

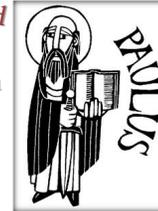
1:1-9 GREETING AND THANKSGIVING

1. How does Paul assert his authority right from the start? Why was this important?
 - Paul had been called by Christ himself to be an Apostle by the will of God.
 - If the Corinthians refused to listen to him, they were refusing to listen to God.
 - Paul was about to take up some pretty weighty issues. It would be important for them to know this letter wasn't Paul's opinion but God's Word.



1:1-9 GREETING AND THANKSGIVING

2. What characteristics of the church and its members does Paul bring out?
 - vs. 1, "*our brother*" – The members of the church are family, brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - vs. 2, "*church of God*" – The church belongs to God. We serve him and his people. He blesses and sustains us.
 - vs. 2, "*sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy*" – As Christians we have been washed clean from our sins through faith in Jesus and called to live new and holy lives in service to him.



1:1-9 GREETING AND THANKSGIVING

2. What characteristics of the church and its members does Paul bring out?
 - vs. 2, "*together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" – We are members of the Holy Christian Church, united through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - vs. 3, "*Grace and peace*" – As believers we have been saved from our sins by the grace of God in Christ and now we are at peace with him.



1:1-9 GREETING AND THANKSGIVING

3. Where does the emphasis lie?

¹Paul, called to be an apostle of *Christ Jesus* by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

²To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in *Christ Jesus* and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our *Lord Jesus Christ*—their Lord and ours:

³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the *Lord Jesus Christ*.

⁴I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in *Christ Jesus*. ⁵For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—⁶because our testimony about *Christ* was confirmed in you. ⁷Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our *Lord Jesus Christ* to be revealed. ⁸He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our *Lord Jesus Christ*. ⁹God, who has called you into fellowship with *his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, is faithful.

1:1-9 GREETING AND THANKSGIVING

3. What does this teach us about how we address difficult problems amongst Christians?
 - When dealing with issues in the church we don't just come out swinging with the club of the law and beat people into submission.
 - Only the gospel has the power to change hearts.
 - Paul appeals to who they are as Christians and reminds them of the incredible grace of God at work in their lives.
 - If things were going to get straightened out at Corinth it would be because of God's faithfulness.

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER
TO THE CORINTHIANS
LESSON 2

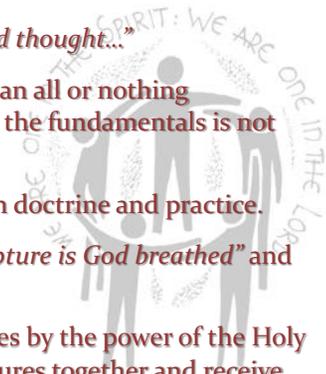


1:10-17 A CHURCH DIVIDED OVER ITS LEADERS

1. How important are a pastor's personality, preaching style, gifts, and abilities? What happens when too much emphasis is placed on the personal qualities of a congregation's minister?
 - God gives qualifications for spiritual leaders (See 1 Timothy 3).
 - God wants a pastor to use his gifts to the best of his ability.
 - Too much emphasis on the minister's gifts and abilities takes the focus off of Christ.
 - If the pastor has been turned into a heroic figure, does this affect a congregation's ability to be "faithful Bereans"? What happens if he leaves?
 - We must remember that Christ is the head of the church and one who binds us together in true unity through faith in him.

1:10-17 A CHURCH DIVIDED OVER ITS LEADERS

2. How much unity is enough unity? Where does it come from?
 - *"perfectly united in mind and thought..."*
 - Scripture speaks of unity as an all or nothing proposition. Agreement on the fundamentals is not enough.
 - We strive for perfect unity in doctrine and practice.
 - We remember that *"all Scripture is God breathed"* and we strive to treat it as such.
 - This kind of unity only comes by the power of the Holy Spirit as we study the Scriptures together and receive the sacrament.



