

## BOAT IN THE WATER & WATER IN THE BOAT

Often churches flatter themselves with the title, "New Testament church". Their members are proud of the fact they go to a *New Testament church*. Pastors make it their goal to grow *New Testament believers*, and build a *New Testament church*.

*I use to think I wanted to be a part of a New Testament church... until I read Paul's New Testament letter to the Church at Corinth. The Corinthian Christians were a New Testament church... but it was a church fraught with problems.*

This was a church divided. There was such dissension that members were suing each other in the pagan courts. Blatant immorality was tolerated. The God-given roles of male and female were ignored. Communion had become an excuse to pig-out. Spiritual gifts were misused. Foundational truths, like the resurrection, were being questioned. And perhaps worst of all... *love had taken a backseat.*

Hey, I want our church to model New Testament ideals - and experience New Testament expansion - and display New Testament power... but if being a New Testament church means being like the church at Corinth... then forget it!

Understand, the city of Corinth was a wicked place. It was home for the kind of people who appear on the Jerry Springer Show... the wackos and the sickos. The Greeks had a phrase, "playing the Corinthian"; it was synonymous for being drunk. Prostitutes were called Corinthian girls". Corinth had an evil rap.

At night 10,000 priestesses left the temple of Aphrodite, and hit the streets to play the prostitute. They turned tricks to raise funds. Sexual immorality was not just tolerated, but was institutionalized as a part of Corinthian religion.

On his second missionary trip Paul spent 18 months in this *den of sin* building a vibrant and Spirit-filled church. But when he left problems developed. Rather than influencing the world - Corinth influenced the church. Paul was in Ephesus when he heard of the problems and penned this letter of correction.

It's been said, "Boats are made for water, but you don't want water in the boat." Likewise, the church is in the world - but in Corinth the world got into the church.

## DIVISION AND ITS CURE

In verse 10 Paul begins to deal with the problems in the church, and he starts with the divisions and schisms that had fractured the church's unity. People had rallied around their favorite teachers and created little cliques in the body.

Some said, "I am of Paul" - they loved their liberty in Christ. Others said, "I am of Apollos" - they liked doctrine and apologetics. Still others, "I am of Cephas (or Peter)" - they loved the Spirit-led afterglows. And others insisted, "I am of Christ" - they didn't need any teacher but Jesus.

I read the true story of a man named Paul Loetz... Paul took a terrible fall - punctured a lung, broke some ribs, was bleeding internally. While lying on a bed in the emergency room, he witnessed two doctors arguing over who was going to put the tube into his crushed chest.

Their argument turned into a shoving match... Eventually Paul screamed out, "Please, somebody save me!" Two other doctors stepped in and performed the procedure.

This describes what was going on in the church at Corinth. Wounded people were looking for help, while they argued with each other over picky stuff.

In verse 13 Paul asks them, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" The Corinthians had drifted to the periphery, and forgotten their common ground... their devotion to Jesus.

The church is Jesus' body. Jesus died for us. We're baptized into Jesus. The main thing is Jesus Christ - and we need to keep the main thing the main thing.

## BAPTISM & THE GOSPEL

Paul talks about baptism in 1:17, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel" - apparently the two are not the same. Baptism comes after the Gospel, but is not included in the Gospel. It's important, but not essential.

## THE CROSS, THE CHURCH, THE COURIER

The end of chapter 1 explains how God went out of His way to orchestrate a salvation plan that would confront and confound the wisdom and power of man.

Understand, the Jews were impressed with power – the Greeks with wisdom. Verse 18 says “the message of the cross” was an affront to both. That Almighty God would subject Himself to physical torture... appeared weak to the Jews and foolish to the Greeks. God saves us in a way that insults the sources of our pride.

This is why Paul says in verse 23, “we preach Christ crucified...” The cross is the power of God and the wisdom of God. The cross is God’s secret weapon.

