



**STUDENT'S  
LIFE APPLICATION  
BIBLE**  
NEW TESTAMENT



New Living  
Translation®  
SECOND EDITION

Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.  
Wheaton, Illinois

Visit Tyndale's exciting Web site at [www.tyndale.com](http://www.tyndale.com)

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the role of Youth for Christ/USA in preparing the Life Application Notes and Bible Helps.

Student's Life Application Bible, New Testament, copyright © 2005 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved.

The Bible text used in this edition of the *Student's Life Application Bible, New Testament* is the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004 by Tyndale Charitable Trust. All rights reserved.

Notes and Bible Helps copyright © 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1997, 2004 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. New Testament Notes and Bible Helps copyright © 1986 owned by assignment by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Maps copyright © 1996, 2004 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

The text of the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, may be quoted in any form (written, visual, electronic, or audio) up to and inclusive of five hundred (500) verses without express written permission of the publisher, provided that the verses quoted do not account for more than 25 percent of the work in which they are quoted, and provided that a complete book of the Bible is not quoted.

When the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, is quoted, one of the following credit lines must appear on the copyright page or title page of the work:

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

When quotations from the NLT text are used in nonsalable media, such as church bulletins, orders of service, newsletters, transparencies, or similar media, a complete copyright notice is not required, but the initials NLT must appear at the end of each quotation.

Quotations in excess of five hundred (500) verses or 25 percent of the work, or other permission requests, must be approved in writing by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Send requests by e-mail to: [permission@tyndale.com](mailto:permission@tyndale.com) or call 630-668-8300, ext. 8817.

Publication of any commentary or other Bible reference work produced for commercial sale that uses the New Living Translation requires written permission for use of the NLT text.

*TYNDALE, Life Application, New Living Translation, NLT*, and the New Living Translation logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

ISBN-13: 978-1-4143-0804-3

ISBN-10: 1-4143-0804-3

Printed in the United States of America

08 07 06 05

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Tyndale House Publishers and Wycliffe Bible Translators share the vision for an understandable, accurate translation of the Bible for every person in the world. Each sale of the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, benefits Wycliffe Bible Translators. Wycliffe is working with partners around the world to accomplish Vision 2025—an initiative to start a Bible translation program in every language group that needs it by the year 2025.

# 1 CORINTHIANS

**ROB RECENTLY** accepted Christ. Yesterday, the 15-year-old watched in disbelief as two “leaders” of his church got into a shouting (and shoving!) match after Sunday services. Rob quietly asks you why supposedly “mature” Christians act that way. What do you say?

Gemma has discovered that a man and woman who’re active in the church aren’t married, but live together. “Isn’t that supposed to be wrong?” she asks. What would you tell her?

Abby knows that certain activities—drunkenness, pre-marital sex, lying, stealing—are wrong. But what about all those “gray areas” that aren’t directly addressed? Is it okay to hang out in clubs (“I would just go to dance,”) or buy expensive clothes? What about watching her favorite music videos on cable or listening to the radio? And how does God feel about movies she’s watched? “I want to do what’s right,” she tells you, “but sometimes it’s hard to know what’s right. Aren’t there some guidelines from the Bible that can help?” How do you answer?

Christians (and churches) have struggled with immaturity, division, and immorality since the first hymn was sung. But, the apostle Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians has some real, practical answers. Got questions? Keep reading.

# 1 corinthians



## stats

**PURPOSE:** To identify problems in the Corinthian church, to offer solutions, and to teach the believers how to live for Christ in a corrupt society

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** The church in Corinth and Christians everywhere

**DATE WRITTEN:** About A.D. 55, near the end of Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus during his third missionary journey

**SETTING:** The city of Corinth was a seaport and a major center of trade. It was the most important city in Achaia and also one of the most corrupt. The church in Corinth was largely made up of Gentiles. Paul had established this church during his second missionary journey.

**KEY PEOPLE:** Paul, Timothy, members of Chloe's household

**KEY PLACES:** Worship meetings in Corinth

## KEY points

### LOYALTIES

The Corinthians' loyalties to various church leaders and teachers—Peter, Paul, and Apollos—led to intellectual pride, which divided the church. We must guard against the division caused by misguided loyalty or pride in human wisdom.