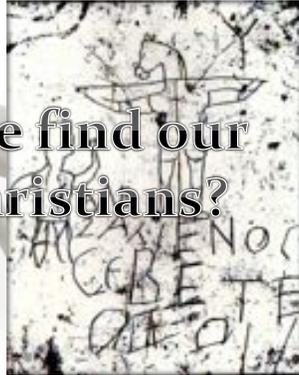
1:18-2:5 CHRIST CRUCIFIED IS GOD'S POWER AND WISDOM

6. Has the world's view of Christianity and Christian people changed since Paul's day?

- 2nd Century pagan philosopher Celsus:

Where do we find our boast as Christians?

“They want and are able to convince only the foolish, dishonorable and stupid, and only slaves, women, and little children.” (*The People's Bible*, p. 21-22)



1:18-2:5 CHRIST CRUCIFIED IS GOD'S POWER AND WISDOM

7. What was Paul's focus when he came to Corinth and began to preach? Implications for today? Why is this focus so important?

- What encouragement do these verses give you for your own personal witnessing for Christ?
- “I resolved to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”
 - The power of the Holy Spirit is found in the gospel, not in the fact of His birth, death, and resurrection.
 - Paul wanted to win hearts and save souls, not because the most popular preaching in town.
 - Pastor's today should strive for the same.

2:6-16 GOD'S WISDOM REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT

8. Who are the “mature” to whom Paul is referring in vs. 6? Is Paul trying to make a distinction between different classes of Christians?

- Paul has been contrasting believers and unbelievers.
- The “mature” here are simply believers, “those whom God has called” (1:24).
- The Sunday school student is wiser than the most learned Greek philosopher, whose philosophy would, “come to nothing” (vs. 6).

σοφία

2:6-16 GOD'S WISDOM REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT

9. Vs. 7 – In what sense is God's wisdom “secret”?

- The good news that Jesus is our Savior must be revealed to us by God.
- This wisdom cannot be gained through philosophic thought.
- This was demonstrated very clearly by the Jewish and Roman leaders, the most brilliant minds and greatest leaders of their day, who couldn't recognize Jesus as the Savior but put him to death instead.

σοφία

2:6-16 GOD'S WISDOM REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT

10. What doctrine is taught in the second half of verse 7?
- The doctrine of election
 - God, in his grace, chose us before the creation of the world to be his own and in time called us to faith in Jesus as Savior.

σοφία

2:6-16 GOD'S WISDOM REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT

11. “*spirit of the world*” vs. “*the Spirit who is from God*”
- Man is the center of all things; concerned primarily with earthly gain (humanism)
 - Merit before God earned through works (work-righteousness)
 - Knows nothing of the mind of God and what he has done for us in Christ.
 - reveals, “*what God has freely given us*” in Christ
 - forgiveness, salvation, and all the blessings that flow from the gospel

σοφία

2:6-16 GOD'S WISDOM REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT

12. What doctrine is taught in vs. 13 and why is it such a comforting teaching for us as Christians?
- The doctrine of verbal inspiration
 - We have God's truth the way he wants us to have it.
 - We know what God says and aren't lead astray by the philosophies of this world.

σοφία

2:6-16 GOD'S WISDOM REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT

13. What implications does verse 14 have for what we teach concerning a person's conversion? Whose power is at work? What role does the person play?
- As is emphasized through these verses, the Holy Spirit's power is at work in conversion.
 - We do not play a role in our own conversion. It is entirely the work of the Spirit.
 - Remember, God's wisdom must be revealed. Otherwise it is “*foolishness.*”

σοφία

2:6-16 GOD'S WISDOM REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT

14. What does it mean that we, as believers, "have the mind of Christ"?
- Like Christ, we know the mind of the Father and his plan of salvation through his Son.
 - Again, this is in contrast to the "wisdom and strength" of the world, which looks to itself for salvation.
 - Knowing what God has done in Christ to save us, we also have a desire to follow him.

σοφία

3:1-23 THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS

15. Explain what Paul means in vs. 1-4 when he describes the Corinthians as "mere men." Contrast "spiritual" versus "worldly."
- "acting like mere men" = in a human way, like those with no spiritual insight, concerned about the things of men rather than the things of God
 - "spiritual" = filled with and controlled by the Spirit
 - "worldly" = living according to the standards of the fallen human nature, the "sinful flesh"



3:1-23 THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS

16. Three points to remember about Christian ministry:
- Vs. 5 – Pastors like Paul and Apollos are only servants of Christ. They lead people to Christ and give him glory, not themselves.
 - Vs. 6,7 – All the minister can do is plant the seed of the gospel and continue to water it by faithfully preaching and teaching. God makes it grow.
 - Vs. 8-9 – All Christian congregations and ministers serve "one purpose," to lead people to Christ and save souls. Rivalries between ministers or congregations stem from "worldly" thinking.