A seminary, founded by godly men, had an arch over its entrance with the engraving, “We Preach Christ Crucified.” In time ivy grew over the arch, until the greenery covered the word “Crucified” - the arch read, “We preach Christ”. The ivy kept growing until it covered “Christ” - today it simply reads, “We preach”.

That’s what’s happened to the modern church. We’ve gone from preaching Christ crucified to just preaching – and that’s why we’ve lost our power.

The cross mocks and attacks the values of this world, and so does the church. The church consists of folks whom God has called out of this world, but rather than choose the rich and the famous... God filled his church with nobodies.

### Devotion Box - Spiritual, Natural, Carnal

From 1 Corinthians 2:6 to 3:4 Paul mentions three people: *the spiritual man... the natural man... and the carnal man*. Which of the three are you?

Verses 9-10 assure us God has spiritual blessing with our name on it - but it can’t be revealed and apprehended without the aid of the Holy Spirit. “For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” The spiritual man taps into these blessings by staying in tune with the Holy Spirit.

Verse 14 describes the natural man. Without the Holy Spirit in his life he’s deaf to spiritual communiqués. He’s limited to an earth-bound, material perspective. *The Christian has “the mind of Christ”. The unbeliever has lost his mind.*

Finally, in 3:1 Paul mentions the carnal man. He’s a babe in Christ. He knows God, but lives as if he doesn’t. He possesses the Holy Spirit, but has yet to allow the Spirit to color his perspective. It’s cute to see a baby with a bottle, but witness a 30 year-old gulping down Gerbers and it’s disgusting. Likewise, the carnal Christian needs to grow up. He needs to *get a life...* a spiritual life, that is!

As proof, Paul points to the Corinthians themselves... Verse 26, “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty...”

God chooses the simple, not the smart – the weak, not the strong – the humble, not the noble – and why?

Verse 29, “that no flesh should glory in His presence.” He wants to make certain the glory goes to Him. Salvation is mercy, not merit.

The *cross* is a stumbling block to the smart and strong. The *church* is a puzzle to the pious and privileged. The *courier* employs tactics that are far from impressive. In chapter 2 Paul describes the methods of his ministry...

Once there was a church with a painting of the crucifixion right behind the pulpit, but the pastor was a big man and blocked the view. One day, in his absence, a child asked his mom, “Where’s the guy who stands where we can’t see Jesus?” Paul ministered to avoid the same statement being made of him. Rather than impress folks with his oratory skill or keen insights, he pointed them to Jesus. Paul kept the message simple and trusted in the Holy Spirit to supply the power!

### MOTIVE MATTERS

The superstructure of a Christian ministry is built on the foundation of Jesus. He’s the basis of who we are and all we do. But as we labor in “God’s field” and work on “God’s building” our reward depends on the motive behind our service. Rewards are based not on quality or quantity... but on motive.

Verses 12-14 describe the day we appear before Jesus to receive our reward, “If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.” Self-centered service is burned. The saint is saved, but his service is singed. But what was done in sincerity – *from a thankful heart, for the glory of God, in an attitude of faith...* such service when tested will be found to be as purest gold.

### Devotion Box - A Fool For Christ

The Corinthians’ concern was appearing better than others... wiser, stronger, and more distinguished. Paul’s ministry glorified Jesus – but at the expense of his own shame and suffering. Paul was willing to be a fool for Christ’s sake.

In the movie *“Field of Dreams”*, Ray Cansella hears a voice in the cornfields telling him to plow under his crop and build a baseball diamond. He builds it, and eventually sees dead ball players working out on his field... His family thinks he’s a certifiable nut. No one understands his actions. Everyone calls him a fool.

But as a Christian, I also base life-altering decisions on a voice nobody else hears. I’ve taken economic risks to follow that voice. I’ve seen God in action when no one else saw Him. Am I ready to be seen by others the way Ray’s family and neighbors saw him? Am I willing to be considered by others a fool for Christ?

