

# UNIT 2 ESSENTIALS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

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## INTRODUCTION

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### **Serve God and Others.**

The Christian life is not lived in isolation from other believers. We are called to do life together. God is glorified when believers serve one another and work together.

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## Writer Bio

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### **Lynn H. Pryor**

is the Discipleship and Senior Adult Pastor for Faith Haven Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Tennessee. For over 30 years, he served with Lifeway Christian Resources in the creation and development of Bible study resources. He continues to write twice a week at [lynnhpryor.com](http://lynnhpryor.com).

### **Renee Walker**

adapted the learner pages for the YOU audience. She serves as minister of spiritual formation at Mount Tabor Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia. She is a Virginia State University and Virginia Union University (STVU) graduate. She and her husband, Arthur, are blessed with a blended family.

### **Heather Johnson**

wrote the Daily Readings for this study. She is an educator and Bible teacher and national trainer with Lifeway Women. She is the wife of Mark Johnson, President of Louisiana Christian University in Pineville, Louisiana. They are grateful parents of four and enjoy serving the church and making disciples.



## A BIBLE STUDY ON HOW TO LIVE THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

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Life moves fast. One day, we are making plans for next week, and suddenly it is next month. We often wonder where the time goes as we take our children to school, fight traffic to get to work, worry about deadlines, and scroll through endless messages and posts. Contemplating financial decisions, medical issues, and moving from one commitment to another can make life seem like a whirlwind blur that never stops. Yet, in the midst of this blur, Christ wants us to walk a steady, unshakable path toward spiritual maturity.

Christ calls all believers to live a spiritually mature life that reflects His likeness by embracing the essentials of Christian living. From the moment we surrender our hearts to Him, we are invited on a journey of renewal.

It is not only about what we believe, but also about how we live, how we love, and how we reflect Christ in our daily choices.

Spiritual maturity does not happen immediately. It is a lifelong journey of daily surrender, communing with God, intentional study of the Scriptures, and a willingness to be shaped by the Spirit. Paul reminded the Corinthians that true wisdom comes from God. This study is designed to strengthen our hearts through seven essential practices:

- Fellowship with Other Believers
- Wisdom from God
- A Servants Heart
- A Humble Attitude
- An Outward Focus
- A Way to Serve
- A Love for Others

When we commit to these essentials, we will appreciate the beauty of Christ as our source and hope.

## SESSION 1

# FELLOWSHIP WITH BELIEVERS

Leader pages on pp. 132-135

### THE POINT:

A LIFE IN CHRIST IS A  
LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP  
WITH OTHER BELIEVERS.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-13

<sup>1</sup> Paul, called as an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Sosthenes our brother: <sup>2</sup> To the church of God at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called as saints, with all those in every place who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord — both their Lord and ours. <sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

.....  
<sup>4</sup> I always thank my God for you because of the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that you were enriched in him in every way, in all speech and all knowledge. <sup>6</sup> In this way, the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you, <sup>7</sup> so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup> He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup> **God is faithful; you were called by him into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

.....  
<sup>10</sup> Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction. <sup>11</sup> For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers and sisters, by members of Chloe's people, that there is rivalry among you. <sup>12</sup> What I am saying is this: One of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul's name?

### MEMORY VERSE

### KEYWORDS

**Sosthenes (v. 1)**— Paul's co-worker and leader of the synagogue in Corinth, who was beaten after the Jews' failed attempt to bring charges against Paul.

**Grace/Peace (v. 3)**—Throughout Paul's letters, "grace" always precedes "peace." Because of the sin that is in the world and in

ourselves, there is no true and lasting peace without the grace of God.

**Members of Chloe's People (v. 11)**— Unknown in the New Testament. In the immediate context, either been a leader or hostess of a group of believers who had direct access to the apostle Paul.

# WHAT CONSTITUTES OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS?

How is your gym membership going? Over 72 million Americans have gym memberships<sup>3</sup> yet 67 percent of those gym memberships are never used.<sup>4</sup> However, imagine someone who not only pays for a membership but also uses it by showing up consistently to exercise. Over time, they lose weight, have more energy, greater strength, and improved health, demonstrating the benefits of regular gym attendance. Taking advantage of what the gym has to offer, its equipment and personal trainers have made a difference in their lives. In fact, the gym community of workout partners, the friendly encouragement from others, and the pumping music inspire you to keep going.