3:1-23 THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS

17. Whether Paul or Apollos, what needed to remain the solid foundation on which they built?
- Paul had laid a solid foundation by preaching "Christ crucified." This is the only foundation on which God's church is built.
- Precious versus shoddy materials:
- Precious = teaching and preaching in line with the gospel; no adding, subtracting or watering down of God's word
 - Shoddy = teaching and preaching that takes away from the gospel; adds, subtracts, waters down, mixes in human wisdom



3:1-23 THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS

18. What are the dangers of human wisdom? The fruits of spiritual wisdom?

Dangers of human wisdom:

- o envy, selfish ambition, boasting, disorder, evil practices



Fruits of spiritual wisdom:

- o deeds done in humility, pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere, produces a harvest of righteousness



3:1-23 THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS

19. How do each of the following “belong to us” as believers?

“the world”

We can take advantage of the good things this world has to offer because God created them as blessings for us to enjoy.

“life”

Our life cannot be taken from us until the time God has appointed.

“death”

Death has lost its power over us. Because Jesus lives we also will live.

3:1-23 THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS

19. How do each of the following “belong to us” as believers?

“the present”

Whatever our circumstances, we are able to rejoice in the Lord Jesus, confident that he will supply our every need and give us the strength to endure.

“the future”

Our future is in the hands of our Savior, who has made us co-heirs with him of eternal life.

3:1-23 THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS

20. What is Paul’s final answer to the Corinthians’ desire to follow a leader?

“You are of Christ.”



4:1-21 THE NATURE OF TRUE APOSTLESHIP

21. Vs. 1-5 – As an apostle, who was Paul ultimately accountable to? What was the number one requirement of his apostleship?
- Ultimately, as a manager of the mysteries of the gospel, Paul was accountable to God.
 - God's number one requirement for those who have been given a trust is that they prove *faithful*.
 - God does not expect every minister of the gospel to be the most popular, most talented, most personable, and most "successful."

4:1-21 THE NATURE OF TRUE APOSTLESHIP

21. How would you characterize Paul's attitude toward human judgments concerning his ministry?
- Vs. 3, "*I care very little...*" Paul understood that ultimately he was accountable to God, not men. He was striving to please God, not be popular.
 - However, he doesn't say, "I don't care at all." A minister who isn't going about his work in the right way, ought to be open and sensitive to criticism.
 - Although Paul wasn't perfect, he felt that he had been faithful. If he received God's commendation on the last day then he would know that his assessment was correct.

4:1-21 THE NATURE OF TRUE APOSTLESHIP

21. What difference in attitude do these verses suggest we should have between how we view the call into the public ministry and a hired position in the business world?
- Again, the primary requirement is *faithfulness*, not "producing results."
 - We don't approach the call into the ministry with a "hire and fire" mentality, constantly scrutinizing the performance of the minister and criticizing him if he doesn't show all the qualities we think are important.
 - We remember that God has placed our minister in his position of authority for our spiritual good. Thus he deserves our respect.

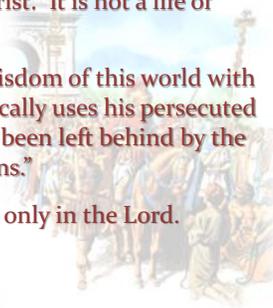
4:1-21 THE NATURE OF TRUE APOSTLESHIP

22. The Corinthians thought they had arrived as Christians, but what was the reality? What does Paul say in vs. 9 about how we are to view our talents and abilities?
- Their pride and foolish boasting showed that they were still spiritually immature.
 - We always keep in mind that our talents and abilities are gifts from God to be used for his glory.
 - When we boast about ourselves we are denying the grace of God, who made us what we are.

