



TEACH ME
THE BIBLE PODCAST

STUDY GUIDE

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CHAPTER

7

1 CORINTHIANS

Divisions in the Church



1 Corinthians: Chapter 7

If you are new to the Story of the Bible or would like to review the Story:
Listen to the following TMTB Podcasts:

The Story: Understanding the “Big Story” (30 min)

Old Testament: Walk Through the Broad Story (27 min)

Timeline: New Testament Beginnings (35 min)

Letters: Paul’s Writing to the Churches–Part 1 (30 min)

REVIEW

As we have stated previously, Paul is under examination by the Corinthians. Apparently, they have written him in order to have him address specific issues regarding why he did what he did. In chapters 7-9, Paul will specifically address these issues. In chapter 7, he begins his defense concerning why he is not married. However, his approach is not for everyone in the body of Christ. Nor, as he explains, is being single a command from the Lord. Instead, for Paul, it is the means by which he can maximize his service to the body of Christ. As we will see in the chapters to come, this will be a reoccurring theme.



1 Corinthians: Chapter 7

MONDAY

Listen to the Chapter 7 podcast.

TUESDAY

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-6.

Also, read 1 Corinthians 9:1-6.

These verses serve as Paul's concluding argument for his defense in chapters 7 and 8 as well as his introduction into chapter 9.

Finally, read 1 Corinthians 12:1-7.

Pay particular attention to 12:7. The word translated as "common good" (from the Greek root: *sumphoros*), is used in 6:12; 7:35; 10:23, 33; and 12:7. Paul's concern in everything is for the "common good" or "advantage" of the church, the body of Christ. Thus, while something might be "lawful" for Paul, not everything that he could do builds up the body in the same way.

WEDNESDAY

In 1 Corinthians 7:21, 22 and 39, Paul introduces a word to the discussion that he will return to in chapters 9 (verses 1 and 19), 10 (verse 29), and 12 (verse 13). The word is "free." In 7:21, Paul instructs the Corinthians that if anyone among them (the "you" in this verse is singular) is a slave but is able to become "free" then that would be better. While our modern discussions focus on the morality of slavery, Paul's point is quite a different one. For Paul, freedom allows one to be fully devoted in their service to the body of Christ. In other words, that one is free to be a bond-servant to Christ. For, if you are a slave then you are under the authority of your master. If you are married, your authority is not simply your own. Instead, you have a responsibility to serve your spouse. Do you see the distinction? Paul is not saying that marriage is evil or bad. He is simply stating that marriage brings with it responsibilities to one's spouse and children. However, since Paul is "free" from a wife, he is able to go wherever and whenever to suffer whatever in his service to the body of Christ. He is free to be a slave!

How do Paul's words in chapter 7 fit with those in chapters 9, 10, and 11?



1 Corinthians: Chapter 7

THURSDAY

In 1 Corinthians 7:16-17 Paul asks “...for how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk...”

Now, read Paul’s words in 10:23-24, “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.” If this instruction is true for the unbelieving neighbor (the context of chapter 10: 23-31), would it not also be true for the unbelieving spouse?

Paul continues in verses 31-33, “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God...just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but that of the many, so that they may be saved.” Building up the body of Christ begins with the salvation of a new member (being baptized into the body of Christ through faith) and continues in their growth in the body.

So, how are you leading people to Christ?

How are you building up the body?

FRIDAY

Read chapter 7 again and review Wednesday and Thursday’s lesson.

Now, in light of Wednesday and Thursday’s discussion, let’s make some application. In verses 24 Paul states, “Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called.” His point is that one can serve the Lord in their present condition or situation. We often fall into the trap of thinking that if I am not a pastor, missionary, or Bible teacher, that I cannot serve the Lord. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Remember, the Corinthians were none of those things. Yet, Paul’s instruction was so that they would serve the Lord in their present situation.

What are some ways that you can build up the body of Christ (through bringing others to salvation or serving others in the body) in every situation in your life?

In your current family situation?

In your work situation?

Any others?