr. Wan, where we will learn more about the historical context of the passage. They will be released at the start of each respective week for maximum benefit.

We hope that as you engage more deeply with God's word through this devotional series and the accompanying videos, it will lead you to a rich and meaningful time of growing in your relationship with God.

How to Cultivate?

Cultivate begins with these 4 steps to maximise your devotional reading, reflecting and digesting of the word of God.

WATCH

The weekly devotional video complements the weekday devotional material with sharing by Rev. Dr. William Wan on the historical context of the passages to help us develop a better understanding and appreciation for the word.

READ AND APPLY

Reading God's word helps us know who he is, and it is one of the ways he speaks to us. As you read the passage and the author's devotional reflection, consider the questions provided and reflect on how you can apply the truths of scripture to your own life.

PRAY

Prayer is a response we have to God's prompting in our hearts from the time we spend with him in the word. Commit your response from the daily devotion and the daily prayer guides to God in prayer.

FAST

Fasting is a biblical way to humble ourselves before God. It allows the Holy Spirit to reveal our true spiritual condition and strengthens our faith and confidence in God. Discuss this as a CG and commit to fasting together as a CG once a week!

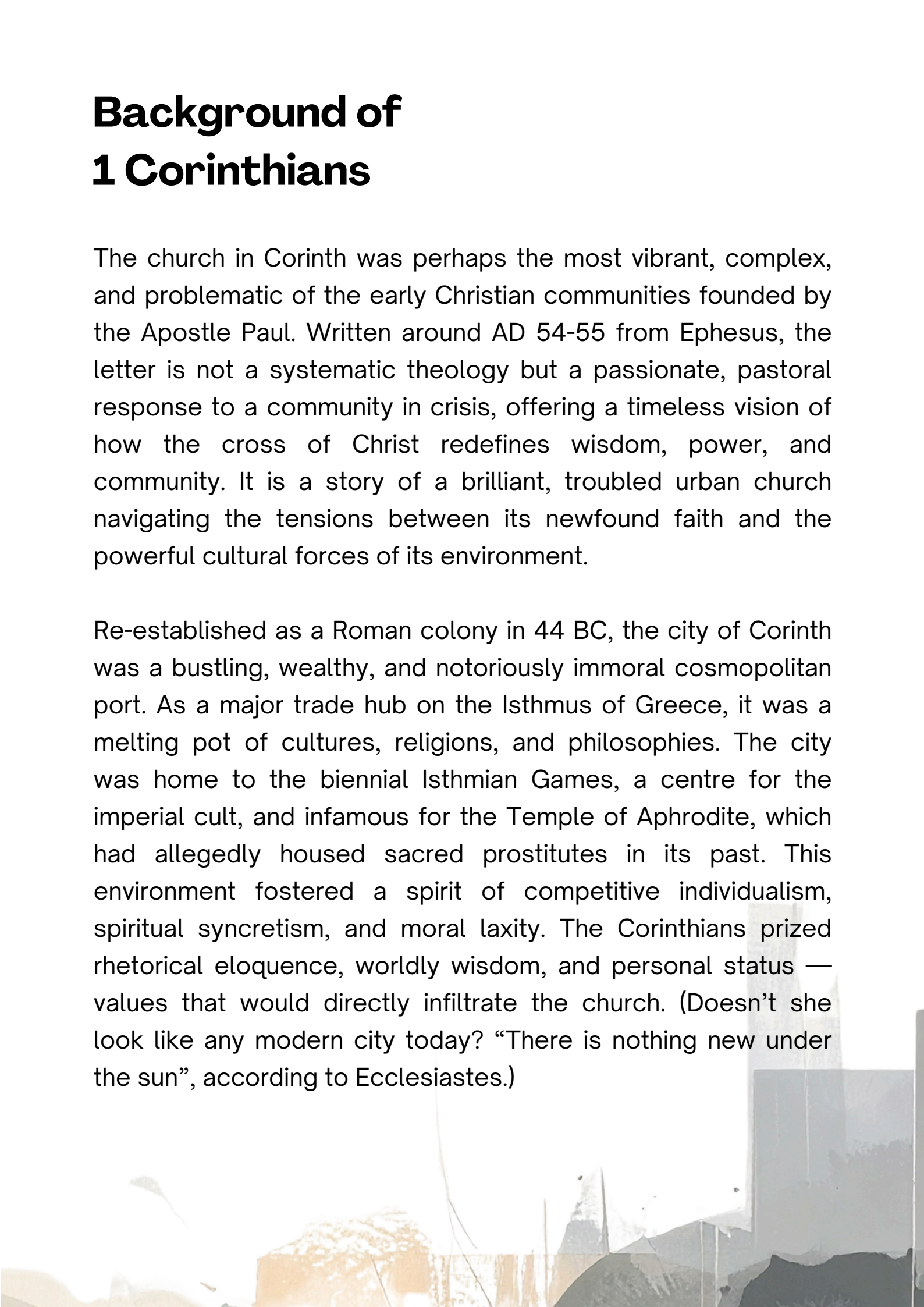
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Background of 1 Corinthians

