



STANDING IN THE GAP

THE TWELFTH ANNUAL STANDING IN THE GAP LECTURESHIP

1 Corinthians, Chapters 1-8

Friday, January 28, 2011 – Sunday, January 30, 2011

Jason Hilburn, Lectureship Director

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
Friday 9:00 A.M.	"Circumcision Is Nothing"	Bobby Liddell
Friday 10:00 A.M.	"Your Glorifying Is Not Good"	Jerry Martin
Friday 11:00 A.M.	"Let There Be No Divisions"	Billy Bland
<i>Lunch provided by the Nesbit congregation</i>		
Friday 1:00 P.M.	"It is Required in Stewards That a Man Be Found Faithful"	Gary Colley
Friday 2:00 P.M.	"How Knowest Thou, O Man, Whether Thou Shalt Save Thy Wife?"	Dan Cates
Fri. 2:00 P.M. (Ladies)	"What Knowest Thou, O Wife, Whether Thou Shalt Save Thy Husband?"	Maggie Colley
<i>Dinner break</i>		
Friday 7:00 P.M.	"Lest I Make My Brother To Offend"	B. J. Clarke
<i>Break until Saturday afternoon</i>		
Saturday 2:00 P.M.	"Every Man's Work Shall Be Made Manifest"	Anthony Oesch
Saturday 3:00 P.M.	"Your Faith Should Not Stand in the Wisdom of Men"	Garland Elkins
Saturday 4:00 P.M.	"Timothy...Shall Bring You Into Remembrance"	Andrew Nelson
Sat. 4:00 P.M. (Ladies)	"I Thank My God Always"	Irene Taylor
<i>Break until next morning</i>		
Sunday 9:00 A.M.	"Babes In Christ"	Robert Jefferies
Sunday 10:00 A.M.	"Not Under Bondage"	Keith Mosher
<i>Potluck Lunch</i>		
Sunday 6:00 P.M.	"Why Do You Not Rather Suffer Yourselves to Be Defrauded?"	Wade Webster
Sunday 7:30 P.M.	"And Such Were Some of You"	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

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“AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU”

1 *Corinthians* 6:9-20

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

INTRODUCTION:

1. The first eight verses in 1 Corinthians 6 deal with matters of litigation.
2. The last twelve verses, which we cover in this assigned topic, treat some rather pressing matters among the deeply troubled congregation at Corinth.
 - A. There is the sharply drawn contrast between what they were prior to conversion and what they are now at the time of this apostolic composition (vs. 9-11).
 - B. Paul deals with lawful and expedient matters which were troublesome to brethren then and still are in the 21st century (v. 12).
 - C. Our bodies belong to the Lord and should not be joined to harlots in fornicating liaisons (vs. 13-16).
 - D. We are to be joined to what is right, pure and holy--not to what is wrong, impure and unholy (v. 17).
 - E. We are to flee from fornication--not fly toward it in thought, word, or deed as some in Corinth were doing (v. 18). See 1 Corinthians 5 and 2 Corinthians 12:21.
 - F. Paul's strong case for moral purity is set forth in cogent, Scriptural logic (vs. 19-20).
 - G. The admonitions and exhortations he gave the Corinthians are needed in 2011 since we live in a society filled with unbridled immorality and sexual sins of all types. Sodom moves closer to us all the time (Gen. 13:13; 19:1ff).

DISCUSSION:

I. FROM DAMNATION TO JUSTIFICATION.

- A. Unrighteous people are not Heaven-bound by any stretch of the imagination (vs. 9-10).
 1. The unrighteous are those who are not right mentally, vocally and in practices (v. 9). Righteousness is the opposite of unrighteousness and means being right in thinking, speaking, and in deeds.
 2. There is no justification for being deceived relative to these works of the world--lusts of the flesh, the eye and the pride or vainglory of life.
 3. Fornicators, adulterers and homosexuals are linked in the same verse and encompass sexual sins between men and women, men with men, women with women, and humans with animals

- (v. 9).
- a. All these are condemned forthrightly by Paul in Romans 1:23-32--a comprehensive list of sins and transgressions practiced in the first century and still practiced in the 21st century by the masses of men and women.
 - b. The Greek word, *porneia*, comprehends all these sexual perversions. Jesus used this term many times while here, and hence he did condemn homosexuality contrary to what homosexual defenders tell us in today's media. Homosexual defenders in our day show their abject ignorance when they say Jesus and the apostles did not address the ugly and repulsive sin of homosexuality. Have they never read all the Old Testament says about the sin of sodomy, or what the New Testament also states?
4. Idolaters are those who put any or all objects above or ahead of God. They make him secondary or even less important than that (v. 9).
 5. Thieves are those who take what belongs to others. Identity theft grows by leaps and bounds in our highly immoral and deeply dishonest society (v. 10).
 6. Covetous people are those greedy of gain, and desire what belongs to others. They are willing to go to any length to obtain what they covet regardless of how many people they trample upon in obtaining such (v. 10).
 7. Drunkards are drawn to and imbibe alcoholic beverages. Consuming one drink means that one is one drink drunk, and two drinks means one is two drinks drunk. Our deeply inconsistent society needs to see the evils of strong drink as clearly as they now see the great harm created by smoking. Our society now says, "Stop smoking and keep drinking!" Both are lethal dangers to any and all participants, plus all the harm each one creates and perpetrates (v. 10).
 8. Revilers are those who rail against others with vehement and abusive language (v. 10).
 9. Extortioners are those who blackmail others by stealth, violence or abuse of authority (v. 10). This is a very common crime in our day and too frequently is found within religious circles.
 10. The ones listed above are not Heaven-bound unless they repent and learn to be obedient to God and His holy will (vs. 9-10; Gal. 5:19-21).
- B. Marvelous and amazing changes had occurred in Corinth (v. 11).
1. The tense of the verbs, were and are, adds up to great importance

- here (v. 11).
2. They are now washed from their sins in baptism (v. 11; Cf. Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26)
 3. They are now sanctified or set apart for holy purposes (v. 11).
 4. They are now justified, or have had their sins cancelled from their inglorious past (v. 11).
 5. These changes have been wrought in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit (v. 11).

II. PROPER AND IMPROPER USES OF THE BODY.

- A. Verse 12 is not to be construed as meaning ALL things were legal and right, for he had just listed nearly one dozen sins which were unlawful.
 1. Acts may be within our power to do, but right will not allow our participation therein. Paul refused to be brought under the power of any of these (v. 12).
 2. Even in lawful matters some things may not be expedient, especially if it wounds the delicate conscience of others as in 1 Corinthians 8.
- B. There are legitimate needs of the body such as food, clothing and shelter which are strictly temporary since this body goes back to dust from which it came (v. 13; Cf. Gen. 3:19).
- C. God designed the body for food and drink, but He did not design the body to be used for fornication, adultery, homosexuality, etc. (v. 13).
- D. The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body (v. 13).
- E. Paul stresses that the body is not designed for sinful indulgences (v. 13).
- F. God raised Jesus, and resurrection of the body is in our future also (v. 14; John 5:26-29).

III. CHRISTIANS BELONG TO CHRIST--NOT TO HARLOTS.

- A. By conversion in general and in baptism in particular, we belong to Christ, being members of Him (vs. 16-17).
- B. That which belongs to Christ (our bodies) should not be given in relations with harlots (vs. 16-17).
- C. Relationship with Christ is a holy union (v. 17).
- D. Relationship with harlots is a Satanic union (v. 16).
- E. We are to flee fornication--not proceed toward it and participate therein with reckless speed (v. 18).
 1. Joseph fled such in Genesis 39.
 2. Reuben in Genesis 35, Judah in Genesis 38, David in 2 Samuel 11, and the man guilty of stealing his father's wife in 1 Corinthians 5 flocked toward such--not fleeing such perilous liaisons.
 3. Fornication means we sin against our own body (vs. 18).
Transmitted sexual diseases are unholy and death-threatening,

the fruits of such sinful indulgences. AIDS surely fits here. It is a fatal consequence for perverted sexual unions. Homosexuals ignore these evident dangers.

IV. HOLINESS BECOMES THE CHILD OF GOD

- A. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19).
 - 1. This is not a literal, bodily, personal or actual indwelling, else we would be part God.
 - 2. Each of the Godhead indwells us by the marvelous means of the Word (Cf. Eph. 3:17).
 - 3. This is the only logical, sensible and Scriptural manner one may indwell another.
- B. We are not our own; we belong to another (the Lord) (v. 19).
- C. We are blood-purchased (v. 20; Cf. Acts 20:28).
- D. Body and spirit of a Christian belong to God and should be a strong motivation to be holy in order to glorify God.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The gospel allows us to be now what we were not while in the lusts of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride or vainglory of life.
- 2. Paul strips fornication, adultery and homosexuality of all the fun, excitement, thrill and innocence the world attaches to these common sins.
- 3. The practice of fornication is an affront to the entire Godhead, the church and decent people who loathe such sins.
- 4. Heaven or hell rests upon taking such Scriptures, as are stated in 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, seriously and upon a permanent basis.

"BABES IN CHRIST"

1 Corinthians 3:1-2

Robert Jefferies

INTRODUCTION:

1. At some point in our Christian lives we have all been "*babes in Christ*."
2. In and of itself, there is nothing wrong with being a "*babe in Christ*." The problem is when there has been no growth on the part of a child of God.
3. When one continues to be a "*babe in Christ*," his/her growth has become stunted.
4. For our study, we want to notice the subject of "A Stunted Growth."

DISCUSSION:

I. THE DESCRIPTIONS OF STUNTED GROWTH.

A. The Corinthians were **carnal**.

1. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto **spiritual**, but as unto **carnal**, even as unto babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1).
2. What do the words "spiritual" and "carnal" mean?
 - a. Spiritual → (*pneumatikos*) "is one who not only accepts revelation but also patterns his life after God's revealed word."
 - b. Carnal → (*sarkinos*) "having the nature of flesh."
3. What caused them to be carnal?
 - a. They were giving allegiance to men, instead of God (1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 3:3).
 - b. They were getting puffed up with man's wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16).
 - c. They were resisting Paul's work and apostleship (1 Corinthians 4:1-ff).
 - d. They were accepting immoral behavior (1 Corinthians 5).
 - e. They were going to law against one another (1 Corinthians 6).

B. The Hebrews were **unskillful**.

1. "For every one that useth milk is **unskillful** in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Hebrews 5:13).
2. What does unskillful mean?
 - a. *Apeiros*
 - b. "Without experience."
 - c. Literally, inexperienced or ignorant.
3. Why were they given this description?
 - a. They were wavering about the fundamental facts of the Gospel.

- 1) "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should **let them slip**. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Hebrews 2:1-4).
- 2) "Let them slip" → carries with it the idea of "drifting away" (ASV, NKJV, ESV).
- 3) They were "drifting away" and "neglecting so great salvation."
 - a) Spoken by the Lord (Luke 16:16; John 3:5).
 - b) If was confirmed by eye and ear witnesses, who validated the original message (John 15:26-27; 20:30; Acts 1:21-22).
 - c) It was confirmed by God in four ways (v. 4):
 - i. Signs
 - ii. Wonders
 - iii. Miracles
 - iv. Gifts of the Holy Spirit

b. They were lacking faith (Ch. 11).

C. Some in the church today are stunted in the same ways.

1. Like the Hebrews, some are wavering in their faith because of suffering, temptation, lack of knowledge, etc.
2. Like the Corinthians, some are getting caught up in moral and attitude related sins.

II. THE PROBLEMS OF STUNTED GROWTH.

A. Stunted growth hinders **communication**.

1. With both groups, Paul wanted to speak to them on a deeper level, but could not because of their stunted growth.
 - a. "And I, brethren, **could not speak** unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1).
 - b. "Of whom **we have many things to say**, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing" (Hebrews 5:11).
2. How many Christians have reacted improperly when a certain subject is taught?

- a. Some overreact to something that may not be wrong, out of ignorance.
 - b. Or something that is wrong, but they will not change.
- B. Stunted growth hinders **education**.
1. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers" (Hebrews 5:12a).
 2. The Hebrews could not teach others because they needed to be taught.
 - a. After a person becomes a Christian, he is expected to teach others what he knows.
 - b. Let's be careful not to be contributing to a teacher shortage.
 3. An ignorant generation can destroy future generations.
 - a. "And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:9-10).
 - b. Cf. 2 Kings 22:8ff→God's law had been buried so deeply that they had to reinstitute such fundamental practices as the Passover (23:21ff).
- C. Stunted growth hinders **maturation**.
1. "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, **neither yet now are ye able**" (1 Corinthians 3:2).
 2. "**Ye have need that one teach you again** which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Hebrews 5:12b-13).
 3. There are goals that God has set for His people.
 - a. **Completeness**→"That the man of God may be **perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:17).
 - b. **Filled with all the fullness of God**→"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, **that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God**" (Ephesians 3:19).
 - c. **Continued growth, leading to spiritual security**→"And beside this, giving all diligence, **add to your faith** virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and

abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: **for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall**" (2 Peter 1:5-10).

III. THE REMEDIES FOR STUNTED GROWTH.

A. Spiritual growth must become a habit.

B. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of **use** have their **senses exercised** to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14).

1. "Use" → habitual practice.

a. Make it a habit to read (Acts 17:11).

b. Make it a habit to take up your cross and grow daily (Luke 9:23).

2. "Exercise" → as if you are training for the Olympics.

a. Training at the highest level.

1) When a person stops exercising physically, he will lose use of his various parts of his body (becomes very sore).

2) If we neglect spiritual exercise, we cannot grow properly.

b. What am I going to exercise?

1) "Senses" → The organ of perception, the conscience.

2) "To discern good and evil."

3. We must train ourselves vigorously in order to grow.

a. "Till I come, give attendance to **reading**, to **exhortation**, to **doctrine**. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. **Meditate** upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:13-16).

b. One of the definitions for "exercise" is "to meditate."

c. Upon what were they to meditate? They were to give attendance...

1) To reading,

2) To exhortation,

3) To doctrine.

CONCLUSION:

1. The brethren at Corinth and Jerusalem had been guilty of having their spiritual growth stunted.
2. Let's be sure that we are living in such a way that we are continually making spiritual growth.

"CIRCUMCISION IS NOTHING"

1 *Corinthians* 7:19

Bobby Liddell

INTRODUCTION:

1. God, through Paul, plainly declared, "Circumcision is nothing," yet, the influence upon the early church of those who sought to bind circumcision as a necessity of salvation was great, widespread, confusing, and divisive.
 - A. The inspired apostle of Jesus Christ refuted the error of man's binding upon man what God had not bound.
 - 1) To the church at Corinth, he wrote: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7:19).
 - 2) To the brethren in Galatia, he penned: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15; cf. 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:10).
 - 3) Again, to the Galatians, he emphasized: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6; cf. Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28; 5:4).
 - 4) According to the divinely given record, for one who wants to be saved, circumcision does not matter--it is nothing, and it does nothing--for God does NOT bind circumcision upon men today.
 - B. What is the meaning of "circumcision," and of "uncircumcision?"
 - 1) In the Bible, circumcision referred to the act itself; that is, of removing the foreskin (John 7:22), to the resulting relationship submitting to circumcision brought, under the Law of Moses (Gal. 2:8; cf. Acts 7:8), or, generally, to the Jews, as a people (Acts 10:45; 11:2; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 2:11).
 - 2) Uncircumcision generally referred to the Gentiles as a people (Eph. 2:11; Gal. 2:7), because they had not submitted to the act of circumcision; thus, they did not have the resulting relationship circumcision brought (under the Law of Moses).
 - 3) To the Jews, uncircumcision was despised, and a reproach, representative of uncleanness, and proof of unworthiness of their company (Gen. 34:14; Jud. 14:3; 1 Sam. 17:26; Acts 11:3).
 - 4) Sometimes, the word, circumcision, may be used in a figurative sense (Acts 7:51; Lev. 19:23).
2. Let us consider the following:
 - A. Keeping the commandments of God.
 - B. Binding the commandments of men.

