

1 CORINTHIANS

gospel formed relationships / discussion guide



OVERVIEW FOR PART 2:

Join us as we walk through the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. We'll see the many cultural similarities between the pacific northwest and ancient Greece, as well as be challenged in how we are designed to live out the gospel through the local church.

In the second mini-series we will see how God designs relationships and the inner workings of church life, even when things are hard.

PART 2: WEEK FOUR **The Gift of Marriage**

Text: 1 Corinthians 7:1-24

There were two groups who went to extremes in regard to sexual relations between a husband and a wife in the church in Corinth. The first, as we've already observed, were the progressives who freely engaged in all kinds of sexual immorality because they believed what one did with their body really didn't matter. "It's just physical" they said, "It has nothing to do with my spiritual life." The other extreme were the ascetics who deemed all sexual relations as unholy because of the pleasure associated with sex. As a result, this group abstained from all sexual relationships. In many cases this was not a mutually agreed upon conclusion. In fact, some of the people who converted to Christianity were married to an unbelieving spouse who still wanted to engage in

sexual relations. This led to more marital struggles and unfortunately tainted the witness of the Church.

Paul knows that God created sex to be a wonderful thing experienced within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman. He also knows that marriage is a picture of the love of God expressed through Jesus laying down his life for his Bride, the Church. So, he commands them to mutual submission and self-giving service. The husband has authority over his wife's body and the wife has authority over her husband's body. They are to give themselves to the other to satisfy and please each other. They should not be consumed with their own pleasure but with the other. This provides a beautiful picture of how Jesus laid down his body on the cross for our salvation and ultimate eternal pleasure. This should be the attitude of every Christian. We should be eager to submit to one another and serve the needs of people around us as Christ served us in whatever station of life God has placed us.

Paul also wants them to know that their presence has a sanctifying power. The unbelieving spouse and children are made holy through the believing spouse. Paul is not saying we have the power to save someone. However, he knows that whoever Jesus came in contact with was changed through his presence. Now we, as the temple of the Holy Spirit, have the presence of God in us to sanctify others. This has profound implications for marriage, parenting, work and school. Our union with Jesus means he has the opportunity to bring the holy presence of God where we live, work, learn and play. That is why Paul commends them to live out their calling in whatever station God has placed them.

Read: 1 Corinthians 7:1-24

1. What is God's purpose for marriage and sex within marriage?
2. What does this tell us about what God is like and how does it connect to what Jesus has done?
3. How should this affect how we treat our spouses and others?
4. Where do we need to repent and what should change in our lives as a result?