

## I. Where We've Come From

### A. The Purpose of the Letter

1. Ch. 7: Introduces the second major section of the letter
2. Reminder of Paul's Purpose for the Letter
  - a. **1 Corinthians 1:2 (ESV) <sup>2</sup> *To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:***
    - (1) NIV: called to be holy
    - (2) Called by God into saving, transforming grace in order that in heart, mind, spirit, and life we might once again bear the image (the moral character of God) in the world
  - b. **1 Corinthians 1:9 (ESV) <sup>9</sup> *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***
    - (1) Through faith in Jesus Christ and continued vital, vibrant relationship with Him
    - (2) And through the shared life of faith with other believers
      - (a) That we are made holy
      - (b) That God's holiness (God's glory) is made manifest to a lost and dying world
  - c. **1 Corinthians 1:10 (ESV) <sup>10</sup> *I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.***
    - (1) The work of uniting believers into one body with one head, one mind, one attitude about life belongs to the Holy Spirit
    - (2) Paul's purpose is that through this inspired teaching, God the Holy Spirit will further mature us in our Christ-centered faith and faithfulness to the manifest glory of God

### B. The Parts of the Letter

1. Report vs request
  - a. Reports (Chs 1-6)
    - (1) Factions
    - (2) Incest and Arrogance
    - (3) Lawsuits
    - (4) Religious Prostitution
  - b. Requests (Chs 7-16)
    - (1) Specific Topic the Corinthian Christians Have Queried Paul Concerning
    - (2) Requests: What do we do now that we are Christians?
    - (3) Each is introduced by the phrase "Now concerning," (ESV)

- (a) He raises the specified concern and then respond
    - i) Strategy for Understanding Epistles
      - a) Read the entire letter through at least once in one sitting
      - b) Raise the issues
      - c) Relate the principles
      - d) Realize the benefit
    - ii) This is Paul's presentation strategy for this letter
  - (b) He raises the issues then answers that concern and includes other applications of the spiritual principle with the expectation they will take to heart what he is teaching and put it into practice
2. Requested Concerns
- a. Ch. 7 Marriage, Celibacy, Divorce, and Christian Love
  - b. Ch. 8 Food, Freedom, and Christian Love
  - c. Ch. 12 Spiritual Gifts, Worship, and Christian Love
  - d. Ch 16 Generosity, Resources, and Christian Love
  - e. Ch 16 Friendship, God's Will, and Christian Love

### C. Paul's Ultimate Concern 7.35

- 1. It is good for a person to remain
  - a. It is good
    - (1) Corinthians "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman."
    - (2) Paul: It is good for a person to remain
      - (a) It is good for a person to remain within the bounds of conjugal love. **vv. 1-5**
      - (b) It is good for a person to remain within the bounds of self-control **vv. 6-9**
      - (c) It is good for a person to remain within the bounds of covenant marriage **vv. 10-16**
      - (d) It is good for a person to remain within the bounds of God's calling **vv. 17-24**
      - (e) It is good for a person to remain within the bounds of devoted commitment **vv. 25-38**
      - (f) It is good for a person to remain within the bounds of focused concentration **vv. 39-40**
  - b. Paul reinforces and applies Jesus' command
    - (1) **John 15:4-9 (ESV)** <sup>4</sup>*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches*

*are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.*

- (2) Paul expands the application to their intimate relations.
2. Paul's ultimate concern **7:35**
  - a. *I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint on you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord*
    - (1) To promote good order
    - (2) To secure your **undivided devotion** to the Lord
      - (a) The heart of devotion is love
    - (3) **To have the same kind of love for Jesus that Jesus has for the Father!**
  - b. The Love of Jesus
    - (1) The example of Jesus
      - (a) **John 17:4 (ESV)** *<sup>4</sup> I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.*
      - (b) **John 4:34 (ESV)** *<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.*
    - (2) Marked by
      - (a) Priority
        - i) **Luke 14:25-33**
        - ii) *"So therefore, any one of you that does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.*
      - (b) Transformation
        - i) **Romans 12:1-2**
        - ii) *Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*
      - (c) Filling
        - i) **Ephesians 5:18**
        - ii) *Do not be drunk with wine for that is debauchery but be filled with the Spirit*

## II. Do you have an undivided heart utterly devoted to Christ?

### A. An example of undivided devotion to Jesus

1. **John 21:11**
  - a. The disciples have returned to fishing
  - b. They've fished all not and caught nothing

- c. Jesus tells them to cast their net on the right side of the boat
- d. Their nets are filled with 153 large fish
- 2. Pastor's talking about message and methods and how to be good disciples
- 3. The fish are the most amazing example of undivided devotion in the account
  - a. They recognized Jesus immediately
  - b. They obeyed Jesus emphatically
  - c. They surrendered their lives to Jesus completely

**B. What about us?**

- 1. Can we be any less devoted to Jesus than a school of fish?
- 2. Any less satisfied with Him than the birds of the air?
- 3. Any less content than the lilies of the field?

**C. Final Appeal**

- 1. **Romans 12:1 (ESV) *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.***
- 2. **Give yourself in faith committing to faith in Jesus and faithful compliance with God's word**