### IMMORALITY

Paul used tough love to deal with an incident of sexual sin in the church at Corinth. Paul's advice encourages us to avoid compromising, even if others seem to disagree with our moral stance.

### FREEDOM

Paul taught freedom of choice on practices not expressly forbidden in Scripture. Although Jesus makes us free (see John 8:32, 36), we don't have the right to abuse that freedom by encouraging others to do wrong.

### WORSHIP

Paul addressed disorder in worship. Worship must be carried out properly and orderly. Everything we do to worship God should be done in a manner worthy of his high honor.

### LIFE AFTER DEATH

Some people denied that Jesus rose from the dead. Others believed that people would not be physically resurrected after death. Jesus' resurrection assures us that each of us will have a new, living body after we die.

## 1 GREETINGS FROM PAUL

This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes.

### USEFUL 1:1

**Paul was chosen by God to be a missionary. Likewise, each Christian has a task to do. Although some tasks may seem more spectacular than others, all are necessary to carry out God's greater plans for the world. How will you use your abilities in his service? (Check out 1 Cor 12–14 for more on these abilities.) ■**

<sup>2</sup>I am writing to God's church in Corinth,\* to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus,\* just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

<sup>3</sup>May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

### PAUL GIVES THANKS TO GOD

<sup>4</sup>I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Through him, God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge. <sup>6</sup>This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true. <sup>7</sup>Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>He will

keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. <sup>9</sup>God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

### DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH

<sup>10</sup>I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters,\* by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. <sup>11</sup>For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>12</sup>Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter\*\*" or "I follow only Christ."

<sup>13</sup>Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not! <sup>14</sup>I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup>for now no one can say they were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup>(Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I don't remember baptizing anyone else.) <sup>17</sup>For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News—and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power.

### THE WISDOM OF GOD

<sup>18</sup>The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. <sup>19</sup>As the Scriptures say,

*1:2a Corinth was the capital city of Achaia, the southern region of the Greek peninsula. 1:2b Or because you belong to Christ Jesus. 1:10 Greek brothers; also in 1:11, 26. 1:12 Greek Cephas.*

### Is temptation a sin? Why or why not?

For a quick answer to that, check out Matthew 4:1-11—the story of Jesus' temptation.

That story provides a basic truth: Temptation is not a sin. According to Matthew 18:7-9, it's the natural consequence of living in this world. Giving in to temptation, however, is where sin comes in.

Though temptation always will be present, we don't have to wave the white flag and admit defeat. The Holy Spirit provides any believer with the power to resist.

God's Word also teaches us how to overcome temptation. First Corinthians 10:13 has the scoop: "The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand.

When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure."

God provides a way out of every temptation. We can choose to take his way out or to give in. If we stay close to God, we'll be more likely to resist and do what is right. We don't have to give in to temptation.

### Why do we have to keep taking Communion? What's the point?

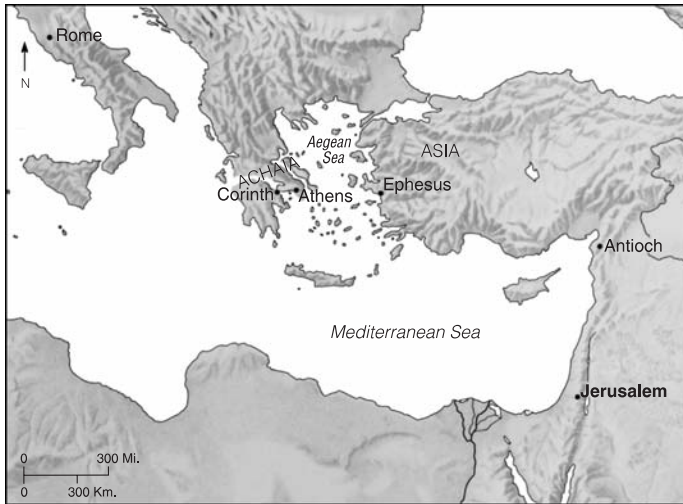
Have you ever saved something from a special event because you wanted to remember how great that moment was? Certain items help us remember special moments in our lives.

Before Jesus was arrested and placed on trial, he established a tradition by which his followers could remember him.

Communion (AKA the Lord's Supper or Eucharist) is that act. Paul reminds us of this in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. (See also Matt 26:26-28.) By taking Communion, we remember how Jesus' body was broken and his blood shed for all people.

