

## **1 Corinthians Study Guide**

- Introduction: 1 Corinthians 1.1-9
- Problem ONE: 1 Corinthians 1.10-4.21
- Problem TWO: 1 Corinthians 5.1-13
- Problem THREE: 1 Corinthians 6.1-20
- Problem FOUR: 1 Corinthians 7.1-39
- Problem FIVE: 1 Corinthians 8.1—13 & 1 Corinthians 10.1-11.1
- Problem SIX: 1 Corinthians 9.1-27
- Problem SEVEN: 1 Corinthians 11.2-16
- Problem EIGHT: 1 Corinthians 11.17-34
- Problem NINE: 1 Corinthians 12.1-14.40
- Problem TEN: 1 Corinthians 15.1-58
- Conclusion: 1 Corinthians 16.1-24

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## **THE SIXTH PROBLEM IN THE CHURCH AT CORINTH**

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The translation quoted here is the New International Version (NIV)

### **FIGHTING OVER WHAT TO PAY A PASTOR** **1 Corinthians 9.9-17**

If it was not enough they could not get along with each other in the church they also had problems when it came to how they dealt with their pastors (elders) in the church at Corinth. There was a disagreement over if they should be paid for leading the church.

When I (Bob Highlands III) first went in the ministry I served a small church in Oklahoma. Their was a board member who loved to tell me at every meeting, "We let the Lord keep you humble and we will keep you poor," AND that is exactly what they did.

This lesson is aimed at answering three simple questions.

1. What rights does a pastor have in his personal life?
2. Should the pastor of a church be paid?
3. How much should a pastor be paid?

### **PAUL'S POSITION BEFORE GOD**

- ♦ Read Acts 1.21-22 They were going to fill Judas' position as one of the twelve apostles of Christ. What were the requirements they were going to use to select this person?

- ◆ Read 1 Cor. 9.1-2
- ◆ 1 Cor. 9.1 What four ways does Paul use to describe his relationship and position in the Kingdom of God?
- ◆ 1 Cor. 9. 2 Does everyone see Paul as an apostle? Why would they hold this opinion?
- ◆ Why does Paul feel they should see him as an apostle?

#### **PAUL'S POSITION BEFORE MEN**

- ◆ Read 1 Corinthians 9.3-7
- ◆ 1 Cor. 9.3 What position is Paul taking in presenting his case to the church at Corinth?
- ◆ 1 Cor. 9.4 What basic right does Paul ask them about?
- ◆ 1 Cor. 9.5 What are the other Apostles all allowed to do?
- ◆ 1 Cor. 9.6 What type of work is Paul referring to here?
- ◆ 1 Cor. 9.7 What Point is Paul trying to make concerning income and money here?

- ◆ What attitude should a church use when considering paying their pastors?

NOTE: The subject of paying a pastor is as complicated as it is sensitive. It is not the responsibility of the church to keep the pastor poor, but it is the responsibility of the church to pay a fair income. On the other hand anyone who is preaching the gospel because they can get rich is also wrong. In the end it is a balancing act every church, pastor, board and believer has to examine and consider. Even as each pastor is responsible before God for what he preaches each church is responsible to God for how they treat and pay their pastors. Paul was clear that he was referring to those who *"work hard at both preaching and teaching."* <sup>1 Timothy 5.17</sup> The question of paying a pastor and how much will not go away until the Lord returns. Yet I must agree with Paul as recorded in the New Living Translation, *"Those who work deserve their pay!"* <sup>1 Timothy 5.18</sup>

Paul's note to the church at Philippi speaks volumes about the bond between those who receive from each other spiritual and physical blessings.

*How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty.* <sup>Philippians 4.10-14</sup>

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- ◆ What is the difference in how this word is used from example one and example two.
- ◆ Read 1 Timothy 5.17-18
- ◆ According to verse 18 what is this section about?
- ◆ Which way would the word be better translated in verse 17? Double Honor or wages. Why?
- ◆ Read Luke 10.7 What was Jesus' attitude toward paying those who shared the good news with others?
- ◆ **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**
- ◆ What does Paul teach when it comes to paying someone who preaches and teaches the Gospel to local churches?
- ◆ How much did Paul teach they should be paid?
- ◆ What was Jesus' attitude about paying those who share the Gospel?

### **SPIRITUAL SOWING—MATERIAL BLESSINGS**

- ◆ Read 1 Corinthians 9.8-14
- ◆ Vs. 8 What is Paul Going to use to help them understand his lesson to them?
- ◆ Why would this be a something much of the church at Corinth would understand?
- ◆ Vs. 9 Why would this be the best way of treating an animal