4:1-21 THE NATURE OF TRUE APOSTLESHIP

23. Of what does Paul remind the smug, self-important Corinthians in vs. 9-13?

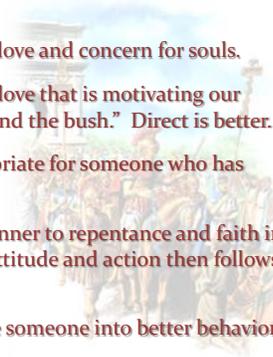
- The Christian life is one of humility and cross-bearing, following in the footsteps of Christ. It is not a life of earthly glory.
- Again, Paul is contrasting the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of God. He sarcastically uses his persecuted lifestyle to show how far he had been left behind by the “exalted and reigning Corinthians.”
- As Christians, we find our boast only in the Lord.



4:1-21 THE NATURE OF TRUE APOSTLESHIP

24. What can we learn from Paul here in these verses about how to approach pointing out the sins of our fellow Christians?

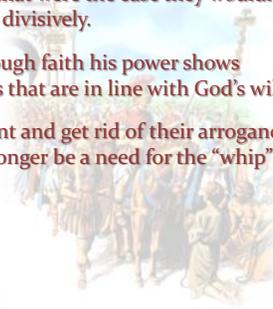
- Our motivation is always Christian love and concern for souls.
- While our tone needs to reflect the love that is motivating our actions, we don't want to “beat around the bush.” Direct is better.
- A harsher tone may be more appropriate for someone who has become particularly arrogant.
- We are always seeking to lead the sinner to repentance and faith in Jesus for forgiveness. A change in attitude and action then follows naturally.
- We are not seeking to simply shame someone into better behavior.



4:1-21 THE NATURE OF TRUE APOSTLESHIP

25. What exactly does Paul mean when he writes, “*The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but power*”?

- Many of the Corinthians were talking big as if they had reached the height of Christian maturity. But if that were the case they wouldn't be acting so proudly, arrogantly, and divisively.
- When Christ rules in your heart through faith his power shows itself in attitudes, words, and actions that are in line with God's will.
- Paul wanted the Corinthians to repent and get rid of their arrogance and pride and then there would no longer be a need for the “whip” of biting words of chastisement.



PAUL'S FIRST LETTER
TO THE CORINTHIANS
LESSON 3



5:1-13 DEALING WITH A CASE OF INCEST

1. What seemed to be the attitude of the members of the Corinthian congregation toward the incestuous relationship of this man with his stepmother?

- **How does this same sinful attitude continue to manifest itself in the church today?**
- **How do we deal with sinners who are so detestable even to the pagans**
- **Even boastful about their open-mindedness and tolerance**
- **Paul is shocked and disgusted**



5:1-13 DEALING WITH A CASE OF INCEST

2. What do these verses say to the person who insists, "What I do in my private life is none of the church's business"?

- **"A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."**
- **If wickedness and sin are tolerated consciences are dulled and indifference grows.**
- **Scripture makes clear we are responsible for the spiritual welfare of our fellow Christians.**
- **We are "one body."**



5:1-13 DEALING WITH A CASE OF INCEST

3. "Hand this man over to Satan..." What was Paul instructing the Corinthians to do? For what purpose?

- **The final step of church discipline – excommunication**
- **To declare someone outside the fellowship of believers and thus a child of the devil and on the road to hell**
- **Always carried out in a spirit of love to lead a person to recognize the seriousness of their sin, repent, and thus save their soul**



5:1-13 DEALING WITH A CASE OF INCEST

3. What additional insights into the nature of how we carry out church discipline do we gain from vs. 4,11?

- **"When you are assembled" – Church discipline carried out by congregation not an individual**
- **"In the name of our Lord Jesus" – Not an arbitrary decision but authority exercised by Christ's command and in accordance with his expressed will in the Holy Scriptures**
- **"With such a man do not even eat" – We want to avoid giving any impression that we condone the sinful behavior**



5:1-13 DEALING WITH A CASE OF INCEST

3. What was the final result of the instruction Paul gives the Corinthian congregation here in these verses?
- They listened to Paul's instruction and excommunicated the man.
 - He repented and Paul urged the congregation to welcome him back into the fellowship of believers by assuring him of God's love and forgiveness as well as their own.



