

Joyful Life Bible Studies

I Corinthians 8,9

Lesson 16

FIRST DAY: Review I Corinthians 7; Overview I Corinthians 8,9

1. Think for a moment about these phrases: *the time is short* (I Corinthians 7:29a) and *the fashion of this world passeth away* (I Corinthians 7:31b). In what specific way do they affect your priorities and lifestyle?
2. We will be stepping up the pace of the study for the next few weeks in order to complete I Corinthians by the end of this semester. By taking two chapters a week for three weeks, we will accomplish this goal. Don't be daunted by covering so much territory. Do your best and gain as much as you can absorb. We will only be able to highlight these chapters. If you have been a Bible student for some time dig deeper. If you are a beginner use these weeks' studies as a panorama to acquaint you with the chapters' contents.

Begin today's assignment by marking the paragraph divisions of I Corinthians 8 and briefly stating the subject of each paragraph:

- a. I Corinthians 8:1-6
 - b. I Corinthians 8:7-13
3. This chapter introduces us to a serious problem in the First Century church in Corinth. Although the problem is irrelevant to most of us today the solution to the problem is *relevant* to all problems among believers in all centuries. Print in bold block letters, meditate on the meaning of, and memorize the last sentence of I Corinthians 8:1.

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

I Corinthians 8:16 rsv

SECOND DAY: Read I Corinthians 8:1-6

1. Identify the specific issue or question Paul is dealing with in I Corinthians 8. Use I Corinthians 8:1a, 4a.

Advanced students: Write a brief explanation of how believers in Corinth might be exposed to eating things offered to idols.

2. Note from I Corinthians 8:1b how Paul carefully lays the groundwork for the solution to the problem. Explain the meaning of *knowledge puffs up*.
 - a. Why is love for God more important than any knowledge we might possess? I Corinthians 8:2,3

3. What do *we know* about idols? I Corinthians 8:4(5)

a. Use Psalm 115:4-8 to depict the powerlessness or *nothingness* of idols.

4. Write I Corinthians 8:4c and 8:6 phrase by phrase absorbing the power and truth of this revelation. Use other versions if you desire.

Challenge: Notice the phrases *we in Him* and *we by Him* in I Corinthians 8:6 KJV. Explain what they signify.

5. It is essential for believers to have *knowledge* and understanding of the biblical doctrine referred to in this paragraph. All believers need to know there is *but one God* and *one Lord Jesus Christ* and that idols are *nothing*, empty, and void of power. When that *knowledge* produces harsh, insensitive, dogmatic attitudes of superiority, what is missing?

a. Write one word that identifies the root source of this attitude from Proverbs 16:18.

(1.) Notice and record what Proverbs 16:5a reveals about pride.

(a.) According to Proverbs 13:10 what results from *pride*?

b. How does love deflate this kind of pride?

6. This is a proper time for each of us to ask the Lord to search our hearts and point out any area where we have allowed knowledge to supersede love in our attitudes toward others. Ask the Lord to make you aware of these attitudes and fill you with His love. Write your prayer here.

And if I have.....all knowledge

But have not love

I am nothing, useless. . . .

I Corinthians 13:2 Amp

THIRD DAY: Read I Corinthians 8:7-13

1. Not everyone in the Corinthian church had this knowledge about idols (verses 4-6). If these Christians of verse 7 ate food offered to idols what happened to their *weak conscience*?

a. What is your initial reaction to the word *weak* describing their conscience? Why?

b. Explain the meaning of a *defiled* conscience by using synonyms.

2. In I Corinthians 8:8 Paul restates the conviction of the strong believers in Corinth. Eating the meat offered to idols didn't make anyone better or worse; it didn't make the believers weak or strong, more acceptable to God or less acceptable to Him. They had the liberty to eat it or not eat it. But in I Corinthians 8:9 they, the strong, are confronted with the influence their liberty had on a weaker believer, therefore, there is a principle of responsibility given here that they must apply. Print here the principle we are to follow. I Corinthians 8:9

a. Carefully read and list each of the consequences that could result from the strong believers' irresponsible influence on the weak believer from the following verses:

8:7c

8:9

8:10

8:11

8:12

8:13a

8:13b

(1.) When we so wound a weak believer Who are we sinning against? I Corinthians 8:12c

b. In recognition of the devastating results of misused *liberty*, what strong commitment does Paul make concerning his liberty? I Corinthians 8:13

(1.) In what way is this a role model for us?