The church in Corinth was perhaps the most vibrant, complex, and problematic of the early Christian communities founded by the Apostle Paul. Written around AD 54-55 from Ephesus, the letter is not a systematic theology but a passionate, pastoral response to a community in crisis, offering a timeless vision of how the cross of Christ redefines wisdom, power, and community. It is a story of a brilliant, troubled urban church navigating the tensions between its newfound faith and the powerful cultural forces of its environment.

Re-established as a Roman colony in 44 BC, the city of Corinth was a bustling, wealthy, and notoriously immoral cosmopolitan port. As a major trade hub on the Isthmus of Greece, it was a melting pot of cultures, religions, and philosophies. The city was home to the biennial Isthmian Games, a centre for the imperial cult, and infamous for the Temple of Aphrodite, which had allegedly housed sacred prostitutes in its past. This environment fostered a spirit of competitive individualism, spiritual syncretism, and moral laxity. The Corinthians prized rhetorical eloquence, worldly wisdom, and personal status — values that would directly infiltrate the church. (Doesn't she look like any modern city today? "There is nothing new under the sun", according to Ecclesiastes.)



Paul had first preached in Corinth around AD 50-51 during his second missionary journey, staying for 18 months (Acts 18). The church he founded comprised not of the social elite, but mainly of ordinary people — slaves, freedmen, and artisans — though with some wealthier members capable of hosting house churches. This very diversity became a source of conflict, as social stratification within the church began to mirror the divisions of the city.

The letter was a response to oral reports from “Chloe’s household” (1 Cor 1:11) and a written letter the Corinthians had sent to Paul (1 Cor 7:1). The reports revealed deep-seated problems: factionalism, with members aligning themselves under various banners like “Paul,” “Apollos,” “Cephas,” or “Christ”; a case of shocking incestuous immorality tolerated by the congregation; and members resorting to secular courts to settle disputes. The Corinthians’ own letter inquired about various practical matters, including marriage, food sacrificed to idols, and spiritual gifts.

Beneath these surface issues lay a fundamental theological problem: a misunderstanding of the gospel that expressed itself as an “over-realised eschatology.” Some Corinthians, intoxicated by their spiritual experiences and “knowledge” (*gnosis*), believed they were already fully perfected, living the resurrection life in the Spirit, and thus free from future judgment and the ethical constraints of the physical body. This led to arrogance, a devaluation of Paul’s simple preaching of the cross, and ethical chaos where spiritual gifts like tongues were prized over love, and the Lord’s Supper was marred by class division.

Paul responded by masterfully addressing the root cause: a failure to grasp the scandalous, counter-cultural wisdom of the cross. He argues that God's power is made perfect in weakness, that true spirituality manifests in self-sacrificing agape love, and that freedom is not unlimited and must be tempered by responsibility toward the community. The background of 1 Corinthians is thus the dramatic collision between the radical, humbling message of Christ crucified and the prideful, status-driven spirit of the Greco-Roman world — a collision with profound and continuing relevance for the church today.

For Cultivate 2026, 20 devotional topics are drawn from the book of 1 Corinthians, focusing on applying its timeless wisdom to Christian living in our broken and polarised world. Together, they provide a rich foundation for reflection, encouraging believers to root their identity, ethics, community life, and hope firmly in Christ and the wisdom of scripture amidst the unique challenges of our time.