5:1-13 DEALING WITH A CASE OF INCEST

4. What point is Paul making about the Christian life with the illustration drawn from the Passover in vs. 7-9?
- According to Mosaic law, the Jews were to get rid of all yeast in their houses on the eve of the Passover.
 - Symbolic of getting rid of the sin in their lives and rededicating themselves to God
 - As Christians, washed clean in the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, we are a new creation, called to give thanks to God with our lives.
 - Complacency about sin and the gospel are not compatible.



5:1-13 DEALING WITH A CASE OF INCEST

5. "There is a great difference between the church being in the world and the world being in the church" ?
- As Christians we are called to bring people to salvation through the preaching of gospel. We can't do this if we are hiding ourselves away.
 - However, the sinful attitudes and standards of the world are not to gain a foothold within God's church.
 - We are to be a shining light that attracts people to our message.



6:1-11 LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

6. "How dare you!" Why was this matter of lawsuits such a troubling issue? What sinful attitudes did it reveal?
- These lawsuits revealed an attitude that is completely the opposite of brotherly, Christian love.
 - Instead of patience, forgiveness, humility, selflessness they were demonstrating anger, vindictiveness, pride, and greed.
 - Again, Paul scolds them for being worldly.
 - They were bringing scorn upon the name of Christ among unbelievers.



6:1-11 LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

6. “You have been completely defeated already”?
- No matter who won the lawsuit, both parties had already been defeated spiritually.
 - Satan had succeeded in driving a wedge between fellow believers and getting them to focus on worldly concerns.



6:1-11 LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

7. What does Paul suggest as a better alternative to taking a fellow Christian to court? (vs. 7)
- Paul suggests that it is better to allow yourself to be cheated and wronged than to let your heart be filled with anger and resentment and to bring dishonor to the name of Christ.



6:1-11 LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

7. Is Paul saying that a Christian should never take anyone to court? What would you do?
- Neither Paul nor Jesus is saying that in all cases we should simply submit to violence, unjust lawsuits, or unwarranted demands.
 - But we should watch the attitudes of our hearts and always ere on the side of love, humility, and cross-bearing rather than bitterness, anger, resentment, and revenge.
 - Living under that cross may mean suffering injustice for the sake of demonstrating Christian love.
 - If we must take legal action to protect our life, family, property, it should be with the same attitude of love rather than a desire for revenge or financial gain.



6:1-11 LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

8. What does Paul mean when he talks about Christians judging “the world” and even “angels”?
- Christians will live and rule with Christ in heaven.
 - As those who rule with Christ we will share in his judgment upon the damned, including evil angels.
 - Thus, we ought to be able to handle judging disputes between believers here on earth.
 - Paul could hardly believe that out of all the members of the large, gifted congregation there wasn’t one qualified person to settle a dispute among believers.



6:1-11 LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

9. Consider the various vices Paul lists in vs. 9,10. Are we to consider these particular sins worse than others? What point is Paul making?
- Paul is describing the “wicked,” that is, unbelievers (literally, “the unrighteous”)
 - Paul is not saying that these sins are worse than any other.
 - He is saying that such lifestyles are incompatible with saving faith. Faith shows itself in action, period.
 - Those who persist in such lifestyles will be damned.



6:1-11 LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

9. What is the significance of Paul using the past tense in vs. 11 when he writes, “And that is what some of you were”?
- As believers, the Corinthians were new creations in Christ.
 - The filth of their former way of life as pagan unbelievers had been washed away.
 - By the power of the Spirit they now lived new, sanctified lives.
 - Paul urges them not to fall back into being what they used to be.



6:1-11 LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

10. For Discussion:

Paul is pretty blunt and to the point in these verses. Does the church today deal with sin in the same way? Or is there a hesitation to confront wickedness and call it what it is? If there is this hesitation, why do you think that is? How do we overcome it?



6:12-20 SEXUAL IMMORALITY

11. How would you define Christian freedom? How were the Corinthians abusing their freedom in Christ while quoting the popular saying, “Everything is permissible for me”?
- Christian freedom = Freedom from the power of sin and the condemnation of the law, freedom to live by the power of the Spirit in the new creation.
 - The Corinthians were using their Christian freedom as an excuse for sin.
 - Jesus, “Whoever sins is a slave to sin.” (John 8:34)
 - Again the Corinthians were clinging to their old pagan ways.