Because Communion is celebrated by believers throughout the world, it is a unifying act. And because we retell the message of Christ's death, we're reminded that he plans to return someday for his church.

There are many distractions that can cause us to lose our focus on what really matters in this life. Communion briefly reminds us that real life revolves not around us (surprise!), but around one incredible act of love at a certain time in history.

**CORINTH AND EPHEBUS**

Paul wrote this letter to Corinth during his three-year visit in Ephesus during his third missionary journey. The two cities sat across from each other on the Aegean Sea—both were busy and important ports. Titus may have carried this letter from Ephesus to Corinth (2 Cor 12:18).

**“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and discard the intelligence of the intelligent.”\***

<sup>20</sup>So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world’s brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. <sup>21</sup>Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. <sup>23</sup>So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it’s all nonsense.

<sup>24</sup>But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles,\* Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God’s weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.

<sup>26</sup>Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world’s eyes or powerful or wealthy\* when God called you. <sup>27</sup>Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. <sup>28</sup>God chose things despised by the world,\* things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. <sup>29</sup>As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

<sup>30</sup>God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from

sin. <sup>31</sup>Therefore, as the Scriptures say, “If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD.”\*

**SIMPLE FAITH 1:18-31**

**Paul explained that faith in Jesus is the key to forgiveness and eternal life with God. God planned it this way so that no one could boast that his achievements helped him secure eternal life. (See also Eph 2:10.) Good intentions or actions do not make us acceptable to God. We need only accept what Jesus has already done for us. Have you? ■**

**2 PAUL’S MESSAGE OF WISDOM**

When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters,\* I didn’t use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God’s secret plan.\* <sup>2</sup>For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. <sup>3</sup>I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. <sup>4</sup>And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>5</sup>I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.

<sup>6</sup>Yet when I am among mature believers, I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to the rulers of this world, who are soon forgotten. <sup>7</sup>No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God\*—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world

1:19 Isa 29:14. 1:24 Greek and Greeks. 1:26 Or high born. 1:28 Or God chose those who are low born. 1:31 Jer 9:24. 2:1a Greek brothers. 2:1b Greek God’s mystery; other manuscripts read God’s testimony. 2:7 Greek But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery.

began. <sup>8</sup>But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord. <sup>9</sup>That is what the Scriptures mean when they say,

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard,  
and no mind has imagined  
what God has prepared  
for those who love him.”\*

## WHAT'S IN STORE? 2:9

**Paul quoted a promise in Isaiah concerning the amazing things God has in store for his people in this life and for eternity. He will create a new heaven and a new earth (Isa 65:17; Rev 21:1), and we will live with him forever. Until then, his Holy Spirit comforts and guides us. This promise of great things to come can give us hope and courage to press on in this life, even through hardship. Even when life seems at its most hopeless, we still have hope. ■**

<sup>10</sup>But\* it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. <sup>11</sup>No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. <sup>12</sup>And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.

<sup>13</sup>When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths.\* <sup>14</sup>But people who aren't spiritual\* can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. <sup>15</sup>Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others. <sup>16</sup>For,

“Who can know the LORD's thoughts?  
Who knows enough to teach him?”\*

But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

## 3 PAUL AND APOLLOS, SERVANTS OF CHRIST

Dear brothers and sisters,\* when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people.\* I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in the Christian life.\* <sup>2</sup>I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, <sup>3</sup>for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world? <sup>4</sup>When one of you says, “I am a

follower of Paul,” and another says, “I follow Apollos,” aren't you acting just like people of the world?

<sup>5</sup>After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. <sup>6</sup>I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. <sup>7</sup>It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow. <sup>8</sup>The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. <sup>9</sup>For we are both God's workers. And you are God's field. You are God's building.

## DESIRES 3:1-9

**Paul called the Corinthians “infants” in the Christian life because they were not yet spiritually healthy and mature. The proof was that they quarreled like children. Baby Christians are controlled by their own desires, while mature believers are controlled by God's desires. Are your desires the same as God's? ■**

<sup>10</sup>Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. <sup>11</sup>For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.

