

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN A CORINTHIAN CULTURE

An overview of I and II Corinthians

“Not special Just Called”

Discussion Sheet

This is the beginning of a study of First and Second Corinthians. The angle of the whole study will be to examine the culture of Corinth, the struggles of the church and it's relevance to following Christ in our Western Culture. This first study, will be mostly for the purpose of understanding the books and why they were written.

Q: Who is Corinth?

- CAPTIAL, PORT, CHIEF in wealth, arts, luxury, knowledge
- KNOWN FOR FORNICATION and prostitution

Q: What is the culture like?

- IMMORAL, RELATIVITY, NARCISISM
- WORLD of choice and individualism

Q: Who wrote these letters?

- PAUL in 57 ad
- APOSTLE TO the Gentiles

Q: Why did he write them?

- FIRST- to correct, and confront negative leadership and cultural influence (Romans 12:1= conformed, transformed)
- SECOND- Thanks for *some* change, defense of his ministry and motivation

Q: Do you think, at first glance that this study will be relevant to Westerners? Why or why not?

A: Pride, Narcissism, Immorality, Conformity to culture and many other things make this relevant. When our focus is the enthrallment of the moment, it abuses the soul.

Have someone read I CORINTHIANS 1:1-9:

Q: According to this passage, who is called and for what reason?

A: We are all called, and we're called to be holy. Holy means that we are set apart for God's purposes. We can't be attached to the culture and to God at the same time.

Q: What is the reason that believers in the church are given “gifts” by God?

A: God enriches the whole church by giving it's individuals unique spiritual gifts. We are a part of community in order to serve rather than to be served. But in serving we also find personal fulfillment in the use of our God-given gifts and abilities.

Q: According to verse 8, what is the source and reason for strength? In a culture that prides itself in it's own strength, why is this important?

A: Strength is from God and for the purpose of standing firm. Standing firm is not being tougher, it means leaning on God harder. When His strength is what enables and sustains us, we give Him the glory and resist the temptation to take credit for standing firm on our own. Corinth was famous for spiritual pride and looking down on “weak” people who couldn't pull themselves up by their own bootstraps so to speak.

Q: Can you define partnership in this passage (verse 9)? How does Romans 12:1,2 tie in with this meaning?

A: It's cooperating with Jesus. That means that we make Him Lord and not ourselves or the culture around us. Romans 12 tells us that in order to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, we can longer be conformed to the culture or the pattern of the world. “When a cultural mind-set has cut deeply into one's life, the corrections must also be deep” –Ravi Zacharius

Q: In closing, do you think that it is difficult to live in our culture as a Christian? Why or why not?

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