3. What application do you find in I Corinthians 8:7-13 for believers today?

a. Give a practical 1990's example of the *stumblingblock* effect a strong believer could have on a weaker believer.

b. Take time to scan Romans 14 and choose a verse or phrase or passage to add to your understanding of I Corinthians 8.

4. Where do you find yourself in I Corinthians 8?

*The strong sought the solution to the problem
from the standpoint of their knowledge and their rights;
the apostle finds it from the standpoint of love and its obligations.*
-selected

FOURTH DAY: Read I Corinthians 9:1-23

1. Mark the paragraph divisions of I Corinthians 9 as follows and state the theme of each paragraph.
 - a. I Corinthians 9:1-14
 - b. I Corinthians 9:15-18
 - c. I Corinthians 9:19-23
 - d. I Corinthians 9:24-27

2. Evidently there were people in the Corinthian church who were questioning Paul's credentials as an apostle. How did he authenticate his apostleship? I Corinthians 9:1b,2; Acts 18:8

3. As an apostle Paul had all the rights and privileges of the other apostles. List a few of these rights from I Corinthians 9:4-6.
 - a. What point is Paul making through the three examples of laborers in I Corinthians 9:7 (8-10)? I Corinthians 9:11,12a
 - b. Whom does Paul say has a right to receive material and financial support in I Corinthians 9:14?
 - (1.) What Old Testament example from verse 13 does he use to confirm this?

4. Why does Paul relinquish these rights? Summarize from I Corinthians 9:12b,15-18.
 - a. Paul's laying aside his rights for the believers' edification is a living illustration of chapter 8. How is this an example for you?

5. Read I Corinthians 9:19-23. This paragraph should be studied much more thoroughly than we have time for in this lesson. If you have time fill in the following chart:

VERSE	TO	I BECAME	THAT I MIGHT
19			
20			
21			
22			

- a. Underline and meditate on the word *gain*. In what way does this speak to you?
- b. How can we *become all things to all men* without compromising our convictions?

6. Think of someone that you want to win to Christ. Ask the Lord to show you how to relate to that one so that you can communicate the gospel to him/her.

FIFTH DAY: Read I Corinthians 9:24-27

1. Corinth was the center of the Isthmian games held every two years and which were second only to the Olympics. It has been said that the city and hillsides of Acrocorinth would have been full of athletes in training for these great events. Believers in Corinth would immediately understand Paul's example of the runner in I Corinthians 9:24. He says that we are to *so run* - run to win. If you've ever been in a race and wanted desperately to win you will understand what Paul means by *so run*. What kind of effort did you exert while running?
 - a. What do you learn from Hebrews 12:1b, 2,3 that will help you *run the race* with all your might?
 - b. *Go for the gold* is a motto for those who train for the Olympics. What parallels are there between these athletes and the Christians of I Corinthians 9:24-26?

Challenge: Define these phrases:

- a. *Striveth for the mastery*
 - b. *Temperate in all things*
2. These verses were meant to awaken careless, self-indulgent Corinthian believers to the challenge of living the Christian life. In I Corinthians 9:26b Paul changes metaphors from a runner to a boxer. The word *fight* there assumes there is an opponent. I Corinthians 9:27 has been translated *I buffet my body and lead it captive*. He is speaking figuratively here. In your own words relate what this means and why Paul says he does this.
 - a. The word *castaway* means *disqualified* or *disapproved*. He is speaking here of service not salvation. What resources are available to us to empower us to live the victorious Christian life and keep us from becoming *disqualified*?
 - (1.) What is our part in accessing and appropriating these resources?
 - b. Considering that Paul's opponent was his own fleshly nature, what areas in your life are you *in the ring with*?
 3. In what way does I Corinthians 9:24-27 stimulate you to greater commitment in these last days?

SIXTH DAY: Review I Corinthians 8 and 9

1. How can I avoid being a *stumblingblock* to another believer?

- a. What have you learned from this study that will contribute to your strengthening a weak believer?
- b. Why shouldn't I try to make a weak believer see things my way if it is not a matter of eternal importance?
2. What attitudes prevent me from relinquishing my rights for another believer's welfare?
 - a. How can these be corrected?
3. In response to this lesson what is your greatest desire?
4. In what ways do you earnestly desire to build others up spiritually?
5. What insights have you gained on *knowledge puffs up; love builds up?*

*It will be worth it all
when we see Jesus.
Life's trials will seem so small
when we see Christ.
One glimpse of His dear face
all sorrows will erase.
So bravely run the race
'til we see Christ.*

E.K. Rustophi