<sup>12</sup>Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. <sup>13</sup>But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. <sup>14</sup>If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

<sup>16</sup>Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in\* you? <sup>17</sup>God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

<sup>18</sup>Stop deceiving yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world's standards, you need to become a fool to be truly wise. <sup>19</sup>For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As the Scriptures say,

“He traps the wise  
in the snare of their own cleverness.”\*

<sup>20</sup>And again,

“The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise;  
he knows they are worthless.”\*

<sup>21</sup>So don't boast about following a particular human leader. For everything belongs to you—<sup>22</sup>whether Paul or

2:9 Isa 64:4. 2:10 Some manuscripts read *For*. 2:13 Or *explaining spiritual truths in spiritual language, or explaining spiritual truths to spiritual people*. 2:14 Or *who don't have the Spirit; or who have only physical life*. 2:16 Isa 40:13 (Greek version). 3:1a Greek *Brothers*. 3:1b Or *to people who have the Spirit*. 3:1c Greek *in Christ*. 3:16 Or *among*. 3:19 Job 5:13. 3:20 Ps 94:11.



## Highlights of 1 Corinthians

*The Meaning of the Cross, 1:18–2:16.* Be considerate of one another because of what Christ has done for us. There is no place for pride or a know-it-all attitude. We are to have the mind of Christ.

*The Story of the Lord's Supper, 11:23–29.* The Lord's Supper is a time of reflection on Christ's final words to his disciples before he died on the cross; we must celebrate this in an orderly and correct manner.

*The Poem of Love, 13:1–13.* Love is to guide all we do. We have different gifts, abilities, likes, dislikes—but we are called, without exception, to love.

*The Christian's Destiny, 15:42–58.* We are promised by Christ, who died for us, that, just as he came back to life after death, our perishable bodies will be exchanged for heavenly bodies. Then we will live and reign with Christ.

Apollos or Peter,\* or the world, or life and death, or the present and the future. Everything belongs to you,<sup>23</sup> and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

## 4 PAUL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CORINTHIANS

So look at Apollos and me as mere servants of Christ who have been put in charge of explaining God's mysteries.<sup>2</sup> Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful.<sup>3</sup> As for me, it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you or by any human authority. I don't even trust my own judgment on this point.<sup>4</sup> My conscience is clear, but that doesn't prove I'm right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide.

<sup>5</sup>So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.

<sup>9</sup>Instead, I sometimes think God has put us apostles on display, like prisoners of war at the end of a victor's parade, condemned to die. We have become a spectacle to the entire world—to people and angels alike.

<sup>10</sup>Our dedication to Christ makes us look like fools, but you claim to be so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are so powerful! You are honored, but we are ridiculed.<sup>11</sup> Even now we go hungry and thirsty, and we don't have enough clothes to keep warm. We are often beaten and have no home.<sup>12</sup> We work wearily with our own hands to earn our living. We bless those who curse us. We are patient with those who abuse us.<sup>13</sup> We appeal gently when evil things are said about us. Yet we are treated like the world's garbage, like everybody's trash—right up to the present moment.

<sup>14</sup>I am not writing these things to shame you, but to warn you as my beloved children.<sup>15</sup> For even if you had ten thousand others to teach you about Christ, you have only one spiritual father. For I became your father in Christ Jesus when I preached the Good News to you.<sup>16</sup> So I urge you to imitate me.

<sup>17</sup>That's why I have sent Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of how I follow Christ Jesus, just as I teach in all the churches wherever I go.

<sup>18</sup>Some of you have become arrogant, thinking I will not visit you again.<sup>19</sup> But I will come—and soon—if the Lord lets me, and then I'll find out whether these arrogant people just give pretentious speeches or whether they really have God's power.<sup>20</sup> For the Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk; it is living by God's power.<sup>21</sup> Which do you choose? Should I come with a rod to punish you, or should I come with love and a gentle spirit?

## JUDGING 4:1-6

**Paul warned the Corinthian believers to avoid judging one leader's performance by another's. Have you ever judged another person about the quality or sincerity of his or her relationship with God? Maybe you've even heard someone express skepticism as to whether or not someone really is a Christian. Only God has the perfect insight to correctly judge. ■**

<sup>6</sup>Dear brothers and sisters,\* I have used Apollos and myself to illustrate what I've been saying. If you pay attention to what I have quoted from the Scriptures,\* you won't be proud of one of your leaders at the expense of another.<sup>7</sup> For what gives you the right to make such a judgment? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?