In the same way, Christ is calling us into fellowship with other believers to inspire us to continue living the Christian life. A life that benefits us as the body of Christ. Many people miss the benefits of fully embracing the church family, preferring to walk alone. However, Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians that Christ desires a unified body, sharing a common faith. Just like an active gym membership strengthens our bodies, an active fellowship will strengthen our souls. So, join the family and reap the benefits of support, love, and spiritual growth.

## Called into Relationship with Christ // 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

There is a saying in our culture, “I like Jesus, but I don’t like the church,” meaning they love Jesus but are frustrated with the believers within the church. They describe themselves as “spiritual,” with a sense of belief in something higher, walking a more personal, self-defined path, and resisting groups that expect commitment or any accountability. Sometimes this comes from past church hurts or from viewing the church as a rigid, unchanged institution. But that’s not the church! Far from it. It is a living, vibrant fellowship of people joined by their shared faith in Christ. Believe me, there is order in the life of the church, which we will look at later in this study. For now, let’s see the church for what it is: an organic community of believers with unique gifts and callings doing life together. In verse 2, Paul gave us a wonderful picture of the fellowship of the church.

- The church of God. God used Paul to plant the church in Corinth, but it was God’s church. When God brought you to faith in Him, you became a child of God. As His child, you were



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brought into His family—the community of those who belong to Jesus.

- Sanctified in Christ Jesus. To be sanctified is to be set apart. When you came to faith in Christ, you were called out from the world and set apart. But this does not just apply to you as an individual believer. The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*, which literally means “the called-out ones.” We are called out and set apart together, and because we are sanctified and set apart, we are given a new name: we are “called as saints.” A saint is not something you will eventually become; you’re a saint now because you’ve been made whole and set apart by Christ. You are also a saint alongside the other saints—that is, the fellowship of the church.
- Call on the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord. The church does not give lip service to Jesus; it recognizes the Lordship of Jesus and gladly submits to living under His authority.

As we read Scripture, many of us see what God is saying to us as individuals, “What does He want me to do?” That is good, but keep in mind that most commands in Scripture were written to the church as a whole, not just to individuals. This is a reminder that we are not walking alone, but as a community of believers. We are in fellowship with one another because we are sanctified, we are saints together, and we look to the lordship of Christ together.

This concept of the church as a fellowship certainly applies to your local church, and to “all those in every place who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord—both their Lord and ours.” Believers are not just a part of a local church; we are a part of the universal church, believers from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

It is likely you do not agree with everyone in your own church, and that is perfectly fine, because we are called to unity, not uniformity. The fellowship of the church is centered on a shared truth and commitment to Jesus.

### WHAT ARE SOME MISUNDERSTANDINGS PEOPLE HAVE ABOUT THE CHURCH?

## Confirmed by Our Testimony in Christ

// 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

Paul expressed his gratitude to God for the church in Corinth, and in his thanks, we see two more descriptions of the church.

**Recipients of grace.** We do not enter into a relationship with God through our own merits or efforts. The last thing we deserve is a relationship with Him, yet that is exactly what we are offered



## DIGGING DEEPER SANCTIFIED

Paul described the believers in Corinth as “sanctified.” The word comes from Latin *sanctificatio*, “to make holy or consecrate.” In Greek, *ἁγιάζω*, is rooted in the word *hag* (*hagiazō*), meaning “to sanctify, consecrate, purify.” These words translate the Hebrew *qadosh*, meaning “separate” or “set apart,” from what is ordinary or profane.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, to be sanctified is to be set apart for God, consecrated and made holy, united with Christ for His divine purpose. Sanctification is a major theme throughout Scripture, revealing God’s desire for His people to reflect His holiness. From Genesis to Revelation, God calls His people to live a life set apart. In the Old Testament, sanctification was expressed through ceremonial rituals (Leviticus 11-15, 20:7-8). In the New Testament, sanctification is a deeply personal experience, representing positional holiness (1 Corinthians 1:2), where believers are justified declared righteous through Christ’s atoning work.<sup>6</sup>

### Why is living a sanctified life difficult for believers?

in Christ. It is all because of God's grace. As recipients of God's grace, we are embraced and accepted right where we are; we do not have to change first. Yet, God's grace never leaves us where we are; it forgives and transforms us into His likeness.