DISCUSSION:

I. KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

A. God alone has commanded what He requires for one to be saved, and has bound His commandments as law, for He alone has the authority to do so (John 14:15; 15:14; Acts 10:48; Gal. 6:2).

1. To Peter (and the apostles), Jesus promised, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mat. 16:19).

a. The meaning is this: in their faithfully preaching the Gospel, the apostles would be binding "on earth" what God had **already** bound "in heaven," and they would be loosing "on earth" what God had **already** loosed "in heaven."

b. "This construction is future perfect passive periphrastic transitive....It is the church on earth carrying out heaven's decisions; not heaven ratifying the church's decision" (Rogers 37).

2. Briefly stated, as did the apostles, so must we have divine authority for that which we teach, preach, and practice in religion (1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:2).

a. Therefore, we must heed the Word of God, not the ideas, beliefs, and opinions of men (Rev. 22:18-19).

b. The truth is: no man has the right (authority) to make laws for God, or to bind what God has not bound (cf. Mat. 28:18).

B. God has revealed that there are some things that do not affect salvation-- things that one may choose to do, or not to do.

1. Our text (1 Cor. 7:19) emphasizes that neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, has anything to do with salvation today, for God has not commanded either in the Christian Age.

2. In spite of this, in Jerusalem, some taught the brethren: "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1), and there were, "certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5).

3. The truth, from 1 Corinthians 7, is: one who had been circumcised (a reference to a Jew, one who had been a keeper of the Law of Moses) could be saved, if he obeyed the commandments of God (Mark 16:15-16).

4. Likewise, one who had not been circumcised (a reference to a Gentile, one who had not been a keeper of the Law of Moses) could be saved, if he obeyed the commandments of God (Rev. 22:17).

5. Regardless of what some contended, and tried to bind upon others,

in the Christian Age, one's being circumcised, or not, makes no difference in his being acceptable to God.

- a. Being circumcised does not save one, or contribute to his salvation.
- b. Not being circumcised does not condemn one, or contribute to his condemnation.

C. Because of the adamant demands of those who bound circumcision, as necessary to salvation, and because of the confusion and division the binding of their manmade laws created, the apostles and elders came together, in Jerusalem, to consider whether circumcision should be bound upon Gentile followers of Christ (Acts 15:5).

1. After "much disputing...Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they" (Acts 15:7-11).
2. After Barnabas and Paul declared, "what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them," James responded: "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:12-18).
3. Then, James said, "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day" (Acts 15:19-21).
4. The correct conclusion, that the Gentiles did NOT have to be circumcised, did not please the men who wanted to bind

circumcision, but was the only conclusion they could make and be pleasing to God (Gal. 1:10).

- D. Of utmost importance, to our study, is this fact: in order to be saved, one must keep God's commands, NOT man's commands; he must obey God's law, not man's laws; and, he must submit to what God has bound, not what man binds (cf. Gal. 2:3).
1. We know that we know God, "if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3), and only by submitting to God, in humble, trusting obedience; that is; "keeping the commandments of God," will we obtain salvation (1 Cor. 7:19).
 2. Jesus made this contrasting point abundantly clear: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mat. 15:9).
 3. When any man, or group of men, seek to bind upon men what God has not bound as a condition of salvation, the result is the same as that in the first century when men tried to bind circumcision upon Christians--confusion and division.
 - a. But, what if they are "good men?"
 - b. Or, what if they are well "studied," and "scholars?"
 - c. What if the manmade law binders are "respected men?"
 - d. We still must obey the commandments of God (Acts 5:29).

II. BINDING THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.

- A. From the beginning, let us all understand that there are some beliefs one might hold, and not be lost for holding them, but that he must not bind them upon others (cf. Rom. 14).
1. For example: a man may believe it is wrong to eat in "the church" (erroneously equating the building with the body), even though God has NOT bound such a restriction (Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:20; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:24).
 2. Still, if one believes eating in "the church" is a sin, HE ought not to eat in the church building (cf. Rom. 14:23).
 3. We, who believe otherwise, would never say to a man who believes it is sinful to eat in the "church" building that he MUST eat therein.
 4. BUT, he must not bind upon others his belief, or accuse them of being ungodly because they do not follow his belief, nor should his belief be the standard of judgment by which brethren determine their actions.
- B. The problem of understanding authority.
1. As noted above, we must have divine authority for what we do and teach, but we must not bind our opinions upon others.

- a. We must be careful not to treat matters of faith as matters of opinion, or to treat matters of opinion as matters of faith.
 - b. We must not add to God's law, nor are we to take away from the divinely given standard.
2. God has given specific authority; for example, the command to assemble (Heb. 10:25), but God has given generic authority, in that He has not specified that we MUST assemble in a building owned by the church (for we could meet in a member's home, or a rented hall, etc.).
 3. Likewise, no man has the authority to bind upon the church that we MUST meet in a member's home, as one brother, of my acquaintance, sought to do (cf. Philemon 1-2).
- C. Note just a few examples where God has bound, and where God has not bound; that is, where God has given specific authority, and where God has given generic authority.
1. God has bound baptism, preceded by faith (Mark 16:15-16), for remission of sins (Acts 2:38), that puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27), but God has NOT bound whether the water MUST be running or still, hot or cold, in a baptistery or in a pond--as long as there is enough water to bury the penitent believer (John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-4).
 2. God has bound going and preaching the gospel (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16), but God has NOT bound how we go (car, train, plane, walking, etc.), nor has God bound the method of delivery (privately, pulpit, TV, printed page, Internet, etc.).
 3. God has bound singing in Christian worship (Eph. 5:19), but God has NOT bound when, in the order of our worship, we sing, how many songs we sing in one assembly, whether we use songbooks or not, or how many stanzas we sing of each song.
 4. God has bound our partaking of the Lord's Supper (the elements being the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine), on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7), but God has not bound when, in the order of our worship, we commune, how many containers we have, or how many servers distribute the elements.
- D. Having gained a better understanding of how man should respond to God's commandments (not man's), and how God has given specific and generic authority, let us consider some examples of a few of the instances (but, by no means, an exhaustive list) where men have bound, where God has not bound.
1. The first is an instance where an expedient became a tradition that, in time, became a law: Some brethren had a beautiful, lacey tablecloth (obviously embroidered by some good sister many,

many years ago) that they used to cover the elements of the Lord's Supper.

- a. Having such was perfectly acceptable, albeit cumbersome, although the actual need for it (probably keeping the flies away, before the days of air conditioning) had long since passed--but NOT having such a covering today would be acceptable also.
 - b. The problem was that these brethren had made a law that the elements MUST have a covering—specifically, THAT covering, or brethren there could not worship acceptably.
 - c. So strongly did they hold this position, had someone violated what they had bound, there could well have been a church split, with the violator(s) condemned as "liberal."
 - d. God has not bound such a covering, and like circumcision, it is nothing; that is, it is not necessary to acceptable worship, or to salvation.
2. The second example is of one who made a law about eating in the building: One fellow took more than an hour to explain to me that I was a "liberal" (and woefully lost) because I believed the "ungodly" doctrine that we could eat in the church building (again, his false idea began with his equating the building with the body, as cited above).
- a. I asked him if I could stop my work and eat a sandwich for lunch in my office, and after some contemplation he decided I MUST NOT eat in my office, because the church owned the building in which both the auditorium and my office were, and to do so would be sinful.
 - b. I asked if I could eat my sandwich standing on the parking lot, and after some thought he decided I could, because it was not a building (even though it was adjacent to the building, and the church owned the building AND the parking lot.)
 - c. I then asked if I could eat my sandwich standing on the parking lot, leaning up against the building, and he pronounced, to my amazement, that I could not without sinning!
 - d. In spite of his binding his manmade law against "eating" in the "church" (or leaning up against it), making adherence to it a test of fellowship; thus, of salvation, he agreed we ought to have restrooms in the "church," and that we could have a water fountain in the "church," that we might "drink," but that we could not "eat" in the "church," for that would be a sin (cf. 1 Cor. 11:22).

- e. I tried, as kindly as I could, to show him the error of his position, and I assured him that if he believed eating in the building was sinful, he should not eat therein; however, upon explaining the meaning of 1 Corinthians 11, I also explained that he sinned in binding a law upon others that God had not bound (note also that if 1 Corinthians 11:22 prohibits eating in the church building [which it does not], it also prohibits eating anywhere outside of one's home; thus, one could not eat at a restaurant, in a park, on one's patio, etc.).
 - f. Interestingly, as he walked out of my office, convinced that I was a lost, law-breaking "liberal" because I did not bind what God had not bound, but what he had bound, another man entered.
 - g. This second man spent the next hour telling me I was an "anti" because I did not loose (where God had not loosed), but where he had loosed.
3. The third example: In a town near to where I was involved in local work, a preacher, with a regular local radio program, spent just about every program decrying the evils of churches supporting "orphans' homes," and affirming that caring for orphans was the responsibility of individual members.
- a. The director of the Department of Human Resources in that county was a good man, and a faithful gospel preacher, who, after having heard the repeated sermons binding this manmade law, decided he would offer his help.
 - b. He called the radio preacher, and stated how he had often heard sermons, on the program, that, in no uncertain terms, required individuals to care for orphans.
 - c. So, he asked the radio preacher, "How many orphans do you want?" and offered to help him with the necessary paperwork and procedures.
 - d. Not surprisingly, for their practice rarely follows their preaching, the man who so strongly and rigidly bound that manmade law did not want to care for a single orphan!
 - e. The truth is this: the church, in practicing pure religion, cares for the fatherless and widows who are in need (Jam. 1:27).
4. The fourth example, identified as the "Saints Only Doctrine," is akin to the third: Some teach that the church CANNOT discharge the responsibility enjoined by Galatians 6:10, contending the individual ONLY may "do good unto all men."

- a. Some go so far as to say any church that helps anyone, except those who are saints, is Hell bound!
- b. God has commanded us to be compassionate friends of those in need, and Christ, Who perfectly exemplified such care, declared its significance at judgment (Mat. 25:31-46).
- c. Yet, A. C. Grider agreed to affirm this proposition: "The Bible teaches that it is a sin for the church to take money from its treasury to buy food for hungry, destitute children and those who do so will go to hell" (Guardian, May 30, 1963).
- d. If Galatians 6:10 refers to individual action only, the church CANNOT do the following, (and would sin and be Hell bound if it did): (1) Restore a brother overtaken in a fault (Gal. 6:1); (2) Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2); (3) Fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2); or, (4) Pay the preacher ("communicate [give] unto him that teacheth" [Gal. 6:6]), for the logical conclusions of the "saints only" doctrine demand individuals ONLY are responsible for these actions--including paying the preacher; thus, every individual Christian would have to obey God's command to pay the preacher, and would be lost if he failed to do so, and the church, collectively, could not pay the preacher, but would sin if it attempted to do so.
- e. Consequently, if Galatians 6:10 refers to the action of individuals ONLY, the church CANNOT even help the "household of faith," for the ones who are to "do good unto all men" are the same ones who are to do good unto "the household of faith."
- f. The question arises as to who these "doing good" ones are, and our erring brethren say, "Individuals only!" but Paul, by inspiration, wrote this epistle to the "churches of Galatia," which included individuals (cf. 1 Cor. 12:20)--but not individuals ONLY (Gal. 6:1-2).
- g. The word translated "all men" (Gal. 6:10) means all men, anyone, or everyone, but those who deny the God-given command for the church to help ALL men say "all men" refers to "saints only," forcing the passage to read: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto them who are of the household of faith, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," while, obviously, "all men" must refer to those other than "the household of faith."

5. The fifth example: Some teach that 1 Corinthians 11 demands that Christian women in worship assemblies today must wear an “artificial covering” when worshipping God, AND that women must not cut their hair (ever).
- a. One brother wrote: “It ought therefore to be clear that the Christian woman should wear some type of covering on her head when worshipping God in the church assembly...It is thus emphasized that the godly woman must wear an artificial covering when worshipping and that she should refrain from cutting her hair” (Jackson).
 - b. Notice the words, “should,” “must,” and “should,” again.
 - c. Note also that, the **godly woman** MUST “wear an artificial covering when worshipping.”
 - 1) Does must mean must?
 - 2) Must means to be obligated, bound, or required, and one of the synonyms is should.
 - 3) Strong gives the meaning of the word “must” (Acts 9:6; 16:30; the same word translated “needful” in Acts 15:5) as: “necessary (as binding)...ought, should.”
 - 4) To say one must do something, in order to be godly, and in order to worship properly is to bind this requirement as a matter of law, and as a condition of both fellowship and salvation.
 - d. The conclusion, if we follow what some teach, must be this: a sister in Christ MUST wear an artificial covering when worshipping in order to worship acceptably, and any sister in Christ who does NOT wear an artificial covering when worshipping is not godly and is not worshipping God acceptably (cf. Psalms 1:4-6; 2 Peter 3:7).
 - e. Likewise, according to what they teach, if she does cut her hair (ever), not that she must not cut her hair short, but if she cuts her hair at all, ever, she is NOT godly.
 - f. We would all agree that if a sister wants to wear a covering when worshipping, we would not tell her that she could not, or that she should not.
 - g. As well, if a sister wants to leave her hair uncut, we would not bind upon her that she must cut her hair.
 - h. BUT, to require that ALL Christian women MUST wear an artificial covering when worshipping, and that NO Christian woman should cut her hair (ever), is to bind where God has not bound.
 - i. G. C. Brewer wrote, “The man who says that Paul was giving the sanction of inspiration to the then existing custom

with its symbolism, thus making it a divine law which must be obeyed for all time, is compelled by every demand of logic as well as by the plain facts in the case not only to demand that women wear long hair but **that they also always wear a veil or headcovering in worshipping God.** According to that position any woman who comes into a worshipping assembly with uncovered head is a rebel against God's authority. She should be withdrawn from if she persists in her rebellion. There can be no escape from this conclusion."

j. Roy Deaver observed: "For a Christian woman to appear on the street or in a gathering in Corinth without her veil would have been for her to have thus identified herself with the ordinary harlots of Aphrodite Pandemos. Such would have brought shame and reproach upon the church," but that, "in our day, and in our culture," such is not the case. "If the time ever comes when all the impure women of Fort Worth identify themselves by carrying a red purse on their right arm, I will argue strongly – in the light of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 – that it would be a sin for a Christian woman of the area to carry a red purse on her right arm" (pp. 81-83).

CONCLUSION:

1. We must keep the commandments of God, but we must not bind the commandments of men, or be bound by them.
2. In making opinions authoritative and binding, men deny "the Master that bought them" (2 Pet. 2:1 ASV), because they deny His authority as Master of their lives (John 8:24, Luke 6:46), and deny His authoritative Word as the only absolute standard to guide them through life and into Heaven.
 - A. Our Lord did not die on the cross in order to establish a church broken into factions by the binding of men's opinions.
 - B. The New Testament of Jesus Christ, not the opinions of men, must be our standard of faith and practice.
3. As Paul wrote: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phi. 3:2-3).