<sup>8</sup>You think you already have everything you need. You think you are already rich. You have begun to reign in God's kingdom without us! I wish you really were reigning already, for then we would be reigning with you.

## 5 PAUL CONDEMNS SPIRITUAL PRIDE

I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you—something that even pagans don't do. I am told that a man in your church is living in sin with his stepmother.\*<sup>2</sup> You are so proud of yourselves, but you should be mourning in sorrow and shame. And you should remove this man from your fellowship.

3:22 Greek *Cephas*. 4:6a Greek *Brothers*. 4:6b Or *If you learn not to go beyond "what is written."* 5:1 Greek *his father's wife*.



## SEX

<sup>3</sup>Even though I am not with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit.\* And as though I were there, I have already passed judgment on this man <sup>4</sup>in the name of the Lord Jesus. You must call a meeting of the church.\* I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed\* and he himself\* will be saved on the day the Lord\* returns.

<sup>6</sup>Your boasting about this is terrible. Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? <sup>7</sup>Get rid of the old "yeast" by removing this wicked person from among you. Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.\* <sup>8</sup>So let us celebrate the festival, not with the old bread\* of wickedness and evil, but with the new bread\* of sincerity and truth.

<sup>9</sup>When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. <sup>10</sup>But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. <sup>11</sup>I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer\* yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people.

<sup>12</sup>It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. <sup>13</sup>God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."\*

## WARNING! 6:13-20

Next on Paul's list of warnings was one on sexual immorality. Such a warning may seem old-fashioned in light of what's regularly seen in movies and on television. But God's standards haven't changed. He doesn't put the kibosh on sex outside of marriage just to be difficult. He wants to prevent us from hurting ourselves and others. ■

## 6 AVOIDING LAWSUITS WITH CHRISTIANS

When one of you has a dispute with another believer, how dare you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter instead of taking it to other believers! <sup>2</sup>Don't you realize that someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can't you decide even these little things among yourselves? <sup>3</sup>Don't you realize that we will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disputes in this life. <sup>4</sup>If you have legal disputes about such matters, why go to outside judges who are not respected by the

5:3 Or in spirit. 5:4 Or In the name of the Lord Jesus, you must call a meeting of the church. 5:5a Or so that his body will be destroyed; Greek reads for the destruction of the flesh. 5:5b Greek and the spirit. 5:5c Other manuscripts read the Lord Jesus; still others read our Lord Jesus Christ. 5:7 Greek has been sacrificed. 5:8a Greek not with old leaven. 5:8b Greek but with unleavened [bread]. 5:11 Greek a brother. 5:13 Deut 17:7. 6:6 Greek one brother. 6:8 Greek even the brothers.

Melanie is confused about sex—not the how (she learned that a long time ago), but the when. Her mom tells her to wait. Her youth director gives her the same advice. But everywhere else the message is clearly, "Go for it!" Or, "If you're still a virgin, you're a total loser!"



- Friends at school tell her how great sex is and how experienced they are.
- All of her favorite celebrities seem to hop from bed to bed on-screen and off-screen.
- During a health class lecture on birth control two weeks ago, the teacher stated, "Now, most normal young people are sexually active. I'm assuming you all are normal, so . . ."
- Melanie's boyfriend keeps telling her that having sex will strengthen their relationship.
- Almost every ad and billboard Melanie sees has a sexual twist or theme.

"What am I supposed to think?" Melanie asks. "It seems like everybody's enjoying this really fantastic experience . . . and I'm like a nun or something. Is it really so wrong if I have sex now? Is saving myself for marriage really worth it?"

Check out 1 Corinthians 6:13-20 and 1 Thessalonians 4:1-4. How would you answer Melanie?

church? <sup>5</sup>I am saying this to shame you. Isn't there anyone in all the church who is wise enough to decide these issues? <sup>6</sup>But instead, one believer\* sues another—right in front of unbelievers!

<sup>7</sup>Even to have such lawsuits with one another is a defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated? <sup>8</sup>Instead, you yourselves are the ones who do wrong and cheat even your fellow believers.\*

<sup>9</sup>Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, <sup>10</sup>or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

## AVOIDING SEXUAL SIN

<sup>12</sup>You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not everything is good for you. And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything.



## MARRIAGE

Think you know all there is to know about marriage? Relax. You aren't expected to. In fact, many married people wouldn't consider themselves experts on the subject!

