

Session 17: Summary of 1st Corinthians:

Why is First Corinthians So Important to the Church Today?

As noted in the previous Bible sessions of 1st Corinthians, the letter contains a frank discussion of the church and the issues that impacted the members of the churches in the first century.

- *Paul did not think that this letter or other letters to the church at Corinth would ever be read by other churches and millions of people after he was with the Lord. At least he did not have it in his mind that what he said in the letters to the church in Corinth would be a guide or counsel for churches across Asia and the churches today.*
- *Although we do not know what the letters to Paul from the church leaders stated or asked, we can understand most of the problems and concerns by the answers given by Paul back to the church leaders at Corinth.*
- *We do know, however, the Corinthian church was corrupted with sin in many ways, so Paul provided an important model for how the church should handle the problem of sin in its midst.*
Note the words “should” handle...Paul was giving his thoughts and comments as to how to effectively and properly address the issues confronting the members of the Corinthian church. Knowing Paul through his other writings, you and I can know for fact that Paul would pray and ask God to help him appropriately answer any question or issue coming up within the body of Christ.
- *Instead of turning a blind eye toward relational division and all kinds of immoral acts within the church, he addressed the problems head on.*
 - ✓ Paul called for purity and godly actions within the Corinthian church.
 - ✓ He made it “perfectly clear” that he was willing to risk the opinions of some as well as different counsel by other leaders of the Corinthian church in order to help cleanse the sin that tainted this wonderful institution Paul has helped start and potentially grow.
- *In this letter to the church at Corinth, Paul covered a number of different issues related to both life and doctrine: divisions and quarrels, sexual immorality, lawsuits among believers, marriage and singleness, freedom in Christ, order in worship, the significance of the Lord’s Supper, and the right use of spiritual gifts; he also included a profound teaching on the resurrection.*

- *The line of thought that ties in with the topics above was Paul's emphasis on Christian conduct in the local church.*
- *Paul expected that Christian people would live according to Christian ideals and moral standards, or as he told them in his counsel.*
“You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (6:20).

How Do We Apply These Concepts and Truths to Our Lives?

Corinth was very much like a modern urban area, containing unending opportunities to engage in sinful behavior without any apparent consequences.

- **Such a community clearly had a negative influence on the Corinthian church and those attending its services.**
- **Paul's instruction to the believers, however, was not to retreat from their city.**
 - ✓ *This was not Paul's vision for the church then or now. Instead, he directed us to live out our commitment to Christ ever more faithfully in the midst of nonbelievers.*
 - ✓ *Paul expected that we Christians would be the shining light into the dark places of their world by worshiping in a unified community that was accountable to one another.*
 - ✓ *Paul expected to settle problems within the church internally,*
 - ✓ *That we would encourage one another in the pursuit of purity and grace,*
 - ✓ *That we would strive together by holding steadfast to the hope of our bodily resurrection to come.*

Questions for the Bible Student (You and Me).

What can we do within our local church to make this kind of community more of a reality?

Do we understand that we are to be “doers of the Word and not just hearers” only?

As stated throughout Revelation and other parts of the Bible, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.”

Are we listening with our just our ears and not our hearts?