

Discovering God's Wisdom

STUDIES IN FIRST CORINTHIANS

Lesson 12

1 Corinthians 10:14-33

Searching the Scriptures for hidden treasure

"I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure." Psalm 119:162

Beginning in chapter 8, Paul has been responding to a question about eating meat sacrificed to idols. Although he will get back to that point in our verses today, he begins by giving a strong word of warning to the Corinthian church.

First Day: Read 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

1. What was Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians? v. 14

Notice how he addresses his readers with the words, *my beloved*. His strong exhortation to them on this point is a revelation of his true love for them.

- a. What does the word flee mean?

The Amplified Bible amplifies the word *flee* this way: *keep clear away from, avoid by flight if need be*.

- b. What exactly is idolatry?

- c. From what we have studied so far about Corinth, why would Paul need to exhort them so strongly in this matter?

2. Paul uses the imagery of the Lord's Supper to help them get the true spiritual impact of what it is to worship an idol. Notice the key word *communion* (NKJV) in this passage. NASB translates it as *share* and the NIV uses *participate*. The Greek word is *koinonia*, which speaks of partnership, participation, and fellowship. Answer these questions from verses 16-17:

- a. Explain what we are participating in when we drink the cup of Communion. (What does this cup represent?)

- b. Explain what we are participating in when we partake of the bread of Communion. (What does this bread represent?)

- c. How is it that in sharing Communion we are sharing in the sacrifice of Christ?
 - d. How is it that in sharing Communion we become one with those who partake with us?
 - e. How was this same concept true of the Israelites who made sacrifices for their sin? v. 18
3. Is an idol itself anything? What does the sacrifice to the idol represent?
- a. What is Paul's point?

Making It Personal...

4. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and answer the following:
- a. Why is it important that a Christian take a stand of *no compromise* with the world?
 - b. Have you taken this stand? See verse 17.
 - c. What is the promise? v. 18 How does this speak to you personally?

Digging Deeper

1 Corinthians 10:22 speaks of *provoking the Lord to jealousy*. Exodus 34:14 says. "*For you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*" Do your best to summarize today's passage in a couple of sentences, from the standpoint of the jealousy of God over *you*, His beloved.

Pearl of Great Price

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31 This is your memory verse—begin memorizing it today!

Second Day: Read 1 Corinthians 10:23-30

In saying all things are *lawful* (legitimate, permissible), Paul is speaking of those areas that we call “gray areas,” those things not specifically forbidden by Scripture. Throughout the rest of this chapter, several rules are given by which we may govern our decisions in those gray areas of life.

1. When something is Scripturally permissible, what is the rule in assessing whether or not it should be done?
 - ✓ *verse 23a*
 - ✓ *verse 23b*
 - ✓ *verse 24*
 - a. How did the beginning of Paul’s thoughts on this subject strike this same chord? (See 1 Corinthians 8:1, and consider again the meaning of the word *edify*.)
2. What is Paul’s specific word on the subject of eating what is sold in the meat market? v. 25
 - a. What is his reasoning on this? v. 26 (Explain what he is saying.)
3. What is Paul’s specific word for the occasion of eating at the home of an unbeliever?
 - a. What if it is announced that the meat was offered in sacrifice? v. 28-29
 - b. Why was Paul not concerned with his own conscience? (See v. 29-30 with v. 26 in mind.)

Making It Personal...

The Amplified Bible translates verse 24 this way: “*Let no one then seek his own good and advantage and profit, but [rather] each one of the other[let him seek the welfare of his neighbor].*”

4. Is there an area in your life right now in which you might be able to apply Paul’s words (perhaps in your marriage, or in a relationship with a parent, child, or friend)? This is not always easy for us to do. Stopping and realizing that we might need to do this is a start! How might you begin to seek the welfare of this one the Lord has laid on your heart?

Digging Deeper

- ❖ Summarize today’s passage by considering verses 28-29 in the light of verses 23-24.

Third Day: Read 1 Corinthians 10:31-33

1. Paul gives 2 more *rules of thumb* in these final verses of chapter 10.
 - ✓ *verse 31*

 - ✓ *verse 32*
2. What was Paul's habit, according to verse 33?
 - a. How do Paul's words here, again, line up with verse 24?

 - b. Was Paul a people-pleaser? What was his purpose in pleasing *all men in all things*?

 - c. How did he say this most beautifully in 1 Corinthians 9:19?
3. Although chapter 10 ends with verse 33, it is thought by many that the first verse of chapter 11 actually finishes Paul's thoughts here. If this is true, what is the final exhortation of this passage?
 - a. What, specifically, is Paul encouraging them (and us) to do? (Consider what he has taught in our passage today.)

Making It Personal...

In these chapters, Paul has let us know that he was at liberty. John says, "*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed* (John 8:36)." Paul was indeed a free man! But his goal was to glorify God (verse 31) and to bring others to salvation (verse 33), even at the expense of his own liberty.

4. Is there any area in your life in which you are not at liberty? Share your thoughts here. Won't you begin today to bring that area to the Lord and ask Him to give you victory there?
 - a. Is there any area of your life in which you realize that you aren't bringing glory to God? What steps can you take to begin to change that fact?

