

1 Corinthians Chapter Seven: Paul Addresses the Corinthians' Concerns

Opening Question: What motivated Paul in all of his actions and how is this displayed in chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians?

Key Takeaways:

1. Paul's letter to the Corinthians addressed how to rightly examine/judge/appraise motives and actions.
2. Paul desired the Corinthians to share his pure motives in building up the body of Christ in all their behavior.
3. The Corinthians needed to have their own motives judged by the correct standard which Paul possessed.
4. Paul had to defend himself, including the reason for his singleness which was being incorrectly judged by the Corinthians.
5. Paul's singleness allowed him to have undistracted devotion to the Lord (7:35).
6. Paul's every motive and action was for maximizing his service to the body of Christ.
7. Paul explained that in order to serve the Lord, it was unnecessary for the Corinthians to change their present condition or situation.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read aloud together 1 Corinthians 4:1-6 and chapters 6-12 to keep the flow of Paul's argument going. Connect Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:1-6 with his defense in chapters 7-8. Continue to track Paul's actions and motives in this section.
2. From the above reading, go back and read 6:12; 7:35; 10:23,33 and 12:1-7 and discuss the "common good" which informs all of Paul's actions. Contrast Paul's treatment of the "common good" with the Corinthians'. How does this instruction apply to the modern believer? What individual freedoms might you need to abandon for the common good of the body of Christ?
3. Discuss specific ways that you can build up the body of Christ in every situation in your life, beginning in your current family situation and in your workplace.

Practical Application:

1. Re-read 1 Corinthians chapters 1-12. As you build on your understanding of Paul's letter, connect what Paul is saying in chapters 6-12 with his words in chapters 1-5. What is the overall point Paul is making and what specific issues fall into this argument?
2. How does understanding 1 Corinthians to this point shape your understanding of life in the body of Christ? Where have you misunderstood this in the past? How will your understanding of God's Word in this letter impact your motives and actions going forward?
3. 1 Corinthians 7:17 makes the point that believers are to operate from their present circumstances at the time of their belief in the gospel. Abandoning prior commitments to follow Christ is not Paul's message. Consider your current commitments and how you can faithfully build up the body of Christ in your present circumstances.

Closing Prayer:

Father, Thank You for Paul's example of personal sacrifice for the common good of the body of Christ. Our desire is to be among those who build up the body. We ask for wisdom as we seek to live out of pure motives in making choices that bring You honor and serve the members of Christ's body until He returns. Amen.