



For the week of July 10



Monday, July 11 — 1 Corinthians 3

Chapter Summary: Paul identifies the source of the significant problem in the church at Corinth — immaturity that has led to jealousy and quarreling, which leads to division. No one man is any more important than another in the church; all are God’s workmen. Paul encourages his readers to stop trying to attain worldly wisdom and to stop boasting about their associations with men.

Devotional: Paul mentions that several people have been involved in the work in Corinth. He planted, Apollos watered. Doubtless others contributed to the growth the church had experienced. Who has contributed to your growth as a Christian? What role can you play in another person’s journey to the Lord? What does it look like to be a planter? A waterer? Through it all we work hard to do our job while still trusting the Lord to be the one who gives the increase.

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- Since each faction in the church at Corinth thought it was spiritually superior to the others, how would the people react to Paul’s words in verses 1-4?
- In verses 10-15, Paul says that Jesus is the “foundation” upon which people can build with a variety of building materials. How is each person’s work tested? What do you think makes for good “building materials” for our spiritual lives?
- Why would it be self-deceptive for someone to think he is “wise in this age” (v. 18)?



Tuesday, July 12 — 1 Corinthians 4

Chapter Summary: Paul applies his teachings in the last chapter to himself and Apollos, encouraging the Corinthians to regard them as servants or slaves of Christ.

The apostles have no position to be envied; they endure hardships and ridicule, all for the sake of Christ. Paul is sending Timothy to teach them, and Paul himself will be coming very soon to straighten things out if they don't do it themselves.

Devotional: Paul tells the Christians to judge nothing before the time. He says he knows of nothing “against myself,” but that doesn't justify him. How can we learn to trust our conscience while still understanding that God is our final judge? What does that mean about how we view others? If anyone can change and repent and be saved, what does that mean for me and those around me?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- In contrast to the self-centered, “power-oriented” message some Corinthians believed, what does Paul's life exemplify?
- In verse 15 Paul says, “I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” In what specific verses does Paul sound very much like a father talking to his children?



Wednesday, July 13 — 1 Corinthians 5

Chapter Summary: Paul shames the Corinthians for allowing sexual immorality to continue in their midst. They even boast of their tolerance of this incestuous relationship. Paul demands that they withdraw their fellowship from those involved, with the stated purpose that the church may be pure and the offenders may be saved.

Devotional: We live in a culture that has so exalted the worship of “self” that if I think I'm okay, the world says everyone else should leave me alone! Paul has already encouraged the Christians to guard against judging, but now he warns them that we must not tolerate sin, either. It's hard to find the balance! Where in your life are you tempted to judge too harshly and quickly? What sins are you prone to sweep under the rug and ignore? How can we strive to be more biblical in our approach to sin and righteousness?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- In Greece there was no shame in sexual relationships outside of marriage. What made this so bad to Paul in the church?
- How is Paul's strategy of discipline designed to bring health to both the believer and the church?
- Paul says Christians should judge those within the body of Christ and let the Lord judge those outside the body. How should that look today in the church?



Thursday, July 14 — 1 Corinthians 6

Chapter Summary: Paul tells the church that they should handle disagreements within the church without using the court system. Paul argues that some things are lawful for Christians to do but they are not helpful to the Christian or to the church and should therefore be avoided. He continues to show why Christians cannot participate in immorality but should glorify God in body and in spirit.

Devotional: “But, that’s not fair!” is a cry often heard by parents of children. But often it isn’t just kids that demand fairness when they think they’ve been “done wrong.” Even as adults we have a rather keen sense of what we’re owed and when we’ve been shortchanged. Unfortunately, even in the church, sometimes we hurt one another. Paul says Christians should make certain that such problems are handled within the church family and not in front of outsiders. And if it comes to it, he says we should rather be wronged than let the good name of the church be harmed. Can you think of a time when you needed to let it go and just be wronged for the good of the church?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- What guidelines does Paul give for settling disputes between Christians?
- Paul says our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. What does that teach us about how we should treat our bodies?
- Paul says that if a Christian engages in sin, it is as if we are causing Christ to engage in sin because He is always with us. We cannot just pick Jesus up and put Him down when we choose. How can this help us to glorify God in every situation?
- Why do you think Paul says sexual immorality is a sin that is unique from every other sin?



Friday, July 15 — 1 Corinthians 7

Chapter Summary: Paul gives advice to all Christians regarding marriage. He encourages single people to stay single and married people to stay married. If a single person does not believe they can stay single, Paul makes it clear that marriage is not a bad thing. He encourages couples not to divorce and be faithful to each other. All of his advice is based on the fact that service to the Lord is our number one priority.

Devotional: Paul makes it very clear that being a Christian must impact how a single person chooses a mate and how a married person treats their mate. Our faith doesn't just change how we act at church, it affects every area of our life. Being a Christian means I make different decisions in dating and in my home life. Why do you think Paul had to teach so much and so plainly on this topic to the church at Corinth? What would he say to us today?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- How can the church encourage young people to consider remaining single and serving God? What support can we offer single Christians?
- How can the church help those who are getting married to make good decisions and establish a good foundation?
- What can the church do for married couples to help them have the marriage God intends them to have?
- Is Paul implying that the church should have a marriage ministry?

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