Digging Deeper

- ❖ Tie this week's memory verse (1 Corinthians 10:31) with the heart of what Paul is saying in this chapter.

Fourth Day:

Deeper Discoveries

This portion of the lesson will take a closer look at some of the words in the chapter. You will need to have your tools—or resources at hand: more than one Bible translation, a dictionary or Bible dictionary, concordance, atlas, and encyclopedia. (If you don't have all of these, simply use what you do have to enrich your learning.)

Using the tools you have at hand, do some digging into the following terms. Start with your dictionary (or Bible dictionary), and then look up the references to add to your understanding. If you have additional resources, you may want to keep digging (making notes in the margins). After you've completed the investigative process, write a definition in your own words. Your investigation in today's lesson will lay the groundwork for tomorrow's study, so be as thorough as you can in your research.

Seek (10:24) *“Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.”*

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? Luke 12:29-31; John 5:44; Philippians 2:21; Colossians 3:1 _____

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Other's well-being (NKJ) (10:24); **another's wealth** (KJV); **his neighbor's good** (NAS)

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? Romans 14:19; Romans 15:2; 1 Corinthians 13:4-5; 2 Corinthians 12:19 _____

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Fifth Day:

Heartsearch

Are you walking worthy of your high calling? Are you applying the wisdom of God to your daily life? Get ready for some self-discovery! This portion of the lesson will give you the opportunity to examine your heart, express your mind, and experience your lesson, by applying what you are learning to everyday circumstances.

Self-denial

Every person makes hundreds of choices daily, but most of those choices do not have a “right” or “wrong” tag attached. Other decisions carry more weight because the outcome affects the lives of other people. How can we be sure that our responses will have a positive impact and not a negative one? What are the criteria for judging? What do we do when we find that, having exercised our freedom in Christ, we have at the same time offended or stumbled a weaker brother or sister in the faith? These are questions that Paul attempted to address with the Corinthian believers, questions that are just as applicable and important to Christians today.

Some of the choices we make may not be wrong in themselves, but they may not be in the best interest of others. Sometimes though, it is difficult to know when to defer to a weaker believer. Yes, we do have liberty in Christ, but we should never use that freedom at the expense of hurting or stumbling someone else. The rule of thumb to follow is: *do not consider only yourself; put the needs and welfare of the other individual ahead of your own.*

Self-denial may not be as difficult for you when you hold it up to the light of what Christ did on your behalf: *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9).

1. Take a moment to consider each aspect of this wonderful verse, which is broken down for you. Put your name in the blanks and then, in the space provided, write down what comes to mind as you contemplate the fullness of what this verse means to you personally.

“For _____ know(s) the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

- a. How do you know of His grace?

“that though He was rich...”

- b. In what way was He rich?

“yet for _____’s sake he became poor...”

- c. Describe how He became poor for you?

“...that _____ through His poverty might become rich.”
d. How did relinquishing all make it possible for you to inherit His riches?

e. What wealth do you now possess because of His self-denial?

f. How will this knowledge affect your perspective in the future?

Is it hard for you to put others first? If so, make it a matter of prayer. As you do, you'll find it becoming easier as the Lord answers that prayer by making you more aware and enabling you to respond in a manner that pleases Him. Try to remember the following:

- Work at becoming aware of where you are and who you're with.
- Be sensitive and gracious to the other person's needs.
- Be willing to *limit* what you do in order to *build up* (edify) that other individual.
- Keep in mind the person may be a new believer or one young in the faith, who is just learning how to renounce sinful ways of the past in order to live for Christ.
- Realize, if the person is unsaved, you must do what is best for them *so that* they might be saved.

You may want to add to this list or make one of your own. Committing these items to memory will assist you in determining which course of action to take in any situation you may be facing. If you strive to make the good of others your primary goal, you will reveal the love of God and at the same time develop a servant's heart like His!

Heartsearch: Briefly look back over your *entire lesson* before filling in the following.

❖ *Examine your heart*

What has God put His finger on through your study and brought to light in a new way? (What did you learn about yourself?)

❖ *Express your mind*

What change has this week's study brought about in your thought process? What difference will this make in how you view your current circumstances?

❖ *Experience your lesson*

What nugget of wisdom from your lesson do you plan to apply to your life?

Sixth Day:

Laying Up Treasure

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:19-21*

The highest calling of the believer, and the most important way to lay up treasure in heaven, is through intercessory prayer. You will want to give thoughtful consideration to what you record on this page, as it will be the basis for your prayer during group time. The format for this day of your lesson is based upon the ACTS method of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. In addition to these four, there is space provided for you to keep track of answered prayers, people and things you want to pray for in the coming week, and also a place to write out this week’s Scripture verse from memory.

Using the lesson as your focal point, write out your prayer for each of the following:

I praise God for (an aspect of His marvelous character) _____

I confess to God that I _____

I thank God for _____

I am asking God _____

Praise for answered prayer: _____

People/things I want to pray for this coming week: _____

Pearl of Great Price: _____

Notes