

Knowing Scripture -- R. C. Sproul

Inter-chapter material (after Chapter 4, before Chapter 5)

Condensed from **How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth**, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

Epistles

Epistles are *occasional* in nature – there was some occasion that caused them to be written. Epistles also decidedly belong in the first century A. D. Epistles are *didactic* in nature – they teach things, mostly theology. But the theology taught by epistles is not necessarily systematic. Because of the occasional nature of epistles, the theology is directed at the occasion for which the epistle was written. Theological questions are answered, but they may not be *our* theological questions.

Study Methodology for First Corinthians

1. Find out all you can about the city of Corinth – use a Bible Dictionary. If you don't have a Bible dictionary, check out <http://www.abrock.com/Greece-Turkey/corinth.html>
2. Refresh your memory of Paul's visit to Corinth by reading Acts 18. Continue reading in chapter 19 about Ephesus (Paul wrote I Corinthians from Ephesus according to I Corinthinas 16:8).
3. Set aside an hour or so and read the entire epistle in one sitting. It is, after all, a letter. If you received a letter from you child away at college, you wouldn't say, "Oh, good! A letter from Johnny. I think I'll read the first paragraph today and save the rest for later." (I just read it aloud in 59 minutes, so you should be able to read it in less time silently.) Try to identify paragraphs – i.e., when Paul changes subject matter. Try to get the feel for the issues Paul addressed.
4. Come back later (if necessary) and skim through the book, identifying the topics to fill out the following outline. Don't look for topics of equal length – some topics cover multiple chapters, and some are less than a chapter in length. Look for the change in topic material. I have "seeded" the outline with some markers to help guide you. Don't be too concerned if yours doesn't exactly match mine, but be prepared to discuss a lesser or greater number of topics than are on the outline form. If you have the Fee book, don't cheat ☺.

- I. Standard epistle form items (1:1-9)
 - A. Author – 1:1
 - B. Recipients -- 1:2
 - C. Greeting – 1:3
 - D. Thanksgiving wish or prayer – 1:4-9

- II. Paul addresses problems reported to him (by whom?) – chapters 1-6
 - A. Division in the church – 1:10 – 4:21
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.

- III. Paul responds to questions the Corinthians have asked him (presumably in a letter they have written to him) – chapters 7-16.
 - A. about behavior in marriage – 7:1-24
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.
 - E. the abuse of the Lord's Supper – 11:17-34
 - F. on Spiritual Gifts – 12:1 – 14:40
 - G.
 - H.
 - I. the return of Apollos – 16:12

- IV Concluding exhortation and remarks – 16:13-24