

# the first letter to the CORINTHIANS

The Gospel shaped community

## What is the series about?

We'll be working our way through the 1st Letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. This series will cover what a Gospel shaped community looks like in many areas of life including relationships, sex, food, the gathered church, and the resurrection.

## Listen to the audio

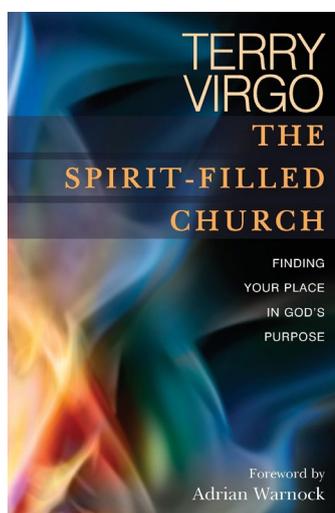
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## Check out the blog

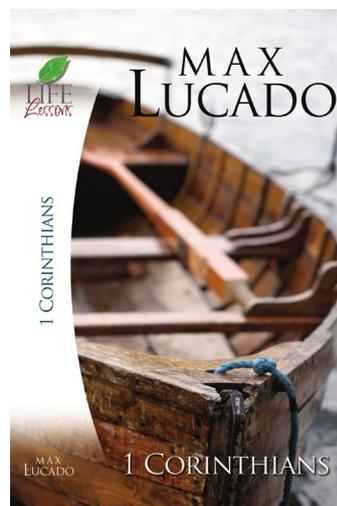
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## Recommended Reading

The Spirit Filled Church  
Terry Virgo



Life Lessons: 1 Corinthians  
Max Lucado



# the first letter to the CORINTHIANS

## **Title: Walking the way of love**

Speaker: Toby Skipper (All Sites) Bible Ref: 1Cor 12:31 - 14:1

### **Overview**

The Corinthian church were a church out of shape. Hence Paul writing & bringing some gospel shaped correction to them. He wanted to help them become more like Jesus and function as a healthy expression of the body of Christ. Leading up to this famous chapter (13) Paul has been speaking about their use of spiritual gifts, encouraging them to pursue, practice and grow in them, but if they were to do this in the way God intended, they would need to pursue a 'higher way', the way of love. Without love, their speech was off putting (v1) and their serving and sacrifice amounted to nothing (v2-3). Love is the soil in which our gifts can grow and people can flourish. Without love everything falls apart and unravels (*Colossians 3:14*). Therefore, we are all encouraged to pursue (*1Cor14:1*) grow (*1Thess 3:12*) & walk in the way of love.

### **Questions to help your group understand the truth preached**

On Sundays we hear God's word preached and as we listen well we trust that God is changing us in the moment. Use these questions to further explore the truth that was taught.

1. What do you think Paul means by 'the most excellent/higher way?' (*12:31b*)
2. Why does Paul launch into a passage on love in the middle of speaking about their gathered times of worship?
3. What stands out most to you about Paul's description of the nature of love?

### **Questions to help your group apply the truth preached**

When applied, God's Word will enable us to love God and to love others. These questions will help your group apply the truth understood in a way that leads to transformed lives.

1. What aspect of Paul's description of love do you find most difficult to walk in and why?
2. How does the cross help deepen our understanding of what it means to love?
3. How can we actively pursue the way of love and continue to grow in it? (*14:1 & 1Thess 3:12, Luke 7:36-47*)

### **Questions to help your group dig deeper**

Having understood the truth preached, and explored how it can be applied to your lives why not dig a little deeper and ask your group the following questions:

1. Forgiving others is an outworking of our love for others (*Ephesians 4:32 - 5:2*) and potentially one of the most difficult - how do we not "keep a record of wrongs"?
2. In 13:8 Paul writes, "Love always protects" - the word for protect or covers, used here has two meanings which Kenneth Bailey draws out in this quote, "Because you love me, you will cover me, and thereby protect me from exterior harm. You are also trustworthy. I can share the secrets of my heart with you knowing that you will not 'leak' those secrets to anyone because of your love for me." What might this look like in our day to day lives?