Examples today?



6:12-20 SEXUAL IMMORALITY

12. List and explain the reasons Paul gives here in these verses for Christians to, *"flee from sexual immorality."*
- Vs. 13, *"The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord."* – We belong to the Lord, who gave us our bodies to use in service to him, not in service to our lustful desires.
 - Vs. 14, *"He will raise us also."* – Our bodies have a glorious destiny. We will be raised up to live with Christ forever.
 - Vs. 15-17, *"Your bodies are members of Christ himself. Shall I take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!"* – The special union we have with Christ through faith is completely incompatible with the sinful uniting of our flesh with anyone other than our spouse.

6:12-20 SEXUAL IMMORALITY

12. List and explain the reasons Paul gives here in these verses for Christians to, *"flee from sexual immorality."*
- Vs. 18, *"He who sins sexually sins against his own body."* – You are using your own body as an instrument for sin.
 - Vs. 19, *"Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit."* – Our bodies are the special dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Sexual sins, therefore, profane the temple of God.
 - Vs. 20, *"You were bought at a price."* – Christ has redeemed us body and soul by shedding his precious blood on the cross. Therefore we are to honor him and give him thanks by using our bodies in God-pleasing ways.

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER
TO THE CORINTHIANS
LESSON 4



7:1-16 CONCERNING MARRIED LIFE

1. Is it wrong for a person to remain unmarried? Paul's response:
- Not only is it acceptable for a person to remain unmarried, it can even be a good thing, a blessing.
 - However, most people don't have the ability to remain single and chaste at the same time.
 - Marriage is to be the general rule. Celibacy is the exception.
 - It is better to marry than burn with passion.



7:1-16 CONCERNING MARRIED LIFE

1. What is Paul wishing for in vs. 7? What is he not wishing for?
 - It appears that Paul was blessed with a special gift of self-control that allowed him to remain unmarried and devote himself to the Lord.
 - Paul wishes everyone had this same gift, but realizes that is not the case.
 - He is not simply wishing that everyone would remain single.



7:1-16 CONCERNING MARRIED LIFE

2. Compare these verses to Ephesians 5:22-33. General principles? Comparison to modern-day thinking?
 - Paul emphasizes a husband and wife's duty to each other rather than individual rights.
 - In a strong marriage each spouse puts the needs of the other first.
 - A secret to a successful marriage is not to insist upon what our marriage partner owes to us but rather but to focus on our duty to our partner.



7:1-16 CONCERNING MARRIED LIFE

3. Vs. 10-11 – What is the Lord's clear teaching concerning divorce? Under what circumstances does the Lord allow divorce?
 - The Lord clearly forbids divorce as a sin.
 - The exceptions are marital unfaithfulness and desertion. In such cases, the innocent spouse may seek a divorce.
 - Paul's instructions concerning divorce stood in stark contrast to the popular culture of his day and ours.



7:1-16 CONCERNING MARRIED LIFE

4. Vs. 12-16 – *“sanctified through his wife...sanctified through her believing husband?”*
 - Does not mean an unbeliever can be saved simply by being married to a Christian
 - The believing spouse certainly has the opportunity to witness in both words and actions.
 - The holy influence of a believing spouse certainly will be a blessing to the household.
 - In particular we would pray that the believer would be a blessing to the children by bringing them up in the Lord.



7:17-24 CONCERNING CHANGE OF STATUS

5. What point does Paul make concerning a Christian's station in life and his status before God? Where should the emphasis lie as we live our Christian lives?

- Our status before God isn't dependent upon our status in this world.
- Our focus should be on living a life of love for God and others no matter what our station.
- Paul didn't want the Corinthians to become, "slaves of men," i.e., living to please people, focused on the things of this world



7:17-24 CONCERNING CHANGE OF STATUS

6. "the Lord's freedman...Christ's slave"?