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“WHY DO YOU NOT RATHER SUFFER YOURSELVES TO BE DEFRAUDED?”

1 *Corinthians* 6:1-8

Wade L. Webster

INTRODUCTION:

1. Both testaments give the inspired instructions not to defraud (Lev. 19:13; Mk. 10:19; 1 Thess. 4:6).
2. Throughout time, God has required that His people to be honest in their dealings with others.
3. At least four different relationships are involved in the requirement not to defraud.
 - A. A man is not to defraud his *neighbor* (Lev. 19:13; cf. Prov. 22:22; Isa. 10:2). The Parable of the Good Samaritan makes clear that our neighbor is not limited to those who look like us or who live on either side of us. Everyone with whom we come in contact is our neighbor (Lk. 10:30-37).
 - B. A man is not to defraud his *brother* (1 Cor. 6:8; 1 Thess. 4:6). The command not to defraud one's neighbor clearly involved not defrauding one's brother. I separated the two prohibitions because the command not to defraud one's brother is narrower than the command not defraud one's neighbor. Not defrauding one's neighbor would have included strangers and others with whom Israel had dealings. God's people were not to take advantage of anyone.
 - C. A man is not to defraud his *mate* (1 Cor. 7:5). Certain benevolence is due our mates (1 Cor. 7:3).
 - D. A man is not to defraud his *Maker* (Mal. 3:8). When a man does not give as he has been prospered, he is defrauding or robbing His maker of the glory due Him (Psa. 96:8).
4. Although each of the relationships mentioned above are worthy of discussion, our focus in this lesson will be on our brother. It should be noted from the start that defrauding one's brother is a very serious matter. Paul said that there was “a fault” among them (1 Cor. 6:7). Furthermore, he said that they were doing “wrong” (1 Cor. 6:8). The situation at Corinth was very shocking to Paul. He was shocked that there were those within the church at

Corinth who *dared* or presumed to do this (1 Cor. 6:1). Dared is from the Greek word *talmao* and is often translated as “durst” (Acts 5:13; 7:32; John 21:12; Jude 9). Roy Deaver states that the word indicates presumption.ⁱ In addition to being shocked that two brothers would do this, Paul was shocked that the church would let it happen without trying to prevent it (1 Cor. 6:5). Like the matter addressed in the fifth chapter, the saints at Corinth were far too passive (1 Cor. 5:2, 6-7). Although there were times within the book when Paul tried to keep from shaming them (1 Cor. 4:14), this was not one of those times. He spoke these things to their “shame” (1 Cor. 6:5). In this lesson, we will explore three reasons why their actions were shameful.

DISCUSSION:

I. IT WAS SHAMEFUL BECAUSE OF WHO IT INVOLVED.

- A. The letter of First Corinthians was addressed to “the church of God” which was “at Corinth” (1 Cor. 1:2). It was addressed to those who were “sanctified in Christ Jesus” and “called to be saints” (1 Cor. 1:2). As you know, sanctification refers to the setting apart of something or someone for a holy purpose. The saints at Corinth were supposed to be separate (2 Cor. 6:17-18). They were supposed to be different (1 Pet. 2:9). However, they were in many ways like the corrupt city in which they lived. It should be noted that in some ways, they were even worse than the city in which they lived. As you recall, they were tolerating a sin that wasn’t even named among the Gentiles (1 Cor. 5:1). In legal matters, they may not have been worse, but they seem to have been as ready to go to law with one another as unbelievers were. Warren W. Wiersbe noted, “The Greeks in general, and the Athenians in particular, were known for their involvement in the courts. The Greek playwright Aristophanes has one of his characters look at a map and ask where Greece is located. When it is pointed out to him, he replies that there must be some mistake – because he cannot see any lawsuits going on!”ⁱⁱⁱ
- B. Twice within the context under consideration in this study, Paul referred to “the saints” (1 Cor. 6:1, 2) and once to “the church” (1 Cor. 6:4). As noted above, the brethren at Corinth were supposed to be different because of who they were. However, they seemed as given to fornication and feuding as their fellow-Corinthians.

- C. Please note that the matter under consideration within the context (1 Cor. 6:1-8) involved brother against brother (1 Cor. 6:6). The strife was between “brethren” (1 Cor. 6:8; cf. 6:5; Gen. 13:8). Please understand that Paul was not implying that it would have been acceptable for them to have defrauded an unbeliever (cf. Lev. 19:13). He was simply showing how shameful it was for those within the same spiritual family to be treating one another in this way (1 Cor. 6:5). Consider a parallel to the Civil War that took place between the North and the South in our own country. What made the Civil War worse than other wars that we have been involved in as a nation? Was it not the fact that the Civil War involved brother against brother? I believe that it was. There is something worse about brother taking up sword against brother; and, that is true whether it is his own sword or that of the government (Rom. 13:4). Have you ever watched any courtroom television? If you have, then you have probably seen a case involving family members – brothers and sisters, parents and children, etc. Often, the judge will call attention to the fact that family members should have been able to work the matter out without coming to court. I believe that you will agree that there is something worse about these cases than other cases. Please notice the “*and that*” construction employed by Paul (1 Cor. 6:8). It shows the shock that Paul felt over the sinful suit taking place between brethren.
- D. Lenski noted that both men under consideration in the context were bringing charges against one another. He wrote, “When Paul writes about one ‘having a matter against another’ he means one member against another, but *pros* denotes reciprocity, for each of the two has something against the other...If the matter in question were entirely one-sided, Paul would have used *kata*.”ⁱⁱⁱ

II. IT WAS SHAMEFUL BECAUSE OF WHAT IT INVOLVED.

- A. Paul described the matter under consideration as *small* (1 Cor. 6:2). In his commentary on First Corinthians, Reese notes that the term *smallest* “speaks of things that were of the most trifling sort – having to do simply with earthly, and therefore transient things, money, property, and the like. The kind of things settled in ‘small claims court.’”^{iv} Matthew Henry noted, “They went to law for trivial matters, things of little value.”^v

- B. Paul described the matter under consideration as *secular* (1 Cor. 6:3-4). He said that it was a matter “pertaining to this life” (1 Cor. 6:3-4). Reese notes that the Latin translation of this word is “saecularia – secular, worldly – as opposed to spiritual.”^{vi} As Christians, our affections are to be on things above, and not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2; Mt. 6:33). Sadly, we often fight harder for the things of this life than we do for the things to come (1 Tim. 6:12).
- C. Paul described the matter under consideration as *sufferable* (1 Cor. 6:7). He thought that those involved should have been willing to “take wrong” or to “suffer” themselves to be defrauded (1 Cor. 6:7; cf. Mt. 5:38-42). He argued that they should have put the influence of the church before their own self-interests. The reputation of the church should have come before their individual rights. Clearly, had they loved the church as much as they should have, they would not have aired their dirty laundry.
- D. It should be noted that not all matters are small, secular, and sufferable. Roy Deaver noted the following: “It is our studied conviction that 1 Cor. 6 does not forbid an eldership – functioning as an eldership – when all other efforts have failed – in order to protect the LIFE, the WORK, and the PROPERTY of the congregation over which they serve as elders, to take whatever legal action MUST be taken. It is possible – and in fact, has happened – for an eldership to be placed in a position in which (for the protection of the life, works, and property of the congregation over which they serve) they have no alternative but to place the matter in the hands of the legal authorities. As watchmen, they would be derelict in their duties should they fail to do so. If it is true – as many hold – that elders cannot take such action, then – obviously – the deed to the property is not worth the paper it is written on! When such action becomes necessary, we maintain that it is not in violation of the teaching of 1 Cor. 6:1ff, and that it is in fact a situation to which 1 Cor. 6 is not applicable. Such is not a matter of a private dispute between brethren. The very life and work and property of a congregation is not such as could be described by the words “smallest matters,” “trivial cases,” “these pettiest cases.”^{vii}
- E. Roy Deaver further noted, “Clearly, it is the case that legal matters can be dealt with only by legal authorities. Religious problems can be (and ought to be) settled by brethren and among brethren. Gallio had the

right attitude when he said, 'If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villainy, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters' (Acts 18:14, 15). It is the state which has the authority to issue a deed to a piece of property. Obtaining a deed is a legal matter, and we have to go to law to *obtain* our deed to the church property. We may - in harmony with the scriptures - go to law to protect that deed and the rights which it represents."^{viii}

- F. It should be further noted that there are times when it is clearly permissible for a brother or a sister to go before the courts. The innocent party in a marriage is given the right by God to put away their sinful companion for their companion's fornication and to marry another (Mt. 19:9). Brother Deaver notes that these rights "include both *scriptural* and *legal* right. In both (a) the putting away and (b) the forming of another marriage the law of the land would have to be involved. Obviously, the innocent party is here told that he or she may call upon the law to the extent needed. Certainly, Paul, in 1 Cor. 6, *did not take away* this right!"^{ix}

III. IT WAS SHAMEFUL BECAUSE OF WHERE IT INVOLVED.

- A. As already noted, the matter under consideration was shameful because of *who* and *what* it involved. It was a small, secular matter between brethren. It was a private matter and should have stayed private. Jesus had already laid down the law that brothers were to settle disputes among themselves (Mt. 18:15-17). The most shameful thing of all was *where* the matter was taken. The matter was taken to the legal courts, instead of to the local church.
- B. Paul spoke of their taking the matter "*before the unjust*" (1 Cor. 6:1). Please note that "the unjust" in the passage are contrasted with "the saints." We have already elaborated on what is meant by the term *saints*. Therefore, "the unjust" refers to those who have not been set apart from the world for holy purposes. The unjust were worldly judges/juries who did not live by the same holy standards that governed God's people. Some suggest that these judges were prone to bribes and other abuses. We know from the trial of Jesus that they were not always just. However, Paul's concern was not over whether

or not the saints would get a fair trial. His concern was for the church and her influence. Please note that the problem was not going to law, but rather where they were going to law. It was permissible for them to go to law before the saints. The fault was in going before unbelievers.

- C. Paul spoke of their taking the matter *“before the unbelievers”* (1 Cor. 6:6). It was bad enough that brethren could not work out their differences, it was worse that they went before unbelievers to do so. Again, please notice the *“and that”* construction employed by Paul. Paul used this construction to express shock and to call attention to the sinfulness of what they were doing (1 Cor. 6:6, 8). Imagine two believers going before unbelievers to have their case decided. What kind of impression of the church do you suppose this would have left upon the judge and/or jury that heard the case? Do you think it would have encouraged or discouraged them from looking into the Lord’s church further? How foreign the actions of the church at Corinth were to what the Lord wanted the world to see when they saw the church. As you recall, He declared, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35; cf. John 17:20-21; Psa. 133:1; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:4-6).
- D. Paul argued that saints should go before saints, and not unbelievers, in settling matters like this (1 Cor. 6:1). In fact, the least esteemed among brethren were to be preferred over the most esteemed among unbelievers (1 Cor. 6:4). Perhaps, Paul was sarcastically saying, “Let the little members decide the little matters.” Bill Jackson believed that Paul was “stating that the least prominent, the least influential, and perhaps those with the least time in Christ, if faithful were “qualified to judge the matter at hand.”^x He pointed out that Christians would judge (are judging) the world and angels (1 Cor. 6:2-3; cf. Eph. 5:11; Heb. 11:7). Surely, they should be able to render judgments in matters pertaining to this life. Reese noted, “Those who are worthy of sitting as judges in a ‘supreme court’ are certainly qualified to function in a tiny ‘local court.’”^{xi} In a congregation that prided itself in having spiritual gifts, surely there was a man wise enough to judge between these brethren (1 Cor. 6:5).

- E. Conybeare and Howson noted that both “Greek and Roman law gave its sanction to the decision pronounced in a litigated case by arbitrators privately chosen.”^{xii} In other words, there was no need for these two brothers to go before a pagan judge. Roman and Greek law allowed them to settle the matter among themselves. The Jews followed this practice. Wiersbe noted, “Even the unbelieving Jews dealt with their civil cases in their own synagogue courts.”^{xiii} The church could have, and should have, done the same.

CONCLUSION:

1. In this study, we have seen three reasons why the actions of those in the Corinthian congregation were shameful. Their actions were shameful because of *who*, *what*, and *where* was involved.
2. As lawyers and legal actions multiply within our country, let’s make sure that we do not become like those around us. Let’s make sure that we put the influence of the church before the interests of self.
3. As Biblical illiteracy grows and grows, let’s make sure that we are knowledgeable of matters like this.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Deaver, Roy. “Difficult Texts From First & Second Corinthians” in Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained. Editor: Wendell Winkler. Montgomery, AL: Winkler Publications, 1981, p. 226.

ⁱⁱ Wiersbe, Warren W. The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament, Volume 1. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor Books, 2001, p. 587.

ⁱⁱⁱ Deaver., 228.

^{iv} Reese, Gareth L. New Testament Epistles: I Corinthians. Moberly, Missouri: Scripture Exposition Books, 2004, p. 180.

^v Deaver, 228.

^{vi} Reese, 182.

^{vii} Deaver, 230.

^{viii} Ibid., 230,

^{ix} Ibid., 231.

^x Jackson, Bill. A Commentary on First Corinthians. Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1990, p. 50.

^{xi} Reese, 178.

^{xii} Deaver, 226.

^{xiii} Wiersbe, 588.

"I THANK MY GOD ALWAYS"

1 *Corinthians* 1:4

Irene C. Taylor

INTRODUCTION:

1. "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:4).
2. There are many, many things in life for which the Christian should be thankful.
 - A. We should be thankful most of all for our spiritual blessings.
 - B. We should be thankful for our physical blessings.
3. Thankfulness should be a permanent attribute of the Christian life.
 - A. If we **think** properly, thankfulness will follow naturally.
 - B. Count your many blessings, and bow in thankfulness to God.

DISCUSSION:

I THANK MY GOD ALWAYS FOR...

I. HIS GREAT LOVE (John 3:16).

A. Discuss the meaning of *monogenes*.

B. God is love (1 John 4:7-8).

1. "Beloved, let us love one another; for God is love; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

C. His love is deep (1 John 4:9-10).

1. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

D. His love is endless (Deut. 33:27).

1. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee..."

E. His love is for all who will obey Him (1 Sam. 15:22; Jer. 7:23; Matt. 7:21; Acts 5:29; Acts 10:34).

1. The NKJV renders the phrase "is no respecter of persons" in Acts 10:34 as "shows no partiality."

II. THE GIFT OF HIS SON (2 Cor. 9:15).

A. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

B. He was sent to save us from our sins (Matt. 1:21).

1. Jesus came to do His Father's business (Luke 2:49).
2. He set the perfect example.

- a. "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).
- b. "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).
- 3. He went about doing good (John 10:32).
 - a. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38).
 - 1) Brother Leroy Brownlow considered this verse to be the shortest and best biography of our Lord.
- 4. He willingly suffered shame and cruelty, finally **giving** His life on the cross (John 10:17-18).
 - a. He died for all.
 - 1) "...that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

III. THE CHURCH WHICH HE PURCHASED.

- A. He **promised** to build it. (Matt. 16:18-19).
- B. He **prepared** for its arrival (Acts 2).
 - 1. The apostles were gathered in Jerusalem and received power from on high (Acts 2:1ff).
 - 2. Peter preached repentance and the need to be baptized (Acts 2:38).
 - 3. Three thousand souls were added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47).
- C. He established a **pattern** for entrance into the church.
 - 1. Hear the Truth (Rom. 10:17)
 - 2. Believe the Truth (Mark 16:15-16; Heb. 11:6).
 - 3. Repent of sins (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3).
 - 4. Confess Jesus as God's Son (Matt. 10:32-33).
 - 5. Be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:21).

