

## **New Testament Letters: Literary Context**

Last week we discussed the importance of the historical context to New Testament letters. This week we will look at some of methods of literary composition for those letters.

### Video/Lecture Notes

- The letters in the New Testament are complete compositions intended to be read beginning to end.
- Most of the letters follow a standard format, beginning with an opening which gives information about the sender and recipient, continuing with a prayer of thanksgiving, followed by the body of the letter, and closing with a conclusion dealing with miscellaneous matters.
- Understanding the body of the letter requires breaking the text into small chunks and looking for the relationship between these blocks of text. In this, transition words and topic sentences for paragraphs can be helpful in organizing the flow of thought.

### Discussion

Use the space below to outline the structure of **I Corinthians**. What are significant blocks of text? How are these pieces arranged? What does the arrangement tell us about interpreting the letter?