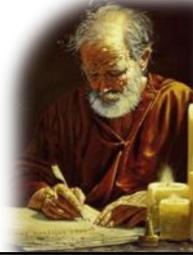
- Christ has set us free from the curse of sin and the burden of the law.
- We are free to live our lives for God without the threat of punishment looming over us and without the restrictions of the OT law.
- However, we are not free to be our own masters. As people who love and trust in Jesus as Savior, we willingly submit to his will and bind ourselves to serving him and others in love.



7:25-40 CONCERNING THE UNMARRIED

7. Considering the "present crisis," why might it have been wise to remain single?

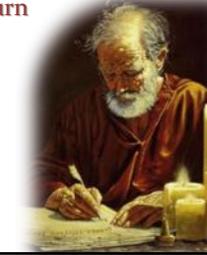
- It would have been easier for a single person to cope with the hardships of a famine.
- A man would not have to find food for his wife and family.
- A food shortage would just add to the challenges of married life.



7:25-40 CONCERNING THE UNMARRIED

8. Vs. 29-31 – Put what Paul says here in your own words and offer your friend some advice.

- Don't get too caught up in worldly affairs.
- Even the marriage relationship, as important as it is, should not be made more important than our devotion to the Lord.
- In these last days, when the Lord could return at any time, it is as important as ever to get your spiritual house in order first.



7:25-40 CONCERNING THE UNMARRIED

9. Vs. 32-35 – What is the difference between monasticism and what Paul is talking about here?
- Paul does not say that remaining single makes you more holy or that it earns you any favor before God.
 - Paul simply states reality: A single person does have more time to devote to the service of the Lord and his church.
 - Yet not everyone has this gift.
 - The work or any other Christian serving in his or her calling is no less noble.



7:25-40 CONCERNING THE UNMARRIED

10. Vs. 36-38 – Describe the situation and Paul's advice?
- Paul is concerned about engaged couples postponing their marriage due to the "present crisis" or due to the Lord's imminent return.
 - Second option in footnote: Paul is concerned about fathers considering whether or not to arrange marriages for their daughters.
 - Paul's opinion: remain as you are, a choice between good and good

Factors to consider?



7:25-40 CONCERNING THE UNMARRIED

11. Paul addresses one final scenario: a widow contemplating getting remarried. What counsel does the apostle give?
- Remaining single and getting married were both acceptable options.
 - The new spouse ought to be a believer.
 - Paul's opinion is that she would be more blessed if she remained single, but realizes not everyone has that gift.



PAUL'S FIRST LETTER
TO THE CORINTHIANS
LESSON 5



8:1-13 CONCERNING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

1. Vs. 4-6 – What does Paul say, first of all, about the gods worshiped by the pagan Greeks and the meat sacrificed to them?
 - The so-called “gods” of the pagans didn’t exist; an idol is nothing but a piece of wood, stone, or metal.
 - Thus there wasn’t anything particularly different or special about meat sacrificed to them. It was just meat, nothing more.



8:1-13 CONCERNING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

2. What argument was made by those who claimed that eating this meat was okay? What sinful attitude was once again rearing its ugly head?
 - “False gods don’t exist and the meat sacrificed to them is just meat. Why should we worry about it?”
 - Arrogance and sinful pride in their “wisdom” was once again showing itself, leading them to look down on others or to pressure them into doing something they didn’t feel comfortable doing.



8:1-13 CONCERNING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

3. Why did it bother some the Corinthians to eat this meat?
 - They had just been rescued from a life of idolatry and brought to faith in the one true God.
 - It is understandable if they felt uncomfortable about any contact with any aspect or reminder of idol worship.
 - Their conscience told them they were doing something wrong.



8:1-13 CONCERNING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

4. What does Paul teach here and elsewhere about acting contrary to your conscience?
 - If you act against your conscience you are sinning, even if the matter is not specifically addressed in God’s Word.
 - “*destroyed by your knowledge*” – To sin against your own conscience is harmful to your faith and will eventually destroy it.



8:1-13 CONCERNING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

5. What principles guide us as we exercise our Christian freedom?
- Demonstrating Christian love is our first priority, not exercising our rights.
 - We seek to build up the body of Christ, not tear it down.
 - If exercising our Christian freedom offends someone's weak conscience or leads a person into sinning against their own conscience, then we are sinning.
 - This is a sin not only against the weak brother or sister, but against Christ as well.