IV. THE BIBLE, GOD'S REVEALED WILL.

- A. It is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16).
 - 1. It is profitable for doctrine (teaching).
 - 2. It is a standard for reproof, for correction.
 - 3. It is for instruction in righteousness.
- B. It is the means by which He guides us from earth to Heaven.
 - 1. "For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death" (Psa. 48:14).
 - 2. "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psa. 73:24).
- C. It is that by which we will be judged in that final day.

1. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12).
 - a. We must follow the guide book or have our name removed from the book of life (Rev. 3:5).
 - b. Those who follow the Bible (the sheep) will be separated from the unbelievers (the goats) (Matt. 25:31-33, 46).

V. MY FAMILY.

- A. Marriage was ordained by God (Gen. 2:24-25).
 1. Marriage has a God-ordained purpose.
 - a. Man needed a **help meet**, a companion (Gen. 2:18).
 2. The husband is to be head of the family (Eph. 5:22-24).
 - a. The husband is to love the wife (Eph. 5:25, 28-29).
 - b. He is to provide for his own (1 Tim. 5:8).
 3. The wife is to reverence her husband (Eph. 5:33).
 - a. Sara respected Abraham calling him lord (1 Pet. 3:6).
- B. They are to "replenish the earth," i.e., have children.
 1. Children are a blessing from God.
 - a. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psa. 127:3).
 - b. "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them..." (Psa. 127:5).
 2. They are to **train** those children.
 - a. "Train up a child in the way he should go..." (Prov. 22:6).
 - b. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord,..." (Gen. 18:19).
 - c. **Training** includes correction.
 - 1) "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. 13:24).
 - 2) "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. 19:18).
 - 3) "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Prov. 29:17).

VI. CHRISTIAN FRIENDS.

- A. There is a special bond with those of like precious faith.
 1. No earthly friendship can match that which unites friends who share in service to God.
 2. True friends love **because** and **in spite of**.
 - a. "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for

adversity" (Prov. 17:17).

b. "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24b).

1) "Real friends are those who, when you've made a fool of yourself, don't feel you've done a permanent job" (Apples of Gold, p. 9).

2) "A friend is one who comes to you when others leave." (Apples of Gold, p. 17).

B. Friendship is a mutual walk.

1. We must give as well as receive.

a. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Prov. 18:24a).

b. "Friendship is to be purchased only by friendship" (Apples of Gold, p. 10).

VII. A MYRIAD OF BLESSINGS.

A. The blessings God showers upon His children are too numerous to remember.

1. We need to give Him thanks daily.

2. We need to count our blessings, not take them for granted.

3. We need to use these blessings to His glory.

B. Some of our daily blessings are:

1. Our daily food.

2. Our homes.

a. Home is more than a house!

b. We should be doubly grateful for a warm house in this cold season.

3. Our livelihood.

a. God provides, but we must be willing to work (2 Thess. 3:10).

4. Our health.

a. Without our health and strength, both mentally and physically, we cannot serve God and His Cause.

CONCLUSION

1. Truly, we should all "thank God always."

2. We should express our thanks to Him daily or more.

3. I am thankful to God always that He loves me and cares for me.

4. I am thankful to God that He forgives my sins.

“LEST I MAKE MY BROTHER TO OFFEND”

1 Corinthians 8

B. J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION:

1. Although we are all *“one in Christ”* (Gal. 3:28) and *“brethren”* in Christ (Mat. 23:8), according to Scripture, there is such a thing as a *“weak brother”* (1 Cor. 8:11).
2. By the revelation of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul labeled some brethren as *“weak in the faith”* (Rom. 14:1).
 - A. It is interesting to note that these **weak brethren are still regarded as brothers** in Christ. In fact, the contexts of Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8, though not identical, demonstrate that in certain instances and **on certain subjects, brethren can be weak in the faith without being lost.**
 - B. **This is not to say that we do not need to know the truth** in order to be set free from our sins (John 8:32). On the other hand, according to Paul, a brother may lack knowledge of what the truth is on a certain matter and nevertheless still be saved. Thus, **not all matters of truth are matters of salvation!**
3. The question before us is this: **if I am in fact the stronger brother, how should I conduct myself to avoid offending the weaker brother?**
 - A. I need to thoughtfully and sympathetically take into account a number of factors concerning my brother.
 - 1) How long has he/she been a Christian?
 - 2) What was his/her religious background prior to becoming a Christian?
 - 3) How much opportunity has he/she had to receive solid Bible teaching?
 - B. My opinion of my brother **should be an opinion obtained by reflection, not a knee jerk conclusion based upon what may or may not be true that has been reported about him and what he believes.**
 - 1) Genuine consideration for my brother will lead me to dwell, not upon suspicions, unfounded assumptions or hearsay about him.
 - 2) Instead, I must focus upon **the facts of what he believes, why he believes it, whether he has been a Christian long enough to be taught otherwise, or whether, even after being taught otherwise, the view he holds falls into the realm of a matter that is not a matter of salvation.**
4. It is not surprising that, in a book that contains all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), we would find specific and practical instructions on how to show proper consideration to weaker brethren.

5. Such is exactly what we find in *1 Corinthians 8:1-13*. A study of these verses reveals **six major principles that I must remember** in order to avoid unnecessarily offending my brother.

I. IT IS NOT JUST ABOUT WHAT I KNOW (1 Cor. 8:1-6).

- A. Paul answers their question of whether a child of God may eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols.
- B. Paul begins by observing that **the solution to this conflict involves more than the mere possession of knowledge**. This is true, in the first place, because in our minds *"we all have knowledge"* (1 Cor. 8:1).
- C. **Just about every human being feels that his knowledge is superior to the knowledge of those with whom he disagrees.**
 - 1. As wonderfully important as knowledge is, it is not all that we need to peacefully co-exist with our brethren. **Knowledge without love "puffeth up."**
 - 2. Knowledge with charity (love) builds up (1 Cor. 8:1).
 - 3. The man who handles conflict with his brethren by focusing **only** upon what he knows (or thinks he knows) is in need of a reality check and Paul provides it in *verse 2*: *"And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."*
- D. This passage *has sometimes been abused to suggest that knowledge is unattainable to anyone about anything.*
 - 1. However, **at least ten times in his epistles (eleven if you count Hebrews), Paul certified his teaching with the words "we know"** (Rom. 3:19; 7:14; 8:22, 26, 28; 1 Cor. 8:1, 4; 13:9; 2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Tim. 1:8; Heb. 10:30).
 - 2. Note carefully that two of these instances occur in the immediate context of *1 Corinthians 8:2* (8:1, 4). Thus it is impossible that Paul is affirming an agnostic approach to truth.
- E. What then is the meaning of *1 Corinthians 8:2*?
 - 1. Paul is stating simply that a **"know-it-all-attitude" is destructive to settling disagreements between brethren.**
 - 2. The Christian must be humble enough to admit that he still has room to *"grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet. 3:18).
 - 3. **The man who thinks he already knows everything is not likely to treat graciously the brother with whom he disagrees.**
- F. This does not mean that we have to be timid about what we do know just because there are some things we do not know. In fact, **in matters of salvation we must know the truth and insist upon teaching the truth without compromise.**

1. It is **not arrogant** to affirm that we know that Jesus is the one and only way to the Father. This is a Biblical fact (*John 14:6; Acts 4:12*).
 2. It is **not arrogant** to affirm that without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God (*Heb. 11:6*).
 3. Neither is it arrogant to say that we know that all men everywhere must repent (*Acts 17:30*) or that baptism does also now save us (*1 Pet. 3:21*).
 4. These are matters in which there is **no room for disagreement**. Someone who rejects Jesus as the one and only way to heaven, who rejects faith, and downplays baptism, **is not the weaker brother – he is not a brother at all!**
- G. Having said this, we reiterate that **there are matters in which brethren may disagree without jeopardizing their fellowship or salvation**.
- H. In the first century, Jews who became Christians had a decision to make concerning the eating of particular meats.
1. For centuries the Law of Moses prohibited the eating of certain meats. However, Jesus nailed the Law of Moses to the cross (*Col. 2:14*), thus removing its regulations and prohibitions.
 2. Consequently, no man had the right to judge another brother over matters of eating meat (*Col. 2:16*).
 3. Under the New Testament, *“every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer”* (*1 Tim. 4:4-5*).
 4. Those who commanded New Testament Christians to abstain from certain meats were *“speaking lies”* (*1 Tim. 4:2*).
- I. Nevertheless, this **newfound liberty** to eat meats formerly prohibited **was not necessarily an easy transition for the Jewish Christian**.
1. Even the apostle **Peter at first had difficulty accepting this liberty**. As he sat upon the housetop praying, while the noon meal was in preparation, he fell into a trance...(*Acts 10:11-16*).
 2. It would be easy to chide Peter for his stubborn reluctance to eat what God commanded Him to eat, but **put yourself in his place and consider what a dramatic change of practice this commandment entailed**.
 3. Although he recognized the Lordship of the voice of God, he struggled with eating what Jews had been prohibited from eating for multiplied centuries. **God understood the need to condition Peter to accept these drastic changes**.
 4. Consequently, He took the time to reassure Peter not once, not twice, but three times, that what had formerly been unclean to eat was now divinely cleansed.

- J. Paul was well aware of the fact that **some Jewish Christians had no problems embracing their newfound liberty to eat meats that were formerly off limits, while others chose not to exercise this liberty because it violated their consciences** (*Rom. 14:2-4, 6*).
1. These passages make it clear that **on this particular issue there was a God-given liberty**. The Jewish Christian was at liberty to eat meat or not to eat meat.
 2. He was **not at liberty to bind his choice upon those of the opposite persuasion nor was he at liberty to violate his conscience**.
- K. The situation at Corinth added a **new wrinkle** to the matter of eating meats. This was **not merely a matter of eating meats** which had been prohibited under the Law of Moses – this was a **matter of eating “things offered unto idols”** (*1 Cor. 8:1*), *“the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols”* (*1 Cor. 8:4*).
1. **Corinth was a town with a large pagan temple**.
 2. “There were **two sources of meat in the ancient world: the regular market** (where the prices were higher) and *the local temples* (where meat from the sacrifices was always available). **The strong members of the church realized that idols could not contaminate food, so they saved money by purchasing the cheaper meat available from the temples**. Furthermore, if unconverted friends invited them to a feast at which sacrificial meat was served, the strong Christians attended it whether at the temple or in the home. All of this offended the weaker Christians. Many of them had been saved out of pagan idolatry and they could not understand why their fellow believers would want to have anything to do with meat sacrificed to idols. (In *Rom. 14–15*, the weak Christians had problems over diets and holy days, but it was the same basic issue.) There was a potential division in the church, so the leaders asked Paul for counsel” (*Wiersbe 1 Cor. 8:1*).
 3. **“The Greeks and Romans were polytheistic, worshipping many gods... They were also polydemonistic, believing in many evil spirits**. They believed the air was filled with evil spirits of all sorts. Giving food sacrifices, which were usually meat, was of great importance in regard to both of those beliefs. *It was believed that the evil spirits were constantly trying to invade human beings and that the easiest way to do that was to attach themselves to food before it was eaten. The only way the spirits could be removed from food was through its being sacrificed to a god. The sacrifice therefore served two purposes; it gained the favor of the god and cleansed the meat from demonic contamination* (*MacArthur, 1 Cor. 8:1*).

4. **“Idol offerings were divided into three parts. One part** was burned on an altar as the sacrifice proper. The **second part** was given as payment to the priests who served at the temple, and **the remaining part** was kept by the offerer. Because of the large number of offerings, the priests were not able to eat all of their portion, and they sold in the marketplace what they did not need. That meat was highly valued because it was cleansed of evil spirits, and was thus the meat served at feasts and to guests (MacArthur, 1 Cor. 8:1-6).
- L. In evaluating the propriety of a Christian purchasing such meat, Paul said, *“we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one”* (1 Cor. 8:4).
1. **Paul was aware of the fact that there were “gods many, and lords many”** (1 Cor. 8:5), at least in the eyes of the world. But these were only “called” gods – **“to us there is but one God**, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Cor. 8:6).
 2. Consequently, **Paul knew, and the more educated brethren in Corinth knew, that there was no real significance to purchasing/eating meat which had previously been offered in sacrifice to an idol.**
 3. After all, *“an idol is nothing in the world”* (1 Cor. 8:4), since idol gods are not even really divine. Paul knew this, the stronger brethren at Corinth knew this, but Paul sought to educate the educated into realizing that it is not just about what I know.
 4. *I must also remember that...*

II. IT IS ABOUT WHAT MY BROTHER DOESN'T KNOW (1 Cor. 8:7-8).

- A. Paul hastens to point out to the strong brethren, who know that an idol is nothing, that *“howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge”* (1 Cor. 8:7).
- B. **In essence, Paul says to them:**
 1. **“Just because you know the truth about this issue does not mean that your brother knows the same truth.** Therefore, you have to take into consideration why your brother has a problem with eating such meat.”
 2. “You may be able to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols without even thinking about its origin. However, your brother may not be able to disconnect from his tender conscience where this meat came from, and the idol to which it was dedicated.”
 3. **“Whatever you do, you must not trumpet your knowledge before your brother and look down upon him and his**

ignorance. You should not feel/act with an air of superiority toward the weaker brother." *After all, 'meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse' (1 Cor. 8:8).*

4. Furthermore, you must remember that **it is not your mission to force your knowledge upon your brother on this particular issue.** Instead, you should respect his desire not to violate his conscience.
5. You might not agree with your brother's views, and you might even know that his views are too restrictive on this particular matter, but **you must avoid belittling him.**
6. You must not pressure him to "grow up" and toughen up his conscience by talking him into doing something that he believes is wrong.

