

Glorify and Edify

Week 26: June 25-July 1 – *1 Corinthians 5-10*

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Helpful Resources

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

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

Paul is in the middle of his third missionary journey, spending time in Ephesus (Asia Minor). While there, he received a disturbing report about the believers in the church at Corinth, and so he penned a letter in response. His first letter to the Corinthians is unlike his other letters. In other letters, Paul focused on doctrine, but in his letter to the Corinthians, he focused on discipline, for the believers there were struggling with several issues.

Corinth was an ungodly city, and though the Lord had saved the Corinthians out of the world, the world was still a part of the Corinthians. Thus, many worldly ideas and practices existed in their church. So then, Paul dealt with immature quarrels, corrections, and questions. He challenged the Corinthians to apply the gospel to all aspects of life, viewing Christianity as more than a religion (a way to be saved) but also as a worldview. He showed them that right doctrine leads to right practices. God-centered beliefs lead to God-centered behavior.

This week, Paul repeated a common theme — the importance of glorification and edification (*10:23, 31*). To glorify means to praise, honor, or magnify someone or something. As Christ-followers, we are to glorify the Lord. To edify means to build up or encourage. The Lord calls us to edify others, particularly fellow believers. Therefore, Paul challenged the Corinthians to practice these two verbs, to glorify the Lord and to edify others (see also *Mark 12:30, 31*). In this review, we will consider the Corinthian issues in light of this theme.

- Corinthian Concerns
 1. **Church Discipline** (*1 Cor. 5:1-13*): The Corinthians neglected to deal with a scandalous church member. Paul pointed out that putting up with such behavior in the church was neither glorifying to God nor edifying to believers. Churches must deal with sinful behavior before it rots both its congregation and its influence.
 2. **Court Rivalries** (*1 Cor. 6:1-11*): The Corinthians filed lawsuits against each other, allowing civil judges to settle church affairs. Paul explained that such behavior did not glorify God or edify believers. Those without the Spirit do not understand spiritual things, nor should they mediate spiritual matters. Church decisions should be left to the church.
 3. **Lawful vs. Profitable?** (*1 Cor. 6:12-20; 8:1-13*): Though Christ has set us free from the penalty of sin, the Corinthians believed they were now free to sin more. In their minds, they were free to do anything without consequences. Paul reminded them that while all things may be lawful or allowed, they might not be profitable or beneficial. In other words, they needed to consider two things — could they do those things while glorifying God and edifying others? If we are mastered by anything other than God, it does not glorify Him; and if we cause others to stumble with our actions, we are not edifying them.

4. **Married or Single?** (*1 Cor. 7:1-40*): The Corinthians had questions about singleness, marriage, and divorce. Paul explained that both singleness and marriage can glorify the Lord, depending on one's self-control. Personally, he preferred remaining single so that he could have the singleness of mind to glorify God without hindrance.
5. **Liberty vs. License** (*1 Cor. 9:1-23*): Paul explained that while he was free to do many things, he restrained the use of his freedom to remove hindrances to the gospel. Thus, in our freedom, we are not completely free. That is called liberty — freedom with restraints. Our restraints are the glorification of God and edification of others. Without restraints (called license), we speak and act with no regard for God or others, shaming the gospel.
6. **Discipline or Disqualification?** (*1 Cor. 9:24-11:1*): When we speak and act without regard for God and others (see #5), we demonstrate a lack of self-control and disqualify ourselves. Disqualification does not mean that we lose salvation but, like Israel, we forfeit the blessings of God. One of those blessings is being useful in God's kingdom to save and disciple others. Thus, a life lived for self is a waste of time. We are to "compete to win" and not to "beat the air." Simply put, glorify God and edify others.

- Practicing Our Principles

If our goals are to glorify God and edify others, how could/should we handle these scenarios?

1. Drinking alcohol
2. Using foul language
3. Buying lottery tickets
4. Smoking and/or vaping
5. Using legal/illegal drugs (i.e., marijuana)
6. Going to a bar, club, or casino
7. Catching that popular R-rated movie
8. Listening to secular/raunchy comedians or musicians
9. Going with a friend to a non-Christian religious service

The Bottom Line

In all that we do and say, we are to glorify God and edify others.

Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever witnessed how the sinful behavior of one church member can spread and spoil other parts of the church? Explain.
2. How does your church deal with discipline issues? Is it biblical and effective? Explain.
3. How should disputes, even legal disputes, be handled in the church? Is there ever a time to involve civil judges? Explain.
4. How does your church handle big decisions? Should they be made by a few or the whole? Support your answer.
5. Provide an example of something we are free to do that might not glorify God or edify others? What are gray areas in which these principles would be helpful to remember?
6. How would you counsel a college student or young adult who is feeling the pressure to marry just to shake the stigma of being single?
7. Compare liberty and license. Why can't/won't license glorify God and edify others?
8. Provide an example of a life that would be described as "beating the air" or "running without discipline." How do we avoid disqualifying ourselves as Paul mentioned?