8:1-13 CONCERNING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

5. Under what circumstances are we obligated to take a stand even on things neither commanded nor forbidden by God in his Word?
- When the gospel is at stake, we do not give up our freedom (Note the example of Paul in Acts and Galatians).
 - Again, a great deal of love and patient instruction is called for in such circumstances.



8:1-13 CONCERNING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

6. What similar problems does the church still wrestle with today?



“A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant to all, subject to all.”

-Martin Luther
The Freedom of a Christian

9:1-18 PAUL'S RIGHTS AS AN APOSTLE

7. Vs. 1-2 – What does Paul mean when he writes, “*You are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord*”?
- The faith that the Holy Spirit had worked in the hearts of the Corinthian Christians was proof that Paul was indeed a true apostle of the Lord.
 - The message he proclaimed was genuine and powerful.
 - “*seal*” = that which confirms, attests, or authenticates



9:1-18 PAUL'S RIGHTS AS AN APOSTLE

8. Vs. 3-14 – What does Paul say here concerning his right to be financially supported by the congregation? Proofs?

- As an apostle, serving them with the gospel, Paul had every right to expect that they would support him financially.

- Proofs:

The example of the other apostles

The custom of society in general

Example of OT priests & Levites

The command of God



9:1-18 PAUL'S RIGHTS AS AN APOSTLE

9. Why did Paul refuse financial support as he lived and worked among the Corinthians?

- To avoid any hindrance to the gospel, such as giving the impression he was peddling the gospel for financial gain.
- To distance himself from “wisdom peddlers” of his day
- To emphasize that salvation is a free gift of God in Christ
- To model a good, Christian work-ethic



9:1-18 PAUL'S RIGHTS AS AN APOSTLE

10. Vs. 16-18 – How did Paul view his apostolic ministry? What was his reward for his service?

- Paul had been given and trust and was continually striving to prove faithful.
- Thus he didn't expect the Corinthians to heap praise or wealth upon him.
- Paul refused payment as a way of showing his gratefulness to God.
- His reward was found in offering the good news of the gospel to all free of charge.



9:1-18 PAUL'S RIGHTS AS AN APOSTLE

11. General principles to be gleaned from these verses?

- A congregation has the responsibility to care for their called worker so that he can dedicate himself to the gospel ministry without being overly burdened by financial concerns.
- The minister should not enter the ministry for financial gain and expect the congregation to lavishly compensate him.
- Both the congregation and the minister need to remain focused on the proclamation of the gospel as the number one priority.



9:19-23 PAUL'S USE OF HIS FREEDOM

12. What was Paul's number one priority? How did this priority influence the way he exercised his Christian freedom and carried out his ministry?
- Number one priority: *"To win as many as possible."*
 - Paul was willing to forego his rights in order not to offend or put an obstacle in the way of preaching the gospel.
 - *"all things to all men"*

13. Examples from your life?



9:24-27 THE NEED FOR SELF-DISCIPLINE

14. Point of the comparison? Where do we find our strength?
- Both athletic training and the Christian life call for self-control, discipline, and restraint.
 - As an Olympic athlete sacrifices to train, we too give up living for ourselves and our desires and rights and live for God and one another.
 - We find the strength in the gospel in
Word and sacrament.



10:1-13 WARNINGS FROM ISRAEL'S HISTORY

15. Review the historical references made by Paul in these verses. What message is he trying to convey?
- References: the exodus from Egypt; parting of the Red Sea; the golden calf; immorality with Moabite women; bronze serpent; spies giving bad report; Korah's rebellion
 - The message: Don't set your hearts on evil as they did and turn away from the Lord in unbelief or you too will be destroyed.
 - *"If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall" (v12).*



10:1-13 WARNINGS FROM ISRAEL'S HISTORY

16. How did the Israelites passing through the Red Sea and Moses' role as Israel's leader picture the Sacrament of Baptism and the Work of Christ?
- God used the waters of the Red Sea to rescue Israel from Pharaoh's army just as he uses the waters of Baptism to rescue us from sin, death, and the devil.
 - Moses was the great mediator of God's covenant with his Old Testament people. Jesus is the great mediator of the new covenant, the covenant of forgiveness through faith in him.

