Cause and Effect

Week 25: June 18-24 – *Acts 18, 19; 1 Corinthians 1-4*

Helpful Resources
Map of Paul's Missionary Journeys (p.59)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

  There is a helpful principle that we should learn early in life — for every cause, there is an effect, and for every effect, there is a cause. A cause is defined as a catalyst, a motive, or an action that instigates an effect. An effect is defined as a condition, outcome, or result of a cause. Things happen because something prompted them to happen. Actions have reactions. Effects refer to what happened, while the cause refers to why it happened. Perhaps, the clearest statement of cause and effect in the Bible is in Paul's letter to the Galatians. He wrote, "Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap" (*Gal. 6:7*). If a man plants good seeds, he will reap healthy fruit. But, if a man plants bad seeds, he will reap rotten fruit.

  After the Apostle Paul returned to Antioch from his second missionary journey, it was not long before he set out on his third journey (*Acts 18, 19*). His plan was to revisit the churches he planted in Asia Minor and Greece and to strengthen the believers there. He also wrote several letters along the way (i.e., *1 Corinthians*). In both Paul's visits and letters, we see demonstrated the principle of cause and effect. In this review, we will reconsider this principle in light of Paul's interaction with the new believers in these young churches. Doing so will help us identify the principle of cause and effect in our own lives.

- Cause and Effect

  Take a minute to re-read these passages. Then, identify the causes and effects.

  1. **The Rise of Apollos**, *Acts 18:24-28*

     Effect: He was mighty in the scriptures (*v.24*).
     What was the cause?

     Cause: He was acquainted only with the baptism of John (*v.25*).
     What was the effect?

     Effect: He greatly helped those who believed and powerfully refuted the Jews (*v.27, 28*).
     What was the cause?

  2. **Paul's Efforts in Ephesus**, *Acts 19:8-27*

     Effect: All who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, which was prevailing (*v.10, 20*).
     What was the cause?

     Cause: Evil spirits left, and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified (*v.12, 17*).
     What were the effects?

3. **Christian Quarrels**, *1 Cor. 1:10-17*

   Effect: There were quarrels and divisions among the Corinthian believers (*v.10, 11*).
   What was the cause?

   Cause: I did not preach the gospel with cleverness of speech (*v.17*).
   What was the effect?

4. **The Foolishness of God**, *1 Cor. 1:18-24*

   Cause: The word of the cross (gospel) is foolishness to those who are perishing (*v.18*).
   What were the effects?

5. **The Natural Man**, *1 Cor. 2:6-16*

   Cause: The natural (unsaved) man does not have the Spirit of God (*v.12, 14*).
   What are the effects?

   Cause: Followers of Christ have the Spirit of God indwelling them (*v.12*).
   What are the effects?

6. **Building on the Foundation**, *1 Cor. 3:10-15*

   Effect: A person receives rewards in heaven (*v.14*).
   What is the cause?

   Effect: A person suffers loss (of rewards) in heaven (*v.15*).
   What is the cause?

7. **A Fool for Christ**, *1 Cor. 4:1-16*

   Effect: It is a very small thing that I may be examined by you (*v.3*).
   What was the cause?

   Cause: I have become a fool for Christ (*v.10*).
   What are the effects?

The Bottom Line
Every cause has an effect, and every effect has a cause. We reap what we sow.

Questions to Consider

1. What are some of the founding principles (causes) of your life? What have been the results or effects?
2. When you look at some of the positive or negative effects in your life, can you determine their root causes?
3. Knowing that every cause has an effect, how does this truth weigh upon your decisions or actions? Predict what would happen if we did not weigh the effects of our decisions?
4. Evaluate what you see in your community, state, or nation today. What are their causes?
5. Evaluate what you see in your family, church, school, or workplace. What are the causes?
6. If your cause is Christ, to see Him glorified in your life, what will be the effects?