**Enriched in every way.** God's grace also strengthens and empowers us. The Greek word for "enriched" refers to a very wealthy person, and Christ makes us rich in what truly matters. We are enriched "in all speech and in all knowledge," which Paul will go deeper into in chapter 12. As Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:3, "His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

"And let us consider one another to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25).

Unfortunately, the church in Corinth was not living up to this Christ-centered unity. As you read 1 Corinthians, you will see the problems they faced; however, in Paul's opening remarks, he emphasizes who they were in Christ and what God was doing in them. And God was indeed at work! The church was far from perfect, but because of God's strengthening work, they would "be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul said something similar to the church in Philippi: "I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).

God will see His work through. What a wonderful truth to know that we can trust God to continue shaping us, making us blameless and more like Jesus, and strengthening our fellowship each day.

## HOW CAN WE STRENGTHEN OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS?

### Convicted to Live Like Christ

// 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

Paul did his part to strengthen the fellowship of the church by highlighting where they had fallen



short. Their disunity was the very opposite of the "fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). Sadly, their division was over something as petty as leadership style and personality. Paul identifies four groups in this division:

- **Paul.** During his second missionary trip, Paul came to Corinth and planted the church (Acts 18:1-17). Many of the believers may have felt a strong loyalty to him because he was their first leader.
- **Apollos.** Apollos came later to Corinth (Acts 19:1), and he was known as "an eloquent man who was competent in the use of the Scriptures" (18:24). Since Apollos was a skilled speaker, it is easy to see why some people preferred to follow and listen to him.
- **Cephas.** Peter, also called Cephas, the Aramaic word for "rock." However, Paul mentioned Cephas several times in his letter (1:12, 3:22, 9:5, and 15:5), so the people had either met Peter or were familiar with his leadership role in the early church. His leadership and closeness to Jesus made him a favorite for some to follow.
- **Jesus.** Being a part of the Jesus group is the place you want to be. After all, "Christ follower" is the very definition of a Christian. But Paul calls out this group as divisive because they talked spiritually, with a tone of superiority.

These divisions were about personal preference and loyalty to human leaders, rather than unity in Christ. Paul asked, "Is Christ divided?" The answer is a resounding no. Paul, Peter, and Apollos

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are just men, God's servants working to build up the kingdom of God and glorify Christ. Paul asks more questions, "Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul's name?" The answer is clearly no. Paul was underscoring that he was only a servant. The one that matters, the only one that matters, is Jesus.

While some people take their preferences seriously, it is doubly sad and grievous when they lead to divisions in the church.

*-Our old pastor was a better preacher. I wish he were still here.*

*- I don't like the songs we sing each week.*

*- Mature Christians use this translation of the Bible.*

*- You would think someone who loves Jesus would dress better.*

The world focuses on our differences, but the church must be different. It is a wonderful testimony to God when the world sees us rise above our divisions and love one another. It is a love that arises from a shared commitment to Jesus, who makes us all one.

### WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL STEPS WE CAN TAKE TO PROMOTE UNITY IN OUR CHURCH?

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The New Testament refers to this *koinonia*, which is the act of sharing in the activities of an intimate association, especially within churches.<sup>7</sup> It reflects sharing in the unity of Christ. Although many consider fellowship socializing, it is much more than that. During slavery and segregation, believers gathered to worship and *koinonia*, praying, sharing burdens, and providing hope in Christ. The tradition continues, as people gather in church parking lots and community centers, creating sacred spaces for marginalized people. There is a Somali proverb that says, "Those who walk together climb mountains."<sup>8</sup> Fellowship looks like this: moving forward as a community, united in faith and purpose. For generations, African American churches sang the hymn "What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine, Leaning on the Everlasting Arms,"<sup>9</sup> reflecting this unity and God's sustaining power.