III. IT IS ABOUT THE EXAMPLE I SHOW (1 Corinthians 8:9-10).

- A. Having just stated that *eating meat or not eating meat does not define our relationship with God, or make us any better or worse in His sight, Paul hastens to warn the stronger brother not to take this liberty too far.*
- B. *"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak" (1 Cor. 8:9).*
- C. With Christian liberty comes Christian responsibility.
- D. **Just because I have certain freedoms does not mean that I should abuse them.**
 1. As long as I have a driver's license **I have the freedom to drive my car on the highway, but this does not mean that I can drive any way I want to drive.**
 2. **I must use my freedom responsibly.** My freedom to drive is not the same as freedom from rules. Misusing my freedom on the highway may endanger innocent drivers around me.
 3. Likewise, **misusing my Christian liberty may endanger my brethren around me.**
- E. **Paul even presents a scenario** wherein the stronger brother's actions might lead the weaker brother astray. He asks, *"For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?"*
- F. It is fair to ask **why the stronger brother would be found sitting at meat in the idol's temple.**
 1. In *1 Corinthians 10*, **Paul plainly prohibits Christians from intentionally attending and participating in a pagan worship service to idol gods.**

2. In the first few verses of *Chapter 8*, he addresses the matter of eating food which has been purchased at the market. **Though it may have once been a pagan offering, it is perfectly safe to eat.**
- G. Yet the **question still remains – if the stronger brother was not drawn to the idol’s temple for the express purpose of worshipping an idol, what other explanation could there be for his sitting at meat in the idol’s temple?**
1. *“It was almost impossible for a believer who had any personal contact with Gentiles to avoid facing the question of eating idol sacrifices. Most social occasions, including weddings, involved pagan worship of some sort, and a great many of the festivities were held in temples. Idol food was always served. If a relative was getting married, or a long-time friend was giving a banquet, a Christian either had to make excuses for not attending – which he could not do indefinitely – or he had to eat food that he knew had been part of an idol offering” (MacArthur, 1 Cor. 8:10).*
 2. Even if the stronger brother never opens his mouth to try and persuade the weaker brother into eating meat, **he must recognize that his example is proclaiming a message of its own.**
 3. Essentially, Paul is warning the stronger brother, *“If you are careless and thoughtless in participation in the events transpiring at the idol’s temple, and your weaker brother beholds this, you will leave the wrong impression and embolden him to violate his conscience. Therefore, show proper consideration for your brother by setting the right example.”*

IV. IT IS ABOUT WHERE MY BROTHER GOES (1 Cor. 8:11).

- A. Paul makes it abundantly clear that **this optional matter can become a salvation issue if I am more concerned about defending my knowledge than preserving my brother’s soul.**
- B. Hence, after warning the stronger brother to take heed lest his liberty become a stumblingblock to them that are weak (1 Cor. 8:9), and after cautioning the stronger brother to be aware of his visible example (1 Cor. 8:10), Paul asks the stronger brother, *“And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died” (1 Cor. 8:11)?*
- C. **The absolute, number one, consideration toward my brother must be about his eternal destiny.** It is not worth it to arrogantly push my position regarding an optional matter upon my weaker brother if doing so is going to cause him to sin and ultimately perish!
- D. Incidentally, the doctrine of once saved always saved is annihilated by this text of Scripture. **According to the inspired apostle Paul, a brother for whom Christ died can perish (1 Cor. 8:11).**

- E. Consequently, I must do everything within my power to prevent that from happening. Furthermore, in showing proper consideration to my weaker brother, I must remember that...

V. IT IS ABOUT WHERE I WILL GO (1 Cor. 8:12).

- A. **If I misuse my knowledge to the point of causing my brother to sin, then I have also sinned.** Paul says as much, *“But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ”* (1 Cor. 8:12).
 - 1. The wages of sin is death (*Rom. 6:23*), the second death, which is the lake of fire and brimstone (*Rev. 21:8*).
 - 2. **We should make no mistake about what’s at stake – the salvation of my brother’s soul and the salvation of my soul have everything to do with whether I show him proper consideration.**
- B. To sin against my brother is to sin against a fellow-member of the body of Christ.
 - 1. To sin against the body of Christ is to sin against the Head of the body, Jesus Christ (*Acts 8:1; 9:1, 4; Col. 1:18*).
 - 2. **To sin against Christ is to damn my soul!**
- C. **This is proof positive that one can be a heretic with the truth.** Don’t forget that the brother described in *1 Corinthians 8:12* is the stronger brother, the more knowledgeable brother.
 - 1. Yet, **the stronger brother can be lost while believing the right doctrine because of possessing the wrong attitude.**
 - 2. Hence, **if I know the truth and mistreat my brother, and I die in that condition, or the Lord comes back and finds me lost, what good did it do me to know the truth?**
- D. I must never forget that **the way I treat my brother will, among other things, determine where I go in eternity.**

VI. IT IS ABOUT THE SELFLESS LOVE I SHOULD SHOW (1 Cor. 8:13).

- A. The whole essence of Christianity is to deny self (*Luke 9:23*).
- B. Paul was certainly willing to do so.
 - 1. He concluded, *“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend”* (1 Cor. 8:13).
 - 2. In asking the Corinthians to sacrifice their personal rights for the good of others, Paul was not asking them to do anything he wasn’t willing to do.
 - a. **Paul was willing to forego his right to receive support from the Corinthian church** (1 Cor. 9:1-18).

- b. Paul was willing to deny himself in order to try and save others (1 Cor. 9:19-23).
 - c. Paul was willing to deny himself in order to make sure of his own salvation (1 Cor. 9:24-27).
- C. Who was Paul's role model of self-denial? **It was Jesus Christ.**
 - 1. Paul extolled the selflessness of Jesus in leaving Heaven to come to earth as a man and to die for the sins of the world (Phi. 2:6-8).
 - 2. In the context of 1 Corinthians 8, Paul draws attention to the fact that Jesus died for the weaker brother.
 - 3. The implication is clear – **if Christ could personally sacrifice so much for the good of others, even to the point of giving His very life, then surely the strong brother could give up his right to eat meat if eating meat would cause his brother to stumble into sin.**
- D. *The greatest liberty of all is to be free enough to give up what you want in the best interest of someone else.*
 - 1. **This is precisely what Jesus did** in the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - 2. He petitioned the Father to remove the cup of suffering from Him, but just as quickly added, *"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt"* (Mat. 26:39).
- E. **The key to self-denial is love.** The love Jesus had for His Father, combined with the love He had for the human race, moved Him to deny Himself for the good of others.
- F. Likewise, **the key to solving the many problems at Corinth was love.**
 - 1. Paul wrote, *"Let all your things be done with charity"* (1 Cor. 16:14).
 - 2. He spent an entire chapter explaining the characteristics of love and its essentiality (1 Cor. 13).
 - 3. The foundation for proper consideration of the weaker brother is love (1 Cor. 8:3).
- G. Paul's correspondence to the Romans bears out the same truth. Paul told the brethren there that **if they grieved the weaker brethren with their insistence upon eating meat they would not be walking "charitably"** (Rom. 14:15).
- H. Having a selfless love for one another is the key to proper treatment of one another (Phil. 2:1-5).

VII. CONCLUDING APPLICATIONS.

- A. In view of the fact that the modern local grocer does not have a section of sacrificial meat on sale, **some may wonder about the relevance of 1 Corinthians 8 to the Christian today.**
- B. It should be remembered that *there is a much deeper issue in this chapter than the question of eating meat.*

- C. **The deeper issue has to do with whether we will abuse our liberty in Christ by abusing our brother over a matter of option – not a matter of obligation.**
- D. There are issues in our day and time, which, like the situation in Corinth, involve different views between brethren over matters which are not matters of salvation.
1. Some brethren believe it is wrong to do any work on Sunday, while others understand that as long as you do not miss services there is no regulation in the New Testament for the Christian not to do any work on Sunday.
 2. May a woman wear make-up?
 3. Is it right or wrong to own a television set considering the fact that there is so much filth on television today?
 4. Assuming that the lyrics are clean, is it wrong to listen to music with a strong drumbeat and guitar lead?
 5. May a Christian put up a tree in the living room with non-religious decorations on it and put presents under it during the month of December?
 6. Is it wrong for young people to go trick or treating at Halloween?
 7. What about making Easter eggs?
 8. Is it right or wrong to play cards as long as you don't gamble? (*Teenagers playing cards at New Year's Eve get together, elderly sister raised objections, my father asked us to stop. I thought it was unfair then, but now I understand*).
 9. Is it wrong to eat at a restaurant that serves alcohol?
 10. Is it wrong to eat in the church building?
 - a. It is not wrong to eat in the church building after services, but some brethren have been raised to believe that it is.
 - b. While it would be **improper for them to bind upon the rest of the church what God has not bound, it would be just as improper for us to try and coerce them to stay and eat with us, thus leading them to violate their conscience, and thus sin** (*Rom. 14:23*).
 - c. It would **also be wrong to brag to them later about what a great meal we had and how they should have stayed.**
- E. Whatever the issue, if it is an optional matter, the principles gleaned from 1 Corinthians 8, if practiced, will help me show proper consideration to the weaker brother.
1. I must remember that it is not just about what I know.
 2. I must consider what my brother doesn't know.
 3. I must ever be mindful of the example I show.

4. I must remember that my conduct may very well influence where my brother goes for eternity.
 5. Moreover, my conduct toward my brother will determine where I go.
 6. The number one thing that will help me and my brother get to Heaven is to demonstrate a selfless love toward God and my brethren.
- F. *In matters of faith, let there be unity; in matters of expediency, let there be liberty; in all things, let there be charity!*

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“EVERY MAN’S WORK SHALL BE MADE MANIFEST”

1 *Corinthians* 3:6-15

Anthony Oesch

INTRODUCTION:

1. Corinth was a city of great potential and great problems.
2. There are 16 chapters in the first letter, dealing with 16 problems.
3. Paul opens the book with the problem of division, and in chapter 13 he deals with the problem of a lack of love.
4. Certainly the problem of division and many problems associated with this church were centered around the problem of a lack of love.
5. Division, fornication, giving, abuse of the Lord’s Memorial, etc. stem from a lack of love for each other, for the church, and for God.
6. When it comes to chapter three, Paul is dealing with the subject of building upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.
7. Paul, as it is recorded in chapter three, reminds the Corinthians as well as us, (v. 13), that every man’s work will be made manifest.
8. Prior to that, he expresses a warning about how one builds upon the foundation of Christ.
9. Let us notice:
 - A. The foundation
 - B. The importance of taking heed
 - C. Kinds of building
 - D. How we will suffer loss
 - E. Tying it all together

DISCUSSION:

I. THE FOUNDATION.

- A. 1 Cor. 3:11 – “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
- B. We are laborers together in continuing to build upon the foundation of God.
 1. The foundation upon which we build is Christ – there is no other foundation upon which we can build.
 2. This foundation is an eternal foundation – prophesied by the prophets of aforetime.
 - a. Isa. 2:2-3
 - b. Dan. 2:44
- C. The foundation is built upon the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God – Matt 16:13-18.
 1. The church was purchased with the blood of Christ.

2. It was proclaimed by the apostles - "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:20-21).
- D. As we labor for this glorious institution, we must notice our work:
 1. Paul planted the seed - Luke 8:11.
 2. Apollos simply built upon that by preaching the Word of God.
 3. We know this because we have no authority to plant or preach any other doctrine the that which was preached.
 - a. Gal. 1:8-9
 - b. 2 Tim. 4:2
- E. Now notice verse 9: We are God's husbandry - we are God's building, and we labor together with each other and with God to build up His church.
- F. Therefore let us take heed how we build upon this foundation.

II. LET US TAKE HEED.

- A. 1 Cor. 3:10 - "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."
- B. As laborers together, we work together to build up the church of Christ.
 1. Imagine building a house, and some are working together while some are working against the plan.
 2. The result would be confusion and chaos.
- C. We build on this foundation the same way that the apostles and others before us have.
 1. By preaching the Gospel - 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Pet. 4:11.
 2. By living a life acceptable to God - Rom 12:1-2; Titus 2:12; Matt 16:24.
- D. We need to take heed because of what is at stake.
 1. Take heed at what we preach/teach - James 3:1.
 2. Our souls are at stake - Matt 10:28.
- E. Paul often told us to take heed or watch:
 1. 2 Cor. 13:5
 2. 1 Tim. 4:16
 3. Heb. 3:12
- F. As we take heed let us consider for whom we are working:
 1. We are working for Jehovah who made salvation possible.
 2. We are working with Christ who suffered for man.
 3. He did not just say believe and teach whatever one wants - 2 Cor. 9:27.

III. KINDS OF BUILDING.

- A. 1 Cor. 3:12 - "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble..."
- B. There are two different kinds of material:

1. In a fire some burn up.
 2. In a fire some become purer.
- C. The fire verse 13 seems to be referring to the last day – yet fire is often used to metaphorically to describe hardships of this life.
1. 1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12
 2. The fire of this life will only make those who are of the material of precious metals and stone – more pure, more focused, better adaptable for life.
 3. The fire of this life will only cause those who are of wood, hay, or stubble to “quit the church,” or give up.
- D. The kind of material we are depends on our attitude.
1. How precious is the church to us?
 2. How precious is salvation to us?
 3. Do we feel at all anxious when we think about not being in Christ?

IV. HOW WILL WE SUFFER LOSS?

- A. 1 Cor. 3:13-15 – “Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”
- B. What this does not mean:
1. By no means does this imply or teach that in the end those who are not saved will just burn up – Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
 2. By no means does this imply the Calvinistic doctrine of perseverance of the saints – we can fall from grace - Gal. 5:4.
 3. It does not have anything to do with different rewards – Matt. 20.
 4. If someone holds a doctrine that is contrary to a Bible truth, that person has a wrong understanding.
- C. What does it mean?
1. It simply means that we may suffer some disappointment on the last day because someone is not there.
 2. If we help someone to see the truth, and they are like wood, hay, or stubble, they will be lost.
 3. There may be two people I have taught, one may have been wood, and will suffer loss, then I will suffer some loss (disappointment), the other was like fine metal – he will make it.
 4. The reward we get is the joy that we get to spend eternity with someone whom we helped save.
 5. The fire only refines the good material; it consumes the wood.
 6. Yet, I have to be in harmony with God's judgment – As disappointing as it may be for person X to not be there, I have to be in

harmony with God's judgment, I will understand it better, when I see the glory of God.

V. TYING IT ALL TOGETHER.

- A. 1 Cor. 3:13 - "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."
- B. The day is the last day - Consider the seriousness of this day.
 1. 2 Thess. 1:7-9 - "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 2. 2Co 5:9-10 - "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
 3. Certainly on that day, nothing will be hidden.
 - a. One can attempt to hide his/her lack of faith, but it will be made known on that day.
 - b. One may attempt to hide a habitual sin, but on that day it will be made known.
 4. Consider the sadness of Matt 7:21-23.
 - a. One may do what MAN defines as good, but on that day, it will be made manifest that it was not in harmony with the will of God.
 - b. Oh how sad it would be to hear those words.
 5. On that day one who had refused to believe the truth will be made manifest, and he will then bow - Phil 2:9-11.
 6. A man's work can be made manifest in this life or hid, but on that great day it will be made known.
- C. We should also consider the beauty of this day for those who are precious stones.
 1. It will be made manifest that those who keep the faith will be saved.
 2. 2 Thess. 1:10 - "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
 3. 1 Thess. 4:13-18
 4. When one reads Revelation he gets to spy out the promised land.
- D. THEREFORE - the previously discussed matter is vital.
 1. How I build upon this foundation will be made known.
 - a. Did I (Do I) care?

- b. Did I (Do I) do what I could to teach the next generation?
- c. Did I (Do I) love and exhort the brethren – and encourage them?
- d. Did I (Do I) attempt to teach others the Gospel?
- e. What did I (do I) teach? All the one talent man had to do was try (Matt. 25:14-29).
- f. Was worship (Is worship) important?
 - 1) Do I give?
 - 2) Did I sing? (and appreciate proper singing)
 - 3) Did I look back during the memorial?
 - 4) Did I pray?
 - 5) Did I listen to instruction?
- 2. Because every man's work shall be made manifest:
 - a. I need to study – not only to show myself approved, but also to make sure what I am teaching is correct (James 3:1).
 - b. I need to study to also be able to give an answer to every man.
- 3. Because every man's work will be made manifest:
 - a. Christianity has to be more than a “religion” – it has to be a lifestyle.
 - b. Christianity ought to consume our lives – it will then be manifest to others.
 - c. We may have to suffer for it, but that is only a small fire to “refine” us.
 - d. Rom. 12:1-3
- E. Because every man's work will be manifest, one can respond in three ways:
 - 1. Simply out of fear (Matt. 10:28) – That may be motivation, but one fails to see the love of Jehovah.
 - 2. Out of love (1 Cor. 13:13) – Love is the greatest motivator behind what we do.
 - a. If a man loves God, he will keep his commandments.
 - b. If a man loves God, he will not continue in any kind of infidelity in any way.
 - 3. A combination of both.
 - a. Out of fear of that day, and the desire to not be embarrassed, or more importantly, lost.
 - b. Out of a love for God and what he has done for man.
- F. Considering every man's work shall be made manifest – let us learn from the past.
 - 1. Rom. 15:4
 - 2. When a person in any dispensation did what God asked him to do, that person was blessed.
 - 3. Nothing has changed – Eph. 1:3.