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE

## Devotion Box - What Is Sex?

Paul says in 5:1, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles - that a man has his father's wife!" Incest is an ugly word, yet a case was occurring in the church. A man was living with his stepmother.

What's worse, is according to verse 2 the church was proud of their tolerance. You can hear their excuse, "*Who are we to judge? Judge not lest you be judged.*" Paul was upset that nobody had the guts to confront blatant sin in God's house.

Paul tells them to excommunicate the couple. Give 'em the left-foot of dis-fellowship. He says in verse 5, "Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Once you remove them from the protective effects of church life maybe the couple will see the consequences of their rebellion - repent of their sin - and return to God. Skip ahead to 2 Corinthians 2 and you'll see that the discipline worked.

Paul closes chapter 6 by saying that sex is more than a biological function. People today think of the "*sex act*". But sex is more than an action - it's creating a spiritual bond. It's sharing intimacy - the giving away of yourself to someone else.

Paul says in verse 16, to have sex with a harlot forms a bond - makes you one. If you're a member of the body of Christ you've linked the whole body with a harlot. Paul's point is that sex is laced with spiritual overtones. And it's the bonding involved that causes confusion and pain unless accompanied by marriage vows. Give yourself away without a permanent commitment and it cheapens yourself in your own eyes. That's why verse 18 says illicit sex is a sin against your own body.

A boy asked his gramps, "Your generation didn't have venereal disease. What did you wear to have safe sex?" The old man replied, "We wore a wedding ring!" The only safe sex - physically and emotionally - is between a husband and wife.

### IF MARRIED...

Chapter 7 continues to talk about sex, but Paul addresses married couples. In verse 9 Paul says that for most people marital pleasures can take the edge off sexual pressures. He puts it, "It is better to marry than to burn with passion."

Paul teaches that a married person's body belongs to their spouse. You gave it away on your wedding day, don't take it back now. Verse 3 tells married couples to "render (to each other) the affection due..." Sex is both a delight and a *duty*. You owe it to your spouse to have sex lovingly, frequently, and passionately.

Paul says in verse 5, "do not deprive one another". Let me issue a warning to all married couples - *sex is a tool to build with, not a weapon to fight with*. It's a dumb move to ration out sex - or punish a spouse by holding back. Guys, that only plays into the hands of the Tempter. The best advice I can give a married couple is to have lots and lots of sex... the Bible says it'll do your marriage good.

I personally believe sex is best on days that begin with the letter "T" - *Tuesday and Thursday - Thiday, Thatursday, Thunday - even today and tomorrow.*

### IF SINGLE...

Paul says, 7:32-33, "He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord - how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world - how he may please his wife."

Family is a blessing, but with it, comes responsibilities that at times limit what I can do for God. I'm not as free to serve and sacrifice for the Lord as I would be if I were single...

If you're single realize the benefits. This is the one time in your life where you can *serve the Lord without distractions*. For most of you this is an opportunity that won't last long, so take advantage.

Did you hear about the wedding at the bride's house? It started at 6:45, but the host forgot one detail. In the middle of the vows, as the pastor asked, "Do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?" - a little bird slid from the mouth of an overhead clock and sounded, "cuckoo, cuckoo"... seven hilarious *cuckoos*. That sums up Paul's attitude on marriage. Why be cuckoo and forego your freedom? Serve God without distraction or attachment. Be single for the Savior!

### IF DIVORCED...

Many of the first Christians were in a unique situation. Before they married they'd never heard the Gospel. When the message was preached some believed - but their spouses didn't. It resulted in unequally yoked marriages - believers married to unbelievers - and it made for some stressful situations.

There's an old Puritan proverb, "Marry a child of the devil and you're going to have problems with your father-in-law." A believer and an unbeliever are going to have a tumultuous marriage.

In verses 12-16 Paul says if the unbeliever wants to stay married, then the believer should do so. Who knows if a good witness won't lead to the unbeliever's salvation? In addition, verse 14 says the presence of a believer in the house provides a godly and moral influence on the children.