Marriage was God's idea. He performed the first wedding in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:18-25), thus establishing that marriage is for one man and one woman for life.

Our relationship with God is established through his commitment toward us. Therein lies another extremely important—but often overlooked—principle for a successful marriage: commitment.

Let's talk about emotions for a minute. The emotional rush two people experience when they "fall in love" and decide to marry is wonderful. It also is a terribly inadequate basis for marriage. That "rush," as powerful and enjoyable as it may be, will undoubtedly wear off at some point. If that's what the relationship is based on—physical attraction, romantic ideals, passion—the flame may burn brightly, but it won't burn for long.

Romance, sexual attraction, and passion are tremendous God-given elements of a love relationship. But don't mistake them for the foundation of a lifelong commitment. They're like icing on a cake. Icing makes the cake much sweeter, but a diet of 100 percent refined sugar doesn't make for good health.

To survive the pressure and temptations that attack a marriage, a husband and wife have to be totally committed to making their marriage work. Even when the romance is gone (as it sometimes will be in any marriage), when the money is tight, or the urge to run out is overwhelming, Christians must stand strong on the commitment they made.

Marriage, when seen from God's perspective, can be one of his greatest gifts to his children. Whether or not to marry—and what happens if you do marry—is up to you.

<sup>13</sup>You say, "Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food." (This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can't say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. <sup>14</sup>And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead.

<sup>15</sup>Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>And don't you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one."<sup>17</sup>But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

<sup>18</sup>Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. <sup>19</sup>Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, <sup>20</sup>for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

6:16 Gen 2:24. 7:1 Greek *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

## 7 INSTRUCTION ON MARRIAGE

Now regarding the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to live a celibate life.\* <sup>2</sup>But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband.

<sup>3</sup>The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. <sup>4</sup>The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife.

<sup>5</sup>Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. <sup>6</sup>I say this as a concession, not as a command. <sup>7</sup>But I wish everyone were single, just as I am. But God gives to some the gift of marriage, and to others the gift of singleness.

<sup>8</sup>So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am. <sup>9</sup>But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust.

## TO MARRY OR NOT 7:1-9

**Because many new believers in Corinth thought that everyone should remain celibate, some engaged couples decided not to get married. But Paul advised the couples who wanted to marry that they should not deny their normal sexual drives by avoiding marriage. This does not mean, however, that people who have trouble controlling their thoughts should marry the first person who comes along. It is better to deal with the pressure of sexual desire than to deal with an unhappy marriage. ■**

<sup>10</sup>But for those who are married, I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord.\* A wife must not leave her husband. <sup>11</sup>But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be reconciled to him. And the husband must not leave his wife.

<sup>12</sup>Now, I will speak to the rest of you, though I do not have a direct command from the Lord. If a Christian man\* has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to continue living with him, he must not leave her. <sup>13</sup>And if a Christian woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to continue living with her, she must not leave him. <sup>14</sup>For the Christian wife brings holiness to her marriage, and the Christian husband\* brings holiness to his marriage. Otherwise, your children would not be holy, but now they are holy. <sup>15</sup>(But if the husband or wife who isn't a believer insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the Christian husband or wife\* is no longer bound to the other, for God has called you\* to live in peace.) <sup>16</sup>Don't you wives realize that your husbands might be saved because of you? And don't you husbands realize that your wives might be saved because of you?

<sup>17</sup>Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches. <sup>18</sup>For instance, a man who was circumcised before he became a believer should not try to reverse it. And the man who was uncircumcised when he became a believer should not be circumcised now. <sup>19</sup>For it makes no difference whether or not a man has been circumcised. The important thing is to keep God's commandments.

<sup>20</sup>Yes, each of you should remain as you were when God called you. <sup>21</sup>Are you a slave? Don't let that worry you—but if you get a chance to be free, take it. <sup>22</sup>And remember, if you were a slave when the Lord called you, you are now free in the Lord. And if you were free when the Lord called you, you are now a slave of Christ. <sup>23</sup>God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world.\* <sup>24</sup>Each of you, dear brothers and sisters,\* should remain as you were when God first called you.

7:10 See Matt 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18. 7:12 Greek a brother. 7:14 Greek the brother. 7:15a Greek the brother or sister. 7:15b Some manuscripts read us. 7:23 Greek don't become slaves of people. 7:24 Greek brothers; also in 7:29. 7:26 Or the pressures of life.

