

Quarter Three: *1 and 2 Corinthians*

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Lesson 5—All to the Glory of God

Monday: Selfless Love

July 27, 2026

- **Last Week:** “Sin in the Church”
 - 1 Cor 5, 6 through 7:9
 - Sin (especially sexual sin) in the Corinthian Church & how the church should handle that
- **This week:** “All to the Glory of God”
 - 1 Cor 8, 9, & 10
 - Idolatry in the Corinthian Church (connection between sexual sin & idolatry)
 - Paul’s sacrifice for the sake of the gospel

Memory Text: “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31, NKJV).

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** Knowledge Versus Love (SQ)
 - 1 Cor 8:1 – 13 – Paul’s call to unity: knowledge that leads to arrogance & division in the church is evil; however, knowledge without love is not true knowledge at all
- 2. **Monday:** Selfless Love (Jill)
 - 1 Cor 9:1 – 23 – practical example of love for Christ & the brethren. Paul’s self-denial for the sake of the gospel.
- 3. **Tuesday:** Learning from the Past (John L)
 - 1 Cor 10:1 – 11 – comparison of Israel & their sins & God’s people today and our sins
- 4. **Wednesday:** Warning Against Idolatry (James)
 - 1 Cor 10:5 – 22 – food offered to idols (eating meat at home offered to idols was not a sin, but going to pagan temples was wrong); God requires loyalty & idolatry pulls our affections from God
- 5. **Thursday:** Overcoming Idolatry (Ryan)
 - 1 Cor 8:1 – 3; 10:23 – 11:1 – love keeps one safe from idolatry; love God & love others

Monday: Selfless Love

1 Cor 9:1 – 23; Acts 18:3; Rom 16:3; Rom 16:7; 1 Cor 7:8; Acts 4:36, 37

- 1 Cor 9 is connected with 1 Cor 8 & knowledge & love
 - 1 Cor 9 = a practical example of a Christian leaders’ selfless love for Christ & for others
 - We think 1 Cor 13 is about love (which it is)

7 takeaways of spiritual leadership

- 1 Cor 9:1 – “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?”
 - Apostle = one sent directly by the risen Christ to preach the gospel
 - Free = having apostolic rights; Roman citizen – Paul was given more rights / freedom
 - Seen Jesus = on the road to Damascus
 - Work in the Lord = fruits of his preaching & ministry
 - Paul = a leader
 - Gal 2:7 – 9 – “But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter (8) (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), (9) and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.”
 - Paul was called - & recognized - as an apostle to the Gentiles
 - Peter was called as an apostle to the Jews
- 1 Cor 9:2 – “If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.”
 - Some doubted Paul’s apostleship – he didn’t spend 3 ½ yrs with Jesus like the others
 - Seal of apostleship = their conversion demonstrated that he was called to be an apostle
 - **Takeaway #1: Spiritual leaders remain faithful, even when others doubt them**
 - Requires courage to lead when others doubt – but also great love for God & others
 - Luke 6:26 – “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”
 - Sermon on the Mount
 - Approval of those under you is not always a sign of good leadership
- 1 Cor 9:3 – 7 – “My **defense** to those who examine me is this: (4) Do we have no right to **eat and drink**? (5) Do we have no right to take along a **believing wife**, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? (6) Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to **refrain from working**? (7) Who ever goes to **war** at his own expense? Who plants a **vineyard** and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a **flock** and does not drink of the milk of the flock?”
 - Defense – proof of apostleship / leadership to those who question
 - Food & drink represent financial assistance
 - Apostles / ministers of the gospel are to receive financial support
 - Paul had the right to receive financial remuneration from his work
 - Yet, he did not receive funds (except from Philippi)
 - Believing wife = married apostle was entitled to receive support for a wife
 - Brothers of the Lord = James, Joses, Simon, Judas (Mark 6:3)
 - Cephas = Peter
 - To refrain from working for living = Paul & Barnabas had the right to earn wages for their missionary work
 - Barnabas was wealthy, generous & willing to support himself (Acts 4:36, 37)
 - Paul worked as a tentmaker (Acts 18)
 - 3-fold example from secular world of work:
 - War – spiritual warfare; Vineyard – Israel; Shepherd = Jesus & ministers

- **Takeaway #2: Spiritual leaders choose the unexpected path**
- 1 Cor 9:11, 12 – “If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? (12) If **others** are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but **endure** all things lest we hinder the **gospel** of Christ.”
 - Others = other missionaries from Jerusalem, working in Corinth
 - If other spiritual leaders receive monetary funds from the churches, shouldn't Paul receive funds, too?
 - Endure all things – even injustice
 - Gospel of Christ = Paul's criterion for all decisions
- **Takeaway #3: Spiritual leaders lay down their rights for the gospel**
 - Everything is centered on what is best for the gospel
 - Paul suffered because of his decision to forgo his right to receive monetary compensation for his labor
 - 1 Cor 4:11, 12 – “To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, & we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. (12) And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure.”
- 1 Cor 9:14, 15 – “Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. (15) But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to **die** than that anyone should make my boasting void.”
 - Paul cared about them so much he'd rather die than –
 - His ministry was a labor of love – not for selfishness, ambition, money
 - **Takeaway #4: Spiritual leaders serve from love, not selfish ambition, greed, or pride**
- 1 Cor 9:18 – “What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ **without charge**, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.”
 - Without charge – Paul did receive funds from the church at Philippi (Phil 4:15, 16)
 - Paul refused monetary support from the Corinthian Church to avoid dividing them further
 - **Takeaway #5: Spiritual leaders give up their rights for the good of others**
- 1 Cor 9:19 – “For though I am **free** from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more.”
 - Free from all = under obligation to no one
 - **Takeaway #6: Spiritual leaders embrace servanthood**
 - Mark 10:45 – “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
- 1 Cor 9:27 – “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”
 - **Takeaway #7: Spiritual leaders live with discipline and integrity**
 - Paul was himself practicing what he called others to do: forgo some of his own rights for the cause of the gospel

- Comparison with Isthmian Games: held every two years in Corinth
 - Footraces, wrestling, boxing, discus & javelin throwing, chariot racing & more
 - Perishable crown = victory wreath was often made of withered celery
 - If athletes are willing to endure self-restraint for earthly glory, how much more should Christians live a life of self-restraint for the cause of God?

7 takeaways of spiritual leadership

- 1: Spiritual leaders remain faithful, even when others doubt them
- 2: Spiritual leaders choose the unexpected path
- 3: Spiritual leaders lay down their rights for gospel
- 4: Spiritual leaders serve from love, not selfish ambition, greed, or pride
- 5: Spiritual leaders give up their rights for the good of others
- 6: Spiritual leaders embrace servanthood
- 7: Spiritual leaders live with discipline and integrity