But if the non-Christian abandons the Christian - then the believer is under no obligation, and can move on.

# Bible Scan - 1 Corinthians 1-9

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - [sandyadams@calvarychapel.org](mailto:sandyadams@calvarychapel.org)  
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: [www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm](http://www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm)

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Ladies Night Out, Tuesday, May 14th at 6:45 PM  
Men's Raft Trip, Sunday, May 19th—Monday, May 20th  
High School/Middle School Retreat: Sunday, July 14th-Sunday, July 21st  
Kid's Camp: 1-2nd grade, Tues, 7/16—Thurs 7/18; 3rd—5th grade, Thurs, 7/18—Sun, 7/21  
Next Bible Scan - May 19, 2002 - 1 Corinthians 10-16

"But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." - 1 Corinthians 1:27-29

Bible  
Scan  
Memory  
Verse

## HOW PAUL CURTAILED HIS FREEDOM

In chapter 9 Paul describes how he curtailed his liberty to keep the Corinthians from stumbling. Other apostles took their wives along on trips, and expected the churches to pay their expenses. Paul doesn't condemn their actions. In fact, he insists their practices are proper and based on Scripture. In verse 7, "Who ever goes to war at his own expense?" In other words, it's good to pay the pastor.

Verse 9 quotes Deuteronomy 25:4, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Then Paul explains God didn't put that verse in the Old Testament because he cared about oxen - it's an analogy for us. It illustrates the principle he states in verse 11 - if a pastor feeds you spiritually then feed him materially.

Yet, Paul says in verse 15, "But I have used none of

these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me..." Paul curtailed his liberties because he didn't want anyone to think he did it for money.

He says in verse 16, "for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" Paul's ministry was more than a job - or a way to make a living - it was an incapable calling from God. To prove it, while in Corinth, Paul never took a dime from the church. He made tents in his spare time to support himself. Paul's goal is in verse 18, "That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge." It's refreshing to find a pastor who goes out of his way to protect the reputation of the Gospel and the integrity of the ministry.

### Bloom Where You're Planted

The key to living the Christian life is *to bloom where you're planted!* If you're married at conversion stay married. If you're a Jew, be a converted Jew. Verse 20 says it best, "Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called." Don't wait to live the Christian life until you move, or change jobs, or find new friends, or straighten out family problems. Live for Jesus where you're at!

We use to have a guy come to Calvary Chapel who was a distribution manager for Budweiser. He drove his company van to the Saturday morning prayer meeting - and would park it down the street so no one would know what he did. When he finally confessed his occupation he thought we might reject him as a brother.

I told him, "God wants us to start where we're at - so we'll help you be the best beer truck driver you can be for Jesus Christ." I realized he'd eventually encounter problems... he did and ultimately resigned. But he started where he was at!

### Building Bridges

In chapter 9:19-23 Paul reveals his evangelistic strategy. He states in verse 22, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." When Hudson Taylor arrived in China he struggled in his attempts to share the Gospel, until the Lord told him to give up his western clothes and cut his hair like the locals. It offended the other missionaries, but the Chinese started to listen. Taylor learned that to relay the Gospel to the Chinese you had to be relatable.

Most likely, it's the biker who'll win the biker to Jesus - the salesman who'll win the salesman - the housewife who'll win the housewife. Paul tried to identify with the person he wanted to reach. He found common ground and built a bridge.

### In It To Win It

Paul closes chapter 9 by comparing a Christian to an athlete... Both run to win. Both train to win. Both desire to win. Both follow the rules in order to win. The only difference is the prize they're after. The athlete runs to win a laurel wreath - it shrivels up in a few days and looks like the pressed roses in the family Bible. A Christian runs for an eternal prize that never loses its luster.

To win the race it requires *determination* (all-out effort) - *preparation* (discipline and training) - *concentration* (a focus on the prize) - and *regulation* (I've got to honor the rules). Make sure you don't just shadow box. Make your effort count. *Be in it to win it!*