

1Spending Time with Jesus in I Corinthians Chapters 8-9

Invite Jesus to speak to you as you read this week.

1st: read I or II Corinthians (read the one you didn't read last week) all the way through, the whole book, imagining you are Paul saying this to the church in Corinth. To help you remember and ENJOY what you are reading, read out loud for at least 15 minutes each time (longer would be even better.)

2nd: read chapter 8-9 by themselves to remember what they are about.

3rd: read chapter 8-9 again and write down what stands out to you.

What do you notice?

1)

2)

3)

Third read through, answer questions as you go:

I Corinthians 8:1-13

What would you do if the only restaurants in town were also part of a temple to an idol? Yep, that's how it was in Corinth.


You are invited to your best friend's 16th birthday party at a restaurant. They will be feasting in an idol's temple. The main course will be meat that was first sacrificed to that idol. What do you do?

Pagan priests would sell left over sacrificed meat...to the butcher shops in town. So when you buy meat, you would have no idea if it had been offered to an idol before it hit the market's shelves. Do you buy some to cook for a special dinner with your family?

It was an honor when a friend invited you over for dinner, especially considering there was a famine going on. What would you do if they brought out a plate with a juicy steak on it? You know it cost them a LOT. But it could be part of an animal that was sacrificed to an idol...

Hopefully you see why the Corinthians are asking Paul about this. He does not give them rules to follow. He gives them wisdom – a way to think through making decisions that will honor God.

“We all possess knowledge” is in quotes. So is “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and “There is no God but one.” Who is Paul quoting? _____ OK, so we know what they’ve been thinking.

Wisdom tip #1: Knowledge isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. It _____ up (remember ) Those who _____ they _____ something do not yet _____ as they _____ to _____. (vv 1-2)

Wisdom tip #2: Love _____ up.

So when Christians make decisions, we should stop to think: am I puffing myself up or am I building up Christ and His church?

What does Paul mean in v. 5 that “there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth”?

What does it mean that for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live? _____ What does it mean that there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live? _____ What is the same in these statements? What is different?

Imagine a person who grew up going into sinister, oppressive, evil temples to try to get the favor of some “god” who was supposed to be powerful (but also greedy and even cruel.) They offered an expensive animal and participated in dark rituals...because maybe this god would just happen to notice them. Now this person is a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ and is free from idol worship. But still, when they see meat, they remember the darkness, oppression and evil.

What might they think if they saw a mature Christian eating in an idol’s temple? What might they do that could destroy them?

What do you think of when you hear “stumbling block”? Can you draw it here?

What rights do we have today that, if we choose to exercise them, could become a stumbling block to others?

If we exercise those rights, even though we know that another Christian will struggle because of our choice, who are we sinning against? (vv. 11-12) _____ and _____

What should motivate us to set aside our rights, if needed, for the sake of the weak believer? (v. 1)

I Corinthians 9:1-18

Does Paul know what it is like to give up his freedoms for the sake of others? _____ If so, can you name some of them?

Think back to Acts and the story of when Jesus appeared to Paul. Jesus tells Ananias that He is sending Paul to the _____. (Acts 9:15) Gentiles grew up worshiping other gods. He will have to help those churches understand God's plan for every aspect of their lives. In this letter he's explained God's plan for sex within marriage (chapters 5-7) and how to help other believers live in a city full of idols (chapter 8).

So Paul will have to give up different freedoms from Cephas (Peter) and the other apostles who mostly preach to Jews because the mission field God is giving him is so different from theirs.

What rights has he (and Barnabas in one case) given up?

v. 4 the right to _____

v. 5 the right to _____

v.6 the right to NOT _____ for a _____ (in other words, to be paid for teaching so that they didn't have to also work at another job.)

But some in Corinth think that because he is different from Cephas and the others, he isn't as much of an apostle as they are. He's seen as 2nd best.

Could you make some guesses as to why they would be challenging him?

Paul doesn't use his right to have them pay him for all he's done to teach them about Jesus. What does he do instead? (v. 12) He _____ up with _____ rather than _____ the _____ of _____.

What does "hinder" mean?

Paul says in v. 16 that he is compelled to preach. What does that mean?

What is his reward? _____

How big of a deal is it to Paul that he can boast of this?

I Corinthians 9:19-27

"Those under the law" means the Jews. They were following the law in the Old Testament, the law that pointed to Jesus and was fulfilled in His life, death and resurrection. "Those not having the law" refers to the Gentiles. Paul says that he is "under Christ's law." What did Jesus say when he was asked which commandment was the greatest?

Do you remember what the "new commandment" was that Jesus gave his disciples after he washed their feet at the Last Supper? (see John 13)

Could this be what Paul means by Christ's law? If so, which would be easier to follow – the Old Testament law or Christ's law?

Why does Paul say he becomes all things to all people? "So that by _____ possible means, I might _____." If you could talk to Paul, do you think he would say the sacrifices he made were worth it? _____ What blessings did he (and will he) share in (v. 23)?

Remember, Corinth had their own Olympic-type Games. Competition was fierce. Like an athlete preparing for the Olympics, Paul says followers of Christ need to be ALL in!

What is the prize awaiting us?

Are you surprised that Paul is aware that even after preaching to others, he could surrender to his body's desires and find himself disqualified for the prize? Why or why not?