<sup>25</sup>Now regarding your question about the young women who are not yet married. I do not have a command from the Lord for them. But the Lord in his mercy has given me wisdom that can be trusted, and I will share it with you. <sup>26</sup>Because of the present crisis,\* I think it is best to remain as you are. <sup>27</sup>If you have a wife, do not seek to end the marriage. If you do not have a wife, do not seek to get married. <sup>28</sup>But if you do get married, it is not a sin. And if a young woman gets married, it is not a sin. However, those who get married at this time will have troubles, and I am trying to spare you those problems.

<sup>29</sup>But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that remains is very short. So from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage. <sup>30</sup>Those who weep or who rejoice or who buy things should not be absorbed by their weeping or their joy or their possessions. <sup>31</sup>Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away.

<sup>32</sup>I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please him. <sup>33</sup>But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. <sup>34</sup>His interests are divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband. <sup>35</sup>I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible.

## BE CONTENT 7:17-24

**Have you ever had a bad case of the "if only" blues? These are the feelings you get when you think that life would be complete if only you had what you want. "Life would be perfect if only I had someone to go out with." "I would be successful if only I weren't stuck in the family I'm in." Paul advised the believers to "live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you" (7:17). In other words, be content. Does this mean you have to pretend that you're happy to be single when you don't really feel glad? Nope. It does mean accepting where you are instead of blaming God or demanding that he change your situation right now. ■**

<sup>36</sup>But if a man thinks that he's treating his fiancée improperly and will inevitably give in to his passion, let him marry her as he wishes. It is not a sin. <sup>37</sup>But if he has decided firmly not to marry and there is no urgency and he can control his passion, he does well not to marry. <sup>38</sup>So the person who marries his fiancée does well, and the person who doesn't marry does even better.

<sup>39</sup>A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If

her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but only if he loves the Lord.\* <sup>40</sup>But in my opinion it would be better for her to stay single, and I think I am giving you counsel from God's Spirit when I say this.

## NO PROBLEMS? 7:29-40

Many people think that finding the right boyfriend/girlfriend or getting married will solve all their problems. Having someone special in your life is cool. But no relationship—even a marriage—is a “cure for whatever ails you”! For example, here are a few of the problems marriage won't solve: (1) loneliness (some married people are really lonely), (2) sexual temptation, (3) satisfaction of one's deepest emotional needs. There is only one reliable solution for anyone: trust God to solve your problems. ■

## 8 FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

Now regarding your question about food that has been offered to idols. Yes, we know that “we all have knowledge” about this issue. But while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church. <sup>2</sup>Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. <sup>3</sup>But the person who loves God is the one whom God recognizes.\*

<sup>4</sup>So, what about eating meat that has been offered to idols? Well, we all know that an idol is not really a god and that there is only one God. <sup>5</sup>There may be so-called gods both in heaven and on earth, and some people actually worship many gods and many lords. <sup>6</sup>But we know that there is only one God, the Father, who created everything, and we live for him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom God made everything and through whom we have been given life.

<sup>7</sup>However, not all believers know this. Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated. <sup>8</sup>It's true that we can't win God's approval by what we eat. We don't lose anything if we don't eat it, and we don't gain anything if we do.

<sup>9</sup>But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble. <sup>10</sup>For if others see you—with your “superior knowledge”—eating in the temple of an idol, won't they be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been offered to an idol? <sup>11</sup>So because of your superior knowledge, a weak believer\* for whom Christ died will be destroyed. <sup>12</sup>And when you sin against other believers\* by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ. <sup>13</sup>So if what I eat causes another believer to sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live—for I don't want to cause another believer to stumble.

7:39 Greek *but only in the Lord*. 8:3 Some manuscripts read *the person who loves has full knowledge*. 8:11 Greek *brother*; also in 8:13. 8:12 Greek *brothers*. 9:3 Greek *those who examine me*. 9:5 Greek *Cephas*. 9:9 Deut 25:4.

## FREEDOM 8:1-13

You may have heard people talk about *legalism and freedom in Christ*. Although Paul doesn't mention the word *legalism*, it's implied in his message to the Corinthians. On one side is the freedom that Jesus offers through his forgiveness of sins. On the other side is legalism, which is all about keeping every rule in order to look “good” or to earn God's favor. Jesus often reprimanded the Pharisees for their love of rules, rather than people.