**Biblical Truth:** Fellowship is a biblical command to witness to the world Christ is real.

**How can your fellowship guide seekers to the truth of the gospel?**

## LIVE IT

### What steps can you take to fellowship with someone you do not know in your church?

Our culture today encourages solitude through digital gaming and media, disconnecting people. Paul reminds believers to unite because divisions weaken the body of Christ. Fellowship builds genuine relationships that strengthen the body. As believers, God does not give us a spirit of fear but of courage, so we can build faithful relationships. Therefore, step out of your comfort zone and reach someone you do not know in your church.

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- **Seek God in prayer.** Ask God to guide you in choosing the right words to start a conversation. Let His wisdom and Holy Spirit give you courage to approach this person.
- **Start the conversation.** Warmly greet the church member or family you do not know. Share your story and ask them about their story. Be attentive and listen for understanding.
- **Evaluate the conversation.** What did you learn as you initiated this fellowship opportunity? Continue to strengthen this relationship by sharing a meal.

# DAILY READINGS

## 1. GOD-GIVEN RELATIONSHIPS // RUTH 1:16

When Naomi told Ruth to go back to her family, Ruth quickly committed to follow Naomi's people and Naomi's God. It is amazing how God provided for Ruth through the "people" she would meet in the land of Judah. Ruth went from being a widow without family, finances, or a secure future to becoming the wife of her kinsman redeemer and mother of Obed. Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David and the lineage of Jesus Christ. When we say yes to God, we should expect that He has a family of believers for us to live alongside. We can confidently join a local church and enjoy the blessings of biblical community.

**God works in our lives through fellow believers.**

## 2. SAVED BY FORGIVENESS// GENESIS 45: 7-8

The phrase "blood is thicker than water" speaks to the fact that we innately trust family more than strangers. Most people expect the world to disappoint but count on family to be there in difficult times. In Genesis, we see the opposite in Joseph's life. Joseph bore unimaginable betrayal at the hands of family members. His brothers sold him into slavery and as a result, Joseph had to live through horrible circumstances including false accusations and time in jail. When given the opportunity to pay his brothers back for backstabbing him, Joseph offered forgiveness. Because Joseph was able to forgive, the Children of Israel were saved from the famine. Remember that forgiveness is part of being in relationship with others. Trust that when we forgive, God can use our disappointments with people to do His will.

**We are blessed when we forgive.**

## 3. BATTLING TOGETHER// DANIEL 3:16-18

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego understood the assignment. They were to serve and worship the one true God and when they refused to bow to King Nebuchadnezzar, they were brought before the King. Scripture says that they replied

"together." When challenging times come, it is a blessing to have like-minded believers to stand with. They faced the possibility of death together. They were a witness of God's power together. The power of an earthly king was no match for the faith and determination of three young men standing together determined to represent God.

**Develop godly friendships with individuals who will stand with you against the enemy.**

## 4. ACT RIGHT!// 2 SAMUEL 12:20

Imagine the emotions and feelings racing across David's mind as he learned that his child with Bathsheba would not live. David admitted his sin in taking Bathsheba and God responded by issuing the consequence. Look at how David responded. While the child was still living, David prayed for his child's life to be spared. David knew the power of God to deliver and despite his emotions, he acted in accordance with his faith that God could do anything. Then, when the baby was no longer living, again David chose to act right. He accepted the consequences and chose to respond to God in worship. Commit to spiritual growth and develop the ability to respond to anything life throws your way.

**Know God's power and character and always choose to worship Him.**

## 5. MAKE THE EASY FIRST CHOICE// PSALM 1:1-2

There are times our Christian walk that we are not sure which way to turn. We want God to grant us wisdom and direct us. Sometimes we are so busy that we do not know where to start. When overwhelmed by life and unsure of where to turn, read Psalm 1:1-2. Do not follow the world, follow God. Look at what has you confused or upset because of worldly perspectives. Seek to eliminate these from your thinking and life practices by trusting in the Lord with all your heart, not relying on self, and acknowledging Him (Prov. 3:5-6).

**The easy first choice is to meditate on the things of God.**