CONCLUSION:

1. Considering that every man's work will be made manifest
 - A. It is important to live our lives for Christ.
 - B. It is important for us to do what God has commanded us to do.
 - C. We need to build upon that foundation correctly.
 - D. We need to take heed.
2. We may suffer loss in the disappointment that one whom we have taught may not have made it, yet it is still our duty to teach.
3. May we all be examples of the believers (1 Tim. 4:12), and encourage others to live for Christ.

“LET THERE BE NO DIVISIONS”

1 *Corinthians* 1:10-13

Billy Bland

INTRODUCTION:

1. Members of the body of Christ can have a tendency to “excuse “ the unscriptural divisions among us.
 - A. To our shame, there have been, and still are, divisions in the body of Christ.
 - B. Seldom, if ever, do we ever hear anyone admit, “I am the cause of the division in the local congregation or in the brotherhood.”
 - C. Yet divisions exist.
 - D. Someone had to cause them.
 - E. Someone observed he had rather be the one who thrust the spear in the physical body of the Savior, than to be the one who split the Lord’s spiritual body – the church.
2. Not all divisions are sinful, and not all unity is authorized.
 - A. Christ, in one sense, brought division.
 - B. “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law” (Luke 12:51-53).
 - C. Yet, Jesus also prayed for unity – “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20-21).
 - D. One does not sacrifice truth for a false unity.
 - E. It is “the unity of the Spirit” for which we must give diligence (cf. Eph. 4:1-3).
3. Yet there are unscriptural divisions.

DISCUSSION:

I. PAUL’S APPEAL FOR UNITY (v. 10).

- A. Unity is one of those rare things that is both good and pleasant.
 1. Some things are good for us, but not pleasant (discipline, medicine).
 2. Some things are pleasant but not good (overindulgence of sweets).
 3. However, unity among brethren is both good and pleasant (Psa. 133).
- B. Those in “brotherhood” have not always practiced brotherly love.

1. "Brotherhood" implies a family, a bond.
 2. Yet, Cain slew Abel, his brother (Gen. 4).
 3. The elder brother lacked brotherly love (Luke 15).
 4. In contrast, "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren" (Gen. 13:8).
 5. Abram recognized there should be "no strife" between "brethren."
- C. Paul's appeal for unity was a priority.
1. One doesn't go very far into the book of First Corinthians until he comes upon Paul's appeal for unity.
 2. Paul did not wait until the end of the book to bring up the subject of unity.
 3. If the church is to work together, it must have unity.
- D. Notice his appeal.
1. "I beseech." (Paul didn't say, "I command," though it is imperative).
 2. He does appeal to the authority of Christ: "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 3. He appeals with an attitude for unity.
 4. Did the same thing with the Ephesians - "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).
 5. Proper attitudes are important for unity to exist.

II. "THERE ARE CONTENTIONS AMONG YOU" (v. 11).

- A. The word "contentions" is from "eris" and means quarreling or wrangling.
1. It is translated "debate" (Rom. 1:19), "strife" (Rom. 13:13, I Cor. 13:3, Phil. 1:15, I Tim. 6:4), "debates" (2 Cor. 12:20), "variance" Gal. 5:20 - a work of the flesh!), and "contentions" (Titus 3:9, I Cor. 1:11).
 2. God is not condemning "debating" in the sense of reasoning together, which Jesus and His apostles did with many on various occasions.
 3. Rather, he is condemning a contentious and ugly attitude.
 4. The Proverbs' writer stated, "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another" (Prov. 25:9).
 5. Like the word "debate," "strive" (in English) is used in a good sense and also a bad sense.
 6. "Striving" is used of one who is in competition (2 Tim. 2:5), but also as one who would be quarrelsome (2 Tim. 2:24). Note - there are two different words in the original language in verses 5 and 24.
 7. Even in scriptural debates, one should manifest a proper attitude.
- B. How did Paul know of the contentions (quarrels, wranglings) in Corinth?
1. By the house of Chloe.

2. He was an inspired apostle.

III. HOW WERE THESE CONTENTIONS EXHIBITED?

- A. By a partisan spirit - v. 12
- B. By placing man as a standard of authority.
 1. While preachers and teachers of God's Word are to be respected, they are not to be placed on a pedestal above others.
 2. Preachers and teachers are ministers who sow and water, and it is God who gives the increase (I Cor. 3:6-7).
 3. Division over teachers and preachers is a sign of carnality - "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:3-7).
- C. Paul asked a series of rhetorical questions.
 1. Is Christ divided?
 2. Was Paul crucified for you?
 3. Or, were ye baptized into the name of Paul?
 4. After seeing the obvious answers, one realizes how foolish it is to be divided over men!
- D. God and His Word must be our standard - Col. 3:17; John 12:48.
- E. We must avoid unscriptural divisions as well as cliques within the church.
 1. We must not "line up" with men, rather than the truth.
 2. We can avoid "cliques" by showing care for one another without partiality (cf. 1 Cor. 12).

IV. HOW DO WE HAVE BIBLICAL UNITY?

- A. By all speaking the same thing - v. 10
 1. God would not command this if it were impossible.
 2. How do we all speak the same thing?
 3. By having a common standard, God's Word - 1 Peter 4:11.
- B. By not being the cause of division.
- C. By being perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
 1. Divisions can happen over matters of judgment.
 2. Yet, Paul and Barnabas did not divide the church over their judgments (Acts 15:36ff).
 3. Christians are to be kindly disposed to one another, not quick tempered, and not to be trying to find (or "create") fault in others.

CONCLUSION:

1. By what, did Jesus say, would all men know that we are His disciples?
2. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

“NOT UNDER BONDAGE”

1 *Corinthians* 7:15

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

INTRODUCTION:

1. The apostle Paul had received several questions from the Corinthian brethren concerning what to do in certain marriage situations.
 - A. “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me; It is good for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Cor. 7:1).
 - B. Since God had dictated that “It is not good that the man should be alone,” (Gen. 2:18b), why would the apostle seemingly contradict God’s original plan for the union of a man and woman?
2. The answer to the above, supposed dilemma, lies in verse 26 of 1 Corinthians 7.
 - A. “I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.”
 - B. Because of the seemingly overwhelming pressures placed on their marriages, the apostle had advised that under the **existing conditions**, the Corinthians were under no obligation to marry.
 - C. The apostle had **not**, in some universal sense, forbidden marriage.
 - D. In fact, in verse two of 1 Corinthians seven, Paul wrote: “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”
3. The phrase under consideration here of “not under bondage” is found in verse fifteen of I Corinthians seven.
 - A. “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is **not under bondage** (emphasis mine, K.M.) in such cases: but God has called us to peace.”
 - B. The question that the Corinthians had asked Paul was, obviously, concerned with what to do during the “present distress” if one were married to a non-Christian.
 - C. This study is involved, then, with a marriage that exists between a member of the church of Christ and a non-member.

I. THE BELIEVER AND THE UNBELIEVER ARE MARRIED.

- A. The Corinthians asked a question, the answer to which, Christ had not given while He was on earth.
 1. “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let him not leave him” (1 Cor. 7:12-13).

2. Some have tried to argue that Paul just gave his “opinion” about the marriage of a believer and a non-believer, but such exegetes fail to remember that whatever Paul wrote was the commandment of the Lord. “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (I Cor. 14:37).
3. The reason some insist that Paul is only giving his opinion about marriages between believers and non believers is that such persons believe that it is a sin for a Christian to marry a non-Christian. It is certainly a problem when such a marriage occurs, but Paul insists that such a marriage is “holy.”
4. **“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (1 Cor. 7:14).**
5. Some also, in order to push their idea that it is a **sin** (a violation of God’s law-1 John 3:4) to marry a non-Christian, further insist that Paul was only discussing marriages that had already occurred **before** the apostle had legislated on them. No verse in the context (nor in any other Bible passage) indicates that only those marriages contracted prior to the writing of 1 Corinthians between non-believers and believers were under consideration by the apostle.
6. Some will use 2 Corinthians 6:14 to argue against the marriage of a non-believer and believer, but that passage was written **after** 1 Corinthians and deals with fellowship issues that would cause one to depart from Christ.
 - a. If 2 Corinthians 6:14 referred directly to marriage, one would have to divorce the unbeliever, and such action would be contrary to what Jesus taught (Matt. 19:9).
 - b. In the same context, Paul instructed those fellowshiping “unrighteousness” to “. . .come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:17).
- B. The unbeliever and the believer are married legally and in God’s sight and if they were not, their children would be illegitimate and there would be no need even to discuss why it might be that the two were **“not under bondage!”**

II. “NOT UNDER BONDAGE.”

- A. Paul’s usage of the expression, “not under bondage,” uses a negative, **not**, with the Greek **perfect tense** for the verb, **bondage**.
 1. What does the perfect tense when used with the **negative** mean?
 2. Sometimes one must depend on the meaning of a word or verb tense in order to understand the sense of a Bible passage.

3. In fact, Jesus emphasized “every word” in His discussion with Satan (Matt. 4:4).
 4. The Word of God cannot benefit unless it is understood. “So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air” (1 Cor. 14:9).
 5. Compare Matthew 22:32 and the verb tense argument made by Jesus.
- B. The perfect tense in Greek differs from the perfect tense in English.
1. Brooks and Winbrey state: “The perfect tense expresses perfective action which involves a present state which has resulted from a past action and the present state is a continuing state; the past action is a completed action” (Syntax of New Testament Greek, University Press, Lanham, MD, 104).
 2. If one were to clap one’s hands together hard enough to feel the sting and then notice that the sting continued, the past completed action of slapping the hands together and the continuing sting would exemplify the Greek perfect tense.
- C. However, in 1 Corinthians 7:15 Paul **negated the perfect tense**, and the meaning then is that the **past action never occurred, and there is no present action continuing**.
1. Therefore, the conclusion one **must** draw from Paul’s usage of “not under bondage” is that **the marriage of the unbeliever to the believer was never under the bondage described**.
 2. But, the couple **are** married (1 Cor. 7:14; See above.)
 3. Therefore, the phrase, “not under bondage,” **cannot** and **never did** refer to the marriage bond, but to some other bond.
- D. The negative perfect is often used in the New Testament. (See Matthew 11:11; 19:8; 21:27; 22:11; 22:29; 24:42; 25:12 and 87 other verses!)
1. The meaning is that the believer was not so bound (and never was) to his mate that he must leave the Christ for the mate.
 2. Because of the “present distress” the believer might decide not to suffer for Christ and try to escape the persecution by giving up the Lord for the believer’s mate. Perhaps the unbeliever was begging his or her mate to do just that and threatening to “depart” or leave the marriage to escape the distress.
 3. Whatever the case, the believer is not so bound to his mate as to have
 4. to leave Christ for him or her. (The word translated “bondage” is **never** used of the marriage bond anywhere in scripture.)
 5. Note that verse 16 of 1 Corinthians 7 bears out the above exegesis, for if the believer were to leave the Christ for his or her mate, then how would he lead that unbeliever to the Lord? “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”

CONCLUSION:

1. Since there are no exceptions to the rule of the negated perfect tense anywhere else in Scripture, and the meaning is that the existing condition never existed, 1 Corinthians 7:15 should not be considered an exception to the grammatical usage.
2. The above being true, the “bondage” **cannot** refer to the marriage bond, and the couple is married, for Paul indicated that if they were not, their children would have been illegitimate.

**“WHAT KNOWEST THOU, O WIFE, WHETHER
THOU SHALT SAVE THY HUSBAND?”**

1 Corinthians 7:16

Maggie Colley

INTRODUCTION:

1. God instituted marriage some 6,000 years ago.
2. His arrangement was one man for one woman for life (Gen. 2:18-25).
3. The husband has certain responsibilities: to provide, protect, and direct the home spiritually (Eph. 6:4).
4. The wife also has important responsibilities in ruling the home under the headship of the husband (I Tim. 5:14-15).
5. The wife whose husband is not a Christian has the responsibility of helping the husband become a Christian (I Cor. 7:16).

DISCUSSION:

I. LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ALL ABOUT APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH TO OUR LIVES.

- A. We must understand the difference in the “works of the flesh” and the “Fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:19-23).
- B. The works of the flesh produce worldliness.
- C. The fruit of the Spirit is produced in our lives when we hear, obey, and are governed by the Spirit’s teaching in the Word of God.

II. THE CHRISTIAN WIFE CAN HAVE A GREAT INFLUENCE OVER THE UNBELIEVING HUSBAND.

- A. One of the greatest influences she may have over her husband and family, is found in her “meek and quiet spirit” (I Pet. 3:4).
- B. Her easy, mild, gentle, faithful spirit proves to be very influential on her husband and family (Matt. 11:28-30).
- C. We need to look again at Moses, whom Jehovah pronounced “very meek” (Num. 12:3).

III. WHATEVER THE HUSBAND’S SPIRITUAL STATE, THE WIFE IS TO REVERENCE HER HUSBAND (Eph. 5:33).

- A. The husband is the “house-band,” and deserves honor.
- B. This includes respect for his work, interest in the family, and his provision for their welfare (I Tim. 5:8).
- C. The wife is not to be in “competition” with her husband.
- D. The wife is to be in submission (I Tim. 2:8-15).

IV. THE WOMAN'S FAITHFUL WORK IN THE HOME SHOULD INFLUENCE THE UNBELIEVING HUSBAND.

- A. She is to comfort in mourning (Rom. 12:15).
- B. Provide food for the needy (Matt. 25:35).
- C. Seek to build up her home at all times (Prov. 14:1).
- D. She will see that she is needed and generally appreciated!

V. THE WIFE IS NOT TO USURP AUTHORITY OVER THE MAN.

- A. There will be Divine penalties for not observing this limitation (I Tim. 2:8-15; I Cor. 14:34, 37).
- B. Godly women will not seek to take a public leading part in worship.
- C. She can teach and pray where other ladies and children and present (Tit. 2).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Godly women are so needed in our world!
- 2. They are also needed in every home!
- 3. Through continual submissiveness and faithfulness, "WHAT KNOWEST THOU, O WIFE, WHETHER THOU SHALT SAVE THY HUSBAND?" (I Cor. 7:16).

"HOW KNOWEST THOU, O MAN, WHETHER THOU SHALT SAVE THY WIFE?"

1 *Corinthians* 7:16

Daniel F. Cates

INTRODUCTION:

1. Paul asked the Corinthians, specifically the sisters and brethren who were married to non-Christians, "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (1 Cor. 7:16).
 - A. Here are two interesting parallel questions which were designed to inspire hope in these spouses who not only were trying to live the Christian life, but who, most likely, were struggling to make inroads in the converting of their spouses and were growing discouraged thereby.
 - B. One can picture these spouses with their non-Christian husbands and wives:
 - 1). Perhaps there were the constant invitations to accompany them to worship services.
 - 2). Perhaps there were persistent warnings about the dangers of their current spiritual states.
 - 3). Perhaps there was repeated nagging about some sinful practice or habit.
 - 4). Perhaps there were innocent but condescending holier-than-thou statements.
 - 5). Perhaps there was resented shoving of religion down the proverbial throat of the "heathen" spouse.
 - C. Whatever steps were being taken, they were apparently not working.
2. Paul was writing to give aid to those spouses who may have felt, and been, spiritually alone and frustrated.
 - A. He was not giving them a new tactic in force-feeding the unbelieving spouses.
 - B. What Paul offered was a peaceful alternative to what must have been a stressful problem for both spouses.
 - C. Paul was offering a means by which the unbelieving spouse might be converted, and it all revolved around the Christian spouse's being called--called of God, called to stay, called to peace, and called to save.