Still, with freedom comes responsibility. Some actions may be perfectly all right for us, but may harm someone new to the faith. As Paul warned, “You must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble.” ■

## 9 PAUL GIVES UP HIS RIGHTS

Am I not as free as anyone else? Am I not an apostle? Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord with my own eyes? Isn't it because of my work that you belong to the Lord? <sup>2</sup>Even if others think I am not an apostle, I certainly am to you. You yourselves are proof that I am the Lord's apostle.

<sup>3</sup>This is my answer to those who question my authority.\* <sup>4</sup>Don't we have the right to live in your homes and share your meals? <sup>5</sup>Don't we have the right to bring a Christian wife with us as the other disciples and the Lord's brothers do, and as Peter\* does? <sup>6</sup>Or is it only Barnabas and I who have to work to support ourselves?

<sup>7</sup>What soldier has to pay his own expenses? What farmer plants a vineyard and doesn't have the right to eat some of its fruit? What shepherd cares for a flock of sheep and isn't allowed to drink some of the milk? <sup>8</sup>Am I expressing merely a human opinion, or does the law say the same thing? <sup>9</sup>For the law of Moses says, “You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain.”\* Was God thinking only about oxen when he said this? <sup>10</sup>Wasn't he actually speaking to us? Yes, it was written for us, so that the one who plows and the one who threshes the grain might both expect a share of the harvest.

<sup>11</sup>Since we have planted spiritual seed among you, aren't we entitled to a harvest of physical food and drink? <sup>12</sup>If you support others who preach to you, shouldn't we have an even greater right to be supported? But we have never used this right. We would rather put up with anything than be an obstacle to the Good News about Christ.

<sup>13</sup>Don't you realize that those who work in the temple get their meals from the offerings brought to the temple? And those who serve at the altar get a share of the sacrificial offerings. <sup>14</sup>In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the Good News should be supported by those who benefit from it. <sup>15</sup>Yet I have never used any of these rights. And I am not writing this to suggest that I want to start now. In fact, I would rather die than lose my right to boast about preaching without charge. <sup>16</sup>Yet



## Making Choices on Sensitive Issues

All of us make hundreds of choices every day. Most choices have no right or wrong attached to them—like what to wear or what to eat. But we always face decisions that carry a little more weight. We don't want to do wrong, and we don't want to cause others to do wrong. So how can we make right decisions?

### IF I CHOOSE ONE COURSE OF ACTION . . .

- . . . will it help my witness for Christ? (9:19-22)
- . . . am I motivated by a desire to help others to know Christ? (9:23; 10:33)
- . . . will it help me do my best? (9:25)
- . . . is it against a specific command in Scripture and thus will cause me to sin? (10:12)
- . . . will it be best and helpful? (10:23, 33)
- . . . will I be thinking only of myself or do I truly care about the other person? (10:24)
- . . . will I be acting lovingly or selfishly? (10:28-31)
- . . . will it glorify God? (10:31)
- . . . will it encourage someone else to sin? (10:32)

preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn't preach the Good News!

<sup>17</sup>If I were doing this on my own initiative, I would deserve payment. But I have no choice, for God has given me this sacred trust. <sup>18</sup>What then is my pay? It is the opportunity to preach the Good News without charging anyone. That's why I never demand my rights when I preach the Good News.

<sup>19</sup>Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ.

<sup>20</sup>When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. <sup>21</sup>When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law,\* I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ.

<sup>22</sup>When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. <sup>23</sup>I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

<sup>24</sup>Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! <sup>25</sup>All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. <sup>26</sup>So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just

shadowboxing. <sup>27</sup>I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

## 10 LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY

I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters,\* about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. <sup>2</sup>In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as fol-

lowers of Moses. <sup>3</sup>All of them ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all of them drank the same spiritual water. For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Yet God was not pleased with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup>These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did, <sup>7</sup>or worship idols as some of them did. As the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged in pagan revelry."<sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup>And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day.

<sup>10</sup>Nor should we put Christ\* to the test, as some of them did and then died from snakebites. <sup>11</sup>And don't grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death. <sup>12</sup>These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.

God is faithful.  
He will not allow  
the temptation  
to be more than  
you can stand.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13