



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

1 & 2 CORINTHIANS

Week 2

DAY 8

Dining Out

1 Corinthians 8

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you admired a friend's character and values, only to discover that they were behaving in a way you felt was inappropriate? How did you feel about the person then?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Why do you think the issue of eating food sacrificed to idols was such a problem for the followers of Christ in the city of Corinth?
 2. What was wrong with the attitude displayed by Christians who could eat such food without feeling guilty?
 3. What "knowledge" kept them from having any qualms about eating (vs. 4-6)?
 4. Why is the teaching in verse 6 about the nature of God so liberating?
 5. Why might some "weaker" Christians continue to be concerned about the power of idols?
 6. What repercussions could Christ-followers cause by exercising their freedom without thinking of others?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever caused another believer to stumble due to your thoughtlessness?
 2. Think about verses 2 and 3. What two valuable lessons do these verses teach about knowledge?
 3. How do you feel our culture demonstrates "idolatrous" attitudes to the "gods" of our day? How can you challenge these gods' hold over society?
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WINDOW
on the Word

*The worship of **pagan gods** usually involved the offering of food, some of which was consumed by the priests, or taken home by the worshippers or sold in the market place. Some believers were superstitiously concerned that by eating this food they would put themselves under the influence of the idols or be drawn back into pagan practices.*

Rights and Responsibilities

DAY 9

1 Corinthians 9

Consider the vast inequity of pay for various professions—athletes, musicians, attorneys, doctors, teachers and pastors. What does this say about the value society places on the services rendered?

1. How does Paul respond to those casting doubt on his apostleship (vs. 1, 2)?
2. What rights can be legitimately claimed by a person working full-time to spread the gospel?
3. Why did Paul's motivation to service bring him a great sense of freedom (vs. 1, 12, 19)?
4. What drove Paul to continually proclaim the gospel?
5. What can you learn from verses 19-23 about the missionary task (a) to one's own people, and (b) to people of another culture and religion?
6. What lessons do boxers and runners teach us about spiritual commitment, and how do those lessons apply to Paul's ministry (vs. 24-27)?

1. What motivates you to work? How might Paul's words affect your attitude toward your job?
2. Are you thankful for those who endure sacrifices in order to share the gospel?
3. How would you rate your own dedication to progress in the Christian life, compared to people who are concerned about their physical fitness?

*The Corinthians would have understood Paul's **sports metaphors** because Corinth hosted the famed Isthmian games every two years, which were second only to the Olympic games, held every four years.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 10

Repeating History

1 Corinthians 10

OPENING
up to the Word

It has been said that if we ignore history, we are bound to repeat it. Can you think of recent examples?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What miraculous deliverances are described in the opening verses of this chapter? What attitude did God's people demonstrate as a result of the Exodus experience?
2. What specific sins are mentioned in verses 6-10 that are recorded in the Old Testament description of Israel's experiences in the Wilderness of Sinai (see Ex 32:1-6; Nu 14; 16:41-50; 25)?
3. Why couldn't the Christians in Corinth participate in both the Lord's Supper and in the temple meals associated with Greek and Roman gods?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Think of those special times in your life when the Lord miraculously provided for you. Did those deliverances cause you to be grateful, complacent or presumptuous?
2. Review the temptations described in verses 6-10. Do you think they are as relevant today? What forms do they take in our society? Which ones do you need to pray for protection against?
3. What significance does the Lord's Supper have in your relationship with God?
4. Pray that God will help you "do all for the glory of God" in the events of this day.

WINDOW
on the Word

"...the spiritual rock that accompanied them..." (v. 4). Paul might be referring to a Rabbinic tradition that the rock that Moses struck for water accompanied the children of Israel in the desert (Nu 20:11; 21:16), applying it spiritually to the abiding presence of Christ with his people.

“Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: ‘the people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.’”

1 Corinthians 10:7



Artwork by Lucas Van Layden

Worship Wars

1 Corinthians 11

OPENING
up to the Word

A formal gathering of Christians under a roof considered to be a “church” building can often result in times of high anxiety and tension. Have you ever experienced a worship war?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What issues are mentioned here about what is appropriate in public worship? To what extent do you feel these are a matter of local custom and culture?
2. What general principles, applicable at any time and in any place, can be derived from these verses?
3. Why was the conduct of some individuals causing divisions among other Christians?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How can this passage help promote greater consideration toward one another?
2. What can you learn from this passage about balancing freedom and responsibility in Christ?
3. How do Jesus’ words spoken at the Last Supper and their fulfillment in his crucifixion bring a new perspective to our preferences in worship (vs. 24-25)?
4. Do social distinctions threaten to exclude some people who are not made to feel welcome at religious country clubs?

WINDOW
on the Word

*In the early church the **Lord’s Supper** was set in the context of a meal called the “agape” or “love feast.” We do not know how frequently the early Christians celebrated the Lord’s Supper, but clearly it must never be taken for granted or treated lightly or misused for selfish indulgence (v. 27).*

“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.”

1 Corinthians 11:28-29



Photo by Barry Stahl-PTM

Body Building

1 Corinthians 12

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

God's gifts to each of us vary greatly. Are you aware of the gifts God has given you?