DISCUSSION:

I. CALLED OF GOD.

- A. Paul was writing to Christians (1 Cor. 1:2) when he penned First Corinthians--these Christians (cf. Acts 11:26) composed the "church" at Corinth--the *ekklesia* or "called out" (2 The. 2:14; Col. 3:15; 1:18, 24; cf. 1 Cor. 7:20, 1 Cor. 7:24; Eph. 4:1, 4:4).
- B. He referenced the calling of these Corinthians Christians in this very context, 1 Cor. 7:17, saying, "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches."
- C. Christians are a called people:
1. Called of God (1 The. 2:12).
 2. "Called of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:6).
 3. "Called to be saints" (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2).
 4. "Called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).
 5. "Called unto the fellowship of" Jesus (1 Cor. 1:9).
 6. "Called in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:22).
 7. Called "into the grace of Christ" (Gal. 1:6).
 8. Called to peace (1 Cor. 7:15).
 9. "Called unto liberty" (Gal. 5:13).
 10. Called "unto his kingdom and glory" (1 The. 2:12).
 11. Called unto holiness (1 The. 4:7).
 12. Called unto eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12).
 13. Called "with an holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9).
 14. Called to be holy (1 Pet. 1:15).
 15. Called "out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).
 16. Called to "follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).
 17. Called to render blessing to "inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. 3:9).
 18. Called "unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus" (1 Pet. 5:10).
 19. Called to "glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3).
 20. "Called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1).
 21. Called God's people (Rom. 9:25).
 22. Called brethren by Jesus (Heb. 2:11).
- D. If these called people wished to win their spouses, they would need to exhibit their being called in living like "the called."

II. CALLED TO STAY.

- A. Paul instructed those who had non-Christians spouses willing to dwell with them to remain with them; he wrote, "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him" (1 Cor. 7:12-13).

1. This point need not be belabored; however, one should appreciate--especially in a first-century-like twentieth century--that divorces are cheap, easy, common, societally acceptable. . .too cheap, easy, common, and acceptable!
 2. Divorce is too easy today; since it is so easy there does not seem to be the determination to first, find the right spouse; second, assure long-term compatibility; third, take time to really learn about each other; fourth, be patient with each other; fifth, really try to work out problems; sixth, keep covenants (cf. Rom. 1:31); and so forth!
 3. The Christian, regardless of whom he has married, should enter into that covenant [which it is between not only man and wife, but also both and God] without any consideration that divorce is a possibility--God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16 ["putting away"]), so should the prospective mates!
- B. If these called people wished to make Christians of their spouses, they had to stay with them; using their not being converted as an excuse for the divorce was not an answer!

III. CALLED TO PEACE.

- A. Paul made sure that these believing spouses understood that they had been called to peace (1 Cor. 7:15).
1. As long as the non-Christian spouse was content to live with the believing spouse, the believing spouse was to remain (1 Cor. 7:12-14).
 2. It may be, on the other hand, that the spouse of the Christian desired to no longer be united with that godly spouse; in such case the Christian was not bound (1 Cor. 7:15).
 - a. In this case the law of Matthew 19:9 might ultimately come into play--if the spouse who had left met and had sexual relations with another.
 - b. At the very least, the spouse would not have to live with a spouse who did not want to live with a Christian – this freedom was from what could have been miserable bondage: the Christian with the faithless and miserable.
- B. The point of Paul was that if these called people had spouses who were content to dwell with them, they would need to so dwell in peace--especially if they ever hoped to win their spouses' souls.

IV. CALLED TO SAVE.

- A. Here is the heart of the matter; here is that toward which Paul had been building: These wanted their unbelieving spouses saved – perhaps

Paul's was the answer and his suggestions the means of their salvation.

1. Paul wrote, "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (1 Cor. 7:16).

2. Paul had earlier said, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband ..." (1 Cor. 7:14).

a. Note also the role of the believing spouse on the spiritual condition of the children: "... else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

B. It was not the case that one spouse's being saved insured salvation for the other; however, where there was a godly spouse (called of God, called to stay, and called to peace), there was the recipe for receptiveness to the Gospel and therefore to God's saving Message and grace!

CONCLUSION:

1. The Christian who is married to a non-believer, or unfaithful believer for that matter, need not throw his hands up in despair, need not brow-beat that spouse, should not get out of that marriage in frustration, and so forth.

2. The Christian married to the non-believer should act like a Christian, determine to remain in that relationship, determine to be at peace with that spouse, and thereby seek to save that one with whom he has determined to spend all of his days!

“IT IS REQUIRED IN STEWARDS THAT A MAN BE FOUND FAITHFUL”

1 *Corinthians* 4:2

Gary Colley

INTRODUCTION:

1. One who is a steward acknowledges that all that he has belongs to his master, not to himself.
2. In the past, the chosen steward was placed in charge and trust for the management of all the family affairs.
3. He was trusted as a man of intelligence, education, and of great influence with his owners.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE CHRISTIAN IS A STEWARD.

- A. Christians are slaves of Christ who glorify God (I Cor. 6:19-20).
- B. They acknowledge that all they have belongs to God.
 1. Many today need to reconstruct their ideas of ownership.
 2. Fidelity is demanded and expected in this office of trust!
 3. We should not be judged by our fellow-stewards; but only by our Master.
 4. Christians must remember that we are appointed by Christ.
 5. We must answer to Him (II Cor. 5:10-11).
 6. The honor of Christ and the welfare of His kingdom is entrusted to us.
 7. Our work will be either to prepare others for Heaven or Hell.
- C. The greatest need in the church today is true stewardship. This will cause the church to flourish and prosper (II Tim. 2:2; I Tim. 4:16).
 1. Paul wrote to Timothy, “Let as many as are servants under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed” (I Tim. 6:1).
 2. Matthew 25:14-30 is one of the most moving utterances of our Lord, spoken in the very shadow of the cross!

II. THE CHRISTIAN IS A STEWARD OF TIME.

- A. To be “Christ-like” we must know what Christ was like, and how He used His time!
- B. We must put the Lord first in our use of time (Matt. 6:33; 10:37).
- C. Jesus had time to:
 1. To be about “His Father’s business” (Lk. 2:41-52).

2. To be baptized (Matt. 3:13-17; I Cor. 12:13).
 3. To go to worship (Lk. 4:16; Heb. 10:23-25).
 4. To pray (Lk. 6:12-13).
 5. To teach others (Jn. 3:1-5; 4:5-26).
 6. To visit the sick (Matt. 25:31-46; Matt. 8:14-15; Lk. 17:11-19).
 7. To pay His respects to a funeral procession (Lk. 7:11-16).
 8. To pay attention to little children (Mk. 10:13-16).
 9. To make provision for His mother (Jn. 19:27; I Tim. 5:4, 16).
 - a. We must have time for our family in health, sickness, and in death (Eph. 6:1-4; Psa. 127:1; I Tim. 5:8).
 11. To make provision for the work He loves to continue after His death (Lk. 19:10; Jn. 16:13; Acts 1:4-5; Mk. 16:15-16; II Cor. 6:17-18).
 12. To put death in His plans (Matt. 26:27-28).
- D. Do we have a saving attitude toward our time?? (II Cor. 6:2).

III. THE CHRISTIAN IS A STEWARD OF MATERIAL POSSESSIONS.

- A. What we have, has been entrusted with riches given to us by the Lord (I Tim. 3:16-17; 6:6-10).
- B. To give as we should we must have a willing mind and give according to our ability (I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 8:12).
- C. A miserly man, who finds no joy in giving, is more unlike the Lord than any person on earth, it matters not how sinful he may be!! (I Cor. 5:11; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5).
- D. With the practice of these principles we can carry on the work of the local congregation, and also carry the Gospel to the lost world which slumbers in sin.

CONCLUSION:

1. "Won't it be grand to hear Him say, 'Well done?'" (Matt. 25:21, 23).
2. That approval all depends on our being faithful stewards of the blessings of the Lord.
3. Christ's joy was to do the will of the Father, even by His death!
4. Our joy likewise should be to do the same.

“YOUR FAITH SHOULD NOT STAND IN THE WISDOM OF MEN”

1 *Corinthians* 2:1-5

Garland Elkins

INTRODUCTION:

1. Paul was doubtlessly one of the best educated men of his generation, but he did not seek to impress those to whom he preached with his “much learning,” but by the powerful gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 2:1, 2).
2. The leaders of the Jews seemed to think that our Lord was not qualified to preach, because he had not attended their schools. They once said of Him: “The Jews therefore marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” (Jno. 7:15).
3. Brother Thomas B. Warren and I worked together more than seventeen years.
 - A. He was a faithful and able gospel preacher, and he was also an outstanding debater.
 - B. He was also well qualified academically, having studied to the highest level, having earned a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt. He also told me numerous times that the major reason that he spent all the time, effort, study, and money to obtain his Ph.D. was so he could debate atheists and expose their error. He indicated that the most capable and effective and well known atheists would not debate one unless he had the Ph.D. Brother Warren was, in my judgment, the most capable debater with the atheists of any man among us, and I heard him debate three of the best known atheists of that time.
4. In the Old Testament some men rebelled against God and followed other men.
 - A. Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and two hundred fifty princes of the assembly rebelled against Moses (Num. 16:1, 2).
 1. Num. 16:31-40. “And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up

the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed. The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel. And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses. “

2. Num. 16:41-50: “But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD. And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.”

5. We are to follow Christ, not men (I Pet. 2:21). We are to follow men only to the degree that they follow Christ (I Cor. 11:1).
6. At Corinth some in the church were following men.
 - A. Regarding the problem of some following men instead of Christ, Paul wrote the following: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am

of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other" (I Cor. 1:10-16 KJV).

- B. Some argue that we cannot see the Bible alike. Paul argues that we can (I Cor. 1:10; Eph. 5:17).
 - 1. From a positive he says, "that ye all speak the same thing."
 - 2. From a negative standpoint he wrote, "that there be no divisions among you" (I Cor. 1:10).
- C. Paul had heard that there were divisions among them (I Cor. 1:11).
- D. He then explains the situation at Corinth; they were following men.
 - 1. Some were allowing "their faith to stand in the wisdom of men" (I Cor. 2:5; I Cor. 1:10-13).
 - 2. Some of the brethren were doing the opposite of what Paul commanded in I Corinthians 2:5 and I Cor. 1:10.
 - 3. "Now this I say, that everyone of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ."

DISCUSSION:

I. TO BELONG TO A LEADER, TWO THINGS ARE REQUIRED. Let us apply this to the men mentioned in this text.

- A. "I am of Paul":
 - 1. The following questions were asked by the inspired Paul (1 Cor. 2:13):
 - a. "Is Christ divided?"
 - b. "Was Paul crucified for you?"
 - c. "Or were ye baptized in the name with Christ?"
 - 2. To belong to Paul, he would have had to be crucified for them, but he was not crucified for them.
 - 3. To belong to Paul, they would have had to have been baptized in the name of Paul. However, they were not baptized in the name of Paul.
 - 4. **Therefore, they were not to wear the name of Paul!**
- B. Some said, "And I of Apollos."
 - 1. To belong to Apollos, it would have been necessary for Apollos to have been crucified for them. He was not crucified for them.
 - 2. To belong to Apollos they would have had to be baptized in the name of Apollos. They were not baptized in his name.
 - 3. **Therefore they were not to follow Apollos!**
- C. Others said, "and I of Cephas."

1. To belong to Cephas, it would have been necessary for Cephas to have been crucified for them; but Cephas was not crucified for them.
 2. To belong to Cephas, it would have been necessary for them to be baptized in the name of Cephas. However, they were not baptized in the name of Cephas.
 3. **Therefore, they were not to follow Cephas.**
- D. Others said, "And I of Christ":
1. To belong to Christ, He must have been crucified for them. He was indeed crucified for them (I Cor. 15:3).
 2. To belong to Christ one must be baptized in his name. All Christians have in the past been baptized in the name of Christ (Col. 3:17; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:16).
 3. **Therefore, we must follow Christ as our leader and Savior!** (Mt. 7:21-23).

II. FALSE TEACHERS PUSH "UNITY IN DIVERSITY" TO MOVE PEOPLE TO ALLOW "THEIR FAITH TO STAND IN THE WISDOM OF MEN."

- A. The greatest need of the modern world is undenominational Christianity.
 1. This means Christianity in its primitive purity.
 2. It means Christianity minus denominationalism.
- B. The spirit of denominational (religious partyism) is a great and terrible enemy to New Testament Christianity, and therefore to the salvation of souls.
 1. To the extent that denominationalism prevails, to the same extent New Testament Christianity suffers.
 2. Denominationalism and undenominational Christianity are poles apart, and of necessity, are diametrically opposed to one another.
 3. Sectarian denominationalism is the greatest blot upon modern Christianity, and is doing more to encourage atheism, infidelity and agnosticism than perhaps all other errors combined!

III. SOME EXAMPLES OF SOME WHO HAVE COMPROMISED.

- A. THE MURCH-WITTY MEETINGS
 1. These meetings were meetings of compromise.
 2. Though the participants talked loudly of unity and gave much lip service to it, yet the conclusions (and all the results are not yet in) have been the cause of widespread friction and further divisions among brethren.
 3. While piously disclaiming compromise, their meetings were permeated with compromise before, during, and after the meetings.

4. These facts have now been sustained by such an abundance of evidence that no informed and honest observer can successfully deny them.
5. James DeForest Murch was a preacher in "the Christian Church" and Claud F. Witty was a minister of the West-Side Central Church of Christ in Detroit, Michigan. Murch explains how they planned their strategy for their meetings. He says:

"Brother Witty and I talked and prayed and corresponded for about a year before we made bolder moves. He invited me to be his guest in Detroit and to preach one Lord's Day morning in West Side-Central...It was something unheard of for a "Disciple" minister to preach in a "non-instrument" Church of Christ...This experience persuaded us both that the climate was about ready for bolder moves. On the following February 23, 1937, the first of a series of "conversations" between interested brethren was held in the Central Y.M.C.A. in Cincinnati. About an equal number of "progressive" and "conservative" leaders were present...Indianapolis, Indiana, was the scene of our second meeting; Akron, Ohio, the third; Columbus, Indiana, the fourth. Meetings in Southern California were also held at Ontario and Los Angeles."

6. The Herald of Truth for years was a sound and effective national radio program, sponsored by the Fifth and Highland congregation in Abilene, Texas. In those days, I raised money to assist the brethren produce that program. However, that congregation became infiltrated with Liberalism and John Allen Chalk, a liberal preacher on the program, contributed to its demise. Faithful brethren were not aware that he was compromising with the "Independent Christian Church." Read these paragraphs from the pen of James DeForest Murch and weep:

One day shortly after I had written *The Free Church* and while I was still living in Washington, I had a long-distance telephone call from Abilene, Texas. The voice in Texas said, "I am John Allen Chalk, the speaker for the Church of Christ nationwide radio broadcast 'Herald of Truth.' I have just finished reading your book, with which I fully agree. How many people among the

Disciples believe this?" I answered, "About a million and a half." "Why," he said, "this is astonishing! This is our belief! Why haven't we realized long before this that we are united on the matter of church policy?" Then he went on to ask specifically for the use of certain quotes from the *The Free Church* in radio addresses that he was preparing. I was glad to give him permission without any royalty charge.

