

The Stewardship of Wisdom

A Study in I Corinthians

Summary

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is addressed to an erring church located in one of the most powerful cities in ancient times. Corinth was an intellectual, artistic, and economic hub. The Gospel taking root in their area had the potential to impact their entire region.

The problem was that the church had become highly dysfunctional, given to disorder, dissention, and the culture's prevailing sexual immorality. Paul writes his letter to combat the pride that had developed in their congregation, namely the pride that comes from a wealth of knowledge and a lack of wisdom.

Throughout the letter, Paul emphasizes that knowledge is a stewardship and should be used in service to Christ and one another. Wisdom is the discernment required to use that knowledge well – and with the right attitude.

Lesson Breakdown

Week One	The Problem with Knowledge	1:1-31
Week Two	The Wisdom of Man & The Power of God	2:1-3:23
Week Three	Servanthood & Stewardship	4:1-20
Week Four	Sex, Holiness, and Worship	5:1-6:18
Week Five	Singleness, Marriage, and Calling	7:1-40
Week Six	Knowledge, Idolatry, and Surrender	8:1-9:27
Week Seven	The Anatomy of an Idol	10:1-11:1
Week Eight	All in the Family	11:17-12:31
Week Nine	It's All About Love	13:1-13
Week Ten	Spiritual Gifts & the Church	14:1-40
Week Eleven	The Resurrection & The End	15:1-16:24

Structuring Your Meeting

Each session is more than a time of learning. It is a chance for your group to get to know each other better and support one another. In a typical one-hour meeting, we suggest only using 30 minutes for the lesson. Reserve the rest of the time for hanging out and gathering prayer requests. We suggest spending 15 minutes in fellowship, 30 minutes on the lesson, and finishing with 15 minutes of prayer request time and prayer.

Understanding the Guides

Each lesson comes with two parts – a participant guide and a leader’s guide. The participant guide gives a brief overview of the lesson and provides each member with a memory verse, a list of the discussion questions, and a copy of the Scripture you’ll be reading together.

You will use the leader’s guide. It contains these same elements and more. You will find research and analysis of the text along each section of Scripture and with each discussion question.

You will also notice a grey sidebar to the right. This provides teaching notes and suggestions to help you lead the meeting more effectively and develop illustrations of the main points. You can also use this space to make your own notes as you prepare.

We have provided more than enough information and discussion questions for you to lead your meeting without having to improvise or conduct any outside preparation. We know that not all of the discussion questions will work with every group so use your judgment to decide which to go with and which to leave out. The material is enough for a 45-60 minute meeting so you can cut certain questions without running out of things to say. To provide better clarity, we have marked the most important questions with an asterisk.

Your Weekly Preparations

Two Days Before the Meeting

Send out an email to your attendees with a PDF of the week’s participant guide and the provided devotional thought. Remind your members of the meeting time and location. You’ll also want to remind them of the memory verse in the participant guide and the Scripture to read ahead of the meeting. You may also invite them to bring their Bibles to help them follow along.

The Day Before

Read through your leader’s guide and make notes for yourself in the sidebar. You’ll notice that we’ve provided *illustration suggestions* rather than *illustrations*. Use these guided questions to come up with your own illustrations that will bring the lesson to life. This is also a great time to think through the questions you think will generate the best discussion for your group and those you may not have time for. Make sure you don’t leave out the main ideas discussed in the “Big Idea” section on the first page. Also, don’t leave out questions marked with an asterisk.

Use the research and notes we’ve provided to help you teach through the text. Make bullet points of the main ideas you’d like to emphasize. You can also contact the Grad Resources office with questions if you need clarification or help preparing the lesson.

In the Meeting

After providing some time for fellowship, ask someone to open in prayer. Resist the urge to simply read the provided notes from the page. Use the bullet points you created the day before to help you discuss the material without having to read it. Use your illustrations in their appropriate places. Finally, be mindful of your time and don’t go over what you have allotted. End in prayer and on a note of personal application, being careful to remind the participants of the big idea along the way.