- 1.** How does the mention of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit together as the source of spiritual gifts express unity in diversity? Why is this important for the Corinthians (vs. 4-6)?
 - 2.** How are the gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed and for whose benefit (v. 7, compare Eph 4:7; 1Pe 4:10)?
 - 3.** Identify the various gifts described in this chapter (vs. 7-11, 28-31).
 - 4.** How does Paul's teaching about the body of Christ challenge the contrasting attitudes described here (vs. 14-27)?
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LIVING
out the Word

- 1.** Have you ever been made to feel like you were a "second class" Christian because you didn't have a specific gift that someone else had? What have you learned from this passage about that attitude?
 - 2.** Do you feel that what you do has to be visible or publicly recognized in order to be significant?
 - 3.** Is there someone in your circle of fellow Christ-followers whose service seems to be taken for granted? In what way could you encourage them?
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WINDOW
on the Word

***"There are different kinds of gifts..."** (v. 4). This chapter contains the most comprehensive list of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. But there is no exhaustive list given. A wide variety of gifts are mentioned in various passages.*

*“For we were all baptized by
one Spirit into one body—
whether Jews or Greeks, slave
or free—and we were all given
the one Spirit to drink.”*

1 Corinthians 12:13



The Greatest Gift

1 Corinthians 13

OPENING
up to the Word

When was the last time you saw a politician or celebrity perform an act of service? Do you think it was sincere, or was it merely a “photo opportunity” to enhance the person’s public image?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How does this chapter relate to the discussion of spiritual gifts in chapter 12? What are the “greater gifts” that Paul advocates (12:31)?

2. Verses 4-7 of chapter 13 describe love in both positive and negative terms. Relate this description to one or more of the real problems facing the Corinthian Christians.

3. Why is love more enduring than any other spiritual gift (v. 13)?

4. At the present time we know only “in part” (vs. 9, 12). How does the idea of putting “childish ways” behind us and the illustration of looking at a poor reflection from a mirror reinforce the lesson of the limitations of our understanding?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What motivates you in your service to others? Does your motivation make a difference to you and to the people you serve?

2. Read through verses 4-7 substituting your own name whenever you see the word “love.” At what points do you feel uncomfortable?

3. How do faith, hope and love need to be applied to specific issues you are facing?

WINDOW
on the Word

“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror...”
(v. 12). Ancient mirrors were made of burnished metal and gave a distorted image. No matter how good the mirror, it gives only a partial view. Remember that the next time you look in the rear-view mirror of your car!

LOVE IS TOUGH WORK

First Corinthians 13 has been called the Love Chapter because of its powerful description of love. In reading this passage keep in mind that it's easy to talk about love; it's much harder to yield to God so that you willingly accept the tough work of living God's love. Love is more than just romantic feelings, passion or sentimental expressions. Love involves commitment, service and sacrifice that benefits both the receiver and the giver.

Love and Oneself

Does not brag on itself ("boast").
Does not inflate its self-view ("proud").
Does not rival for attention ("envy").

Love and Relationships

Does not tread on another's feelings ("rude").
Does not take offense easily ("angered").
Does not take another's things ("self-seeking").

Love and Sins

Does not make unrighteousness its object of rejoicing ("delight in evil").
Does celebrate others' achievements in righteousness ("rejoices with the truth").
Does not hold grudges ("record of wrongs").

Love and Sinners

Does keep all things in confidence ("always protects").
Does hold out holy ambitions for others to achieve ("always hopes").
Does know what God can do ("always trusts").
Does survive under every condition ("always perseveres").

“Oh, for a Thousand Tongues...”

1 Corinthians 14

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever been in another country where you were surrounded by people speaking in a language you didn't understand? Did you find it confusing, disturbing or comforting?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How does Paul distinguish between the gifts of prophecy and tongues in verses 1-6? Why does he say prophecy is of greater value in public worship?
2. What must happen for the gift of tongues to be of value to those who hear it (vs. 6-13)?
3. What is the value of praying or singing in tongues in private devotion (vs. 14-19)?
4. What can we learn about worship in the early church from verses 26-29? What was the extent of participation and what limitations were given?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How do you regard the gift of tongues? Is it a gift you would want?
2. Do you know anyone who has been given the gift of tongues? What is the value of that gift for the individual and for the church?
3. Have you ever been in a church building where one or more persons spoke in tongues? Were the guidelines that Paul gave in verses 27-28 observed?
4. How would you describe the gift of prophecy in light of this chapter?

WINDOW
on the Word

*In the the first century, ecstatic phenomena such as **speaking in tongues** were highly regarded, yet Paul argues that hearing an incomprehensible language can actually be a sign of God's judgment rather than his blessing (vs. 21-22). He quotes Isaiah 28:11-12, where the people on the walls of Jerusalem heard their Assyrian invaders speaking in a language they could not understand. Today, Christians consider speaking in tongues in one of two ways: **cessationists** believe the gift of tongues ceased after the first century; **charismatics** generally believe the gift of tongues is still in effect. Note that according to 11:5 Paul does not rule out **women speaking in church**. In 14:33-35 the context probably refers to certain women interrupting someone else who is speaking.*