About a month later I had another long-distance call from Chalk advising me that he and his radio committee were coming to New York City for a conference with radio network executives. Then he went on to say that it was the unanimous wish of this committee that I be invited to meet them in Hotel Barclay for a day's conference. He said my expenses would be paid and that he would stay over in New York an extra day for this occasion. Of course, I went gladly and had a most enriching experience. Most of our time was given to their questions and my answers. We covered every phase of our church life—polity, doctrine, and practice in worship, missions, education, benevolence, and service. There was a remarkable meeting of minds. They were not trying to convert me. I was not trying to convert them. We were learning of the possibilities of better understanding, and closer unity...Only God knows how wide were the beneficial repercussions of that even which, as far as I know, has never before been publicly mentioned.

7. James DeForest Murch tells that he fell into disfavor with his own brethren, and they fired him. That slowed that movement down for some time.
8. However, before that happened, he discusses a meeting of what they called a "National Unity Meeting" and says, "In Indianapolis a lively and enlightening exchange developed between H. Leo Boles, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, and Edwin R. Errett, editor of the *Christian Standard*. Brother Boles spoke on the subject of **The Way of Unity Between 'Christian Church' And Churches of Christ.**"
 - a. His lecture is preserved in tract form and may be ordered from: Garland Elkins, 7350 Crowther Cove, Memphis, TN 38119.
 - b. Brother Boles spoke for one hour and thirty-one minutes.

B. THE CLOYD-DEWELT MEETING

1. On August 7-9, 1984, a meeting was held in Joplin, Missouri between fifty "Independent Christian Church" preachers and fifty preachers in the churches of Christ.
2. Don DeWelt of the "Independent Christian" and Alan Cloyd of the church of Christ played a prominent part in planning the meeting.
3. The Joplin meeting was called "A Restoration Summit."
 - a. The definition of "summit" is "The highest level of officials as chiefs of state or heads of governments."
 - b. It appears that those who originated and used this term in connection with that meeting would be wise to read and apply Romans 12:3 and Galatians 6:3.

C. Even though Alan Cloyd and Don DeWelt arranged the so-called "summit" meeting, almost everyone acknowledges that Rubel Shelly (also a participant in the meeting) is an apparent leader of our brethren who are fellowshiping the "Independent Christian Church."

1. Space does not permit me to quote very many of the compromising statements made by Rubel Shelly, but I mention a few as a sample of his compromising statements.
2. Two of these were made before our brethren, and two of them were made in a meeting when he and Don DeWelt addressed the "Independent Christian Church."
3. The statements are as follows:

The restoration movement started out as an appeal for unity of Christians. Somewhere along the line, maybe fifty years ago, we abandoned that theme; and we crystallized and we became, to a large measure, what we set out to oppose...There are sincere, knowledgeable, devout Christians scattered among all the various denominations.

Brother Shelly also said:

I don't draw the line at the instruments. I don't think the Lord died over that. I'm not going to make that a test of my fellowship with you in Christ...If I were in a congregation where the will of that congregation, the decision of the elders, was that the instrument was going to be used next week, I wouldn't mount the pulpit and condemn them and divide the church. I'd have a conscience question whether I could stay and worship

with that church, but I would not stand up and say, 'Let the faithful of God step across the line and stand with me.'

4. I have offered to debate Rubel Shelly on two different occasions:
 - a. The first time was about twenty years ago when I came to work with the Memphis School of Preaching. The elders requested me to offer to do that; so I wrote out propositions and sent them to Rubel, but he declined to engage in a debate.
 - b. The second time that I offered to debate him was several years later. The elders of a congregation near Michigan Christian College invited me to preach in a gospel meeting and also requested that I offer to debate Rubel. I wrote out the propositions and signed them, but he declined to enter into a debate.

CONCLUSION:

1. We face serious problems in the church because of Liberalism, but remember that the inspired apostle Paul wrote:
2. "Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" (2 Tim. 2:19).

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"TIMOTHY...SHALL BRING YOU INTO REMEMBRANCE"

1 *Corinthians* 4:17

Andrew Nelson

INTRODUCTION:

1. Is there really a need for local preachers today?
 - A. Some say, "Yes."
 - 1) Preachers are needed:
 - a. To evangelize.
 - b. For visitation.
 - c. As representatives of the local congregation to the community.
 - 2) For these reasons a preacher's appearance, family, behavior, and personality are carefully scrutinized.
 - B. Some say, "No."
 - 1) Fulltime preachers are unnecessary and costly.
 - a. The men can prepare and deliver lessons during worship.
 - b. Preachers are not needed for visitation.
 - 2) Some people see preachers as nuisances.
 - C. While there is some truth to these thoughts, they can be taken to extremes.
 - 1) Physical limitations as well as spiritual responsibilities prevent preachers from being able to do all of the work for a congregation.
 - 2) However, God's Word reveals the need and role of preachers in a local congregation.
2. In his first preserved letter to the Corinthians, Paul informed the Corinthian church that he was sending them a preacher.
 - A. Paul had great love and concern for the Christians at Corinth (1 Cor. 4:14-16).
 - 1) The Corinthian Christians were his children in the faith.
 - 2) Paul wanted to do everything that he could to help the Corinthian Christians to go to Heaven.
 - B. Paul knew the Corinthians needed guidance from a faithful preacher, who would remind them of the truth, which Paul had taught them.

DISCUSSION:

I. CONSIDER PAUL'S REASONS FOR SENDING TIMOTHY TO CORINTH.

- A. Paul wanted the Corinthians to follow him (1 Cor. 4:14-16).
 1. As their father in the faith, Paul loved the Corinthians.
 2. Paul wanted to lead the Corinthians to Heaven.
 - a. He taught them the Gospel.

- b. He lived according to the Gospel.
 - 3. Paul was aware of his personal flaws.
 - a. Paul did not want the Corinthians to take on his imperfections.
 - b. Paul wanted the Corinthians to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).
- B. Paul could not stay in Corinth and do everything he accomplished for the Lord.
 - 1. The miraculous age enabled people to know and to teach God's Will without the written New Testament or the presence of an apostle.
 - 2. Even with miraculous abilities, the Corinthians turned away from the truth.
 - 3. Timothy was sent to guide the Corinthians as Paul would have guided them if he were present.
- C. Today, preachers are needed for spiritual guidance.
 - 1. God's Word is the final authority in spiritual matters (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Gal. 1:6-9).
 - 2. Even with God's Word, people can turn away from the truth.
 - 3. God and preachers and teachers of the Gospel want everyone to go to Heaven.
 - a. This is why the Gospel system was created and is preached.
 - b. Faithful preachers can assist those who are striving to go to Heaven.

II. CONSIDER PAUL'S RECOMMENDATION OF TIMOTHY TO THE CORINTHIANS.

- A. Timothy was a beloved son and brother.
 - 1. Timothy was Paul's son in the faith.
 - a. Timothy was likely converted by Paul at the conclusion of Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 14:6, 7).
 - b. Timothy matured as a Christian.
 - 1) He was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:2).
 - 2) Timothy joined Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:3).
 - 3) On Paul's third missionary journey, Timothy traveled both with Paul and for Paul (Acts 19:22; 20:4, 5).
 - 2. Timothy was the Corinthians' brother.
 - a. As Christians, Timothy and the Corinthian Christians were all part of God's family (Eph. 2:12-22).
 - 1) Timothy was striving to be faithful to God (1 Tim. 4:12-16).

- 2) Timothy was worthy of their love (1 Pet. 2:17).
- 3) Timothy was worthy of their care (Gal. 6:10).
- b. Timothy was sent to the Corinthians with a great responsibility.
 - 1) He was there, as a Christian and a preacher, to help the Corinthians to become spiritually mature.
 - 2) Because of Timothy's work, the Corinthians might develop resentment towards Timothy.
 - 3) Paul sent word to prepare the way for Timothy's arrival and a welcomed reception in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:10, 11).
- B. Timothy was faithful in the Lord.
 - 1. Inspired writers spoke highly of Timothy's character.
 - a. Paul relied on Timothy and thought highly of Timothy's character (Phil. 2:19, 20).
 - b. Luke spoke of Timothy's good reputation in Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:2, 3).
 - 2. Timothy's life speaks to his loyalty to the Lord.
 - a. Knowing of Paul's sufferings, Timothy still joined Paul in his missionary efforts (Acts 14:1-6; 16:3; 2 Tim. 3:10-12).
 - b. Knowing of the difficulties that would be involved in working with people who had problems, Timothy left the comfort of Paul's company to work for the Lord (Acts 19:22).
- C. Today's Gospel preachers are brethren who are striving to be faithful.
 - 1. Preachers are worthy of the same love and care due to all Christians (Gal. 6:10).
 - 2. Preachers are not perfect, but striving to be faithful like all other Christians (1 Jno. 1:7-9).

III. CONSIDER TIMOTHY'S RESPONSIBILITIES.

- A. He was to bring them into remembrance.
 - 1. Timothy was expected to teach alien sinners.
 - a. As a Gospel preacher (2 Tim. 4:1-5).
 - b. As a Christian (Matt. 28:19, 20).
 - 2. The focus of Timothy's work was not specifically on teaching alien sinners.
 - a. Timothy was sent to the church at Corinth, to help the church mature.
 - b. The Corinthian Christians had already obeyed the Gospel.
 - c. The Corinthian Christians needed to be reminded of what they had been taught.
- B. Timothy was to bring them into remembrance of Paul's ways, which were

in Christ.

1. Timothy was not teaching Paul's doctrine.
 - a. In the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians Paul pointed out that the Gospel is from God and not from man (1 Cor. 1:17-31; 2:1-5).
 - b. In Paul's epistles to Timothy, Paul instructed Timothy to preach the Gospel (1 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 3:10-4:2).
 2. Paul learned, lived, and taught Christ's ways.
 - a. The doctrine that Paul taught did not come from man (Gal. 1:11-14).
 - b. Once Paul learned the Gospel, He became a faithful follower of Christ (Gal. 1:10, 15-20; Acts 23:1).
- C. Preachers guide the congregations they serve by keeping them in remembrance of Christ's ways (2 Tim. 4:2-5).
1. Preachers, like all Christians are responsible for teaching those who have never obeyed the Gospel (Matt. 28:19, 20).
 - a. A preacher's schedule, training, and experience can make him a valuable asset in reaching the lost.
 - b. A preacher cannot be expected to be the only member of a congregation to be involved in teaching the lost.
 2. Preachers, like Timothy, work to bring the congregations with whom they work to remembrance of Christ's ways.
 - a. This requires much time in study and application of God's Word (1 Tim. 4:15, 16).
 - b. This requires patience and care for the people one is trying to teach (2 Tim. 2:24, 25).

CONCLUSION:

1. There are many ideas concerning the need and role of preachers for local congregations.
2. God's Word points to the importance of Gospel preachers.
 - A. Paul knew that the Corinthians needed a preacher to help them get back on track.
 - B. Paul knew that the Corinthians needed a faithful brother in Christ to serve as their preacher.
 - C. Paul did not send Timothy to "work for" the Corinthians, but to help them remember how to live according to God's Will.
3. Just as Timothy assisted the Corinthian Christians, preachers help the congregations they serve to remember and travel in the footsteps of Christ.

"YOUR GLORYING IS NOT GOOD"

1 Corinthians 5

Jerry L. Martin

INTRODUCTION:

1. 1 Corinthians 5 addresses a desperate need for the church at Corinth to acknowledge and remove the immorality being practiced in their midst.
 - A. A member of the Corinthian congregation had his father's wife.
 1. The congregation seemed to have not only tolerated the behavior, but had grown to accept the relationship.
 2. At the very least, their silence could be interpreted as acceptance.
 - B. Paul had gotten word of the adulterous relationship.
 1. The Corinthian church had written to Paul asking a question about marriage but had omitted any reference to the fornicating brother.
 2. Paul had gotten his information about the man who had his father's wife from individual church members.
2. This study will outline and illustrate the Corinthians' "glorying" in the behavior of an incestuous brother.
 - A. The apostle Paul himself recognized he had no personal moral standard of justification in which he could afford to glory.
 1. Though he knew of no wrong behaviors in his own life, Paul recognized that Christ was the only one with the authority to pronounce him justified (1 Cor. 4:4).
 2. Paul constantly disciplined himself to make sure his behavior was in compliance with Christ's moral standard (1 Cor. 9:27).
 - B. The Corinthians' "glorying" was a self-declared justification.
 1. Paul let them know, in no uncertain terms, that their "glorying" was not good.
 2. In 1 Corinthian 5, Paul explains why their "glorying" was not good.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE CORINTHIANS' GLORYING BLINDED THEM TO THE DESPERATE CONDITION OF LOST SOULS (5:1-5).

- A. The fact that a brother in Christ had his father's wife was widely and commonly known (vs. 1).
 1. Everyone in the church knew about the incestuous relationship.
 2. Yet, the heathen community would have condemned it.
- B. Their arrogant pride had blinded them to the seriousness of the situation (vv. 2-5).

1. The Corinthian congregation should have been in mourning over this brother's destitute spiritual condition.
2. Their glorying blinded them to the fact that the brother's condition was an emergency situation (a matter of spiritual life or death).

II. THE CORINTHIANS' GLORYING BELITTLED THE DIVINE CALL FOR PURITY (5:6-8)

- A. Their boastful pride ignored the powerful influence of sin (vs. 6).
 1. They all should have known that a little leaven would permeate the whole lump.
 2. One sin, uncorrected, will negatively affect the whole church.
- B. The Old Testament Passover required the Israelites to remove all leaven from their homes or their Passover offering would be considered contaminated (vv. 7-8).
 1. Christ, our Passover, has already been offered, so sin, the spiritual contaminate, could be removed from our souls and our lives.
 2. We, as "unleavened bread of sincerity" must keep our heart, soul, mind, and life, pure or else, we dishonor the holiness of God and make the blood of Christ of no effect.

III. THE CORINTHIANS' GLORYING BETRAYED THE DISTINCTIVENESS CHRISTIANITY WAS INTENDED TO PORTRAY (5:9-13).

- A. The failure of the Corinthian church to practice spiritual discipline was not because of ignorance (vs. 9).
 1. Paul had already written unto them instructing them not to have fellowship with fornicators.
 2. Sinful behavior is a characteristic of those in the world, not those in Christ.
- B. The Corinthian Christians were reminded that though they had to live in the world, they must not live like the world (vv. 10-13).
 1. As long as we live on this earth, we will have to live among those who practice sin.
 2. God expects his children to dispel the darkness of sin rather than allow sin to extinguish their light.

CONCLUSION:

1. Any time man attempts to set his own standard of righteousness, in disregard to Divine directives, he will become arrogant and boastful.
 - A. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul points out that all such boasting (glorying) is not good.
 - B. The chapter closes with the reminder that God will be the judge, not man, thus we must not compromise His standard of purity.

2. Paul had already taught the Corinthians the only context in which they could properly glory (boast): "...He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31).
 - A. Instead of hiding themselves in the grace of God and denying ungodliness (Titus 2:11), they were parading their lustful pride.
 - B. Now the mask is removed, the truth is revealed, and there is a clear choice to be made.