



Week 37: 1 Corinthians 1-8

Study Guide for the week of Sept. 7-13

Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, reflect on 1 Cor 8:10-13.

Paul here links Christian freedom to Christian responsibility.

Read Eph 2:8-9. Do we act in order to obtain God's love or do we act in response to God's love? Think through your week; when did you act out of God's love for you? Act in order to get God's "approval"? It's vital to get the horse (God's love) before the cart (our response).

Does Christian freedom mean anything goes? Are there times when we should curtail the use of our "freedom" in order to support another believer who might be confused about our behavior? Think of examples from your life, both when you used your freedom to trample on another and when you voluntarily limited your freedom to help another.

This week, attend especially to the times when God asks you to limit your freedom in order to build up another. Our individual freedom should be less important than strengthening the faith of another believer.

Discussion starters

1. One of Paul's main concerns in 1 Cor is found in 1 Cor 1:10. What is Paul's concern? Do we as Christians need to have the same concern today? Why or why not? What are the primary purposes of the Church? How well are you contributing to the unity of the purpose of the Church?
2. How much preparation and practice to you put into a presentation, performance, or game? Would you rather experience a well-prepared event or one in which it is obvious little thought or care went into the experience? Reread 1 Cor 2:4. Paul is not denying the need for preparation – he was one of the most educated persons in the scriptures in his day – but Paul knew the Holy Spirit had an important role in guiding his words. The more you know, the more the Holy Spirit has to work with. Are you continuing to learn and grow?
3. Reread 1 Cor 3:5-9. What is Paul's answer to the problem of individualism and rivalries? Is Paul's answer still valid for us today? Why or why not?
4. In chapter 5, Paul deals with a situation of open and unrepentant sin among believers. Are believers to tolerate unrepentant sin (5:2)? Why not (5:6-7)? Does Paul expect life change in a person when one claims to be a believer (5:11)? Is discipline meant to be for the destruction of the person disciplined or to wake them up to repent and return to God's ways (5:5)?
5. In chapter 6, Paul deals with smaller problems that occur among believers. Reread Matt 18:15-17, Jesus' instructions on conflict resolution. List the three steps of Biblical conflict resolution. Consider a conflict you are currently having; which step do you need to employ now?
6. Reread 8:1-9. Which is more important, love or knowledge? Do you know of situations where freedom in Christ has caused another to stumble or become confused? Does greater spiritual maturity mean more or less love for others, especially those with less understanding of God? Paul argues that as our knowledge of God grows, so should our love for others. Is this happening in your life?

Bible verse to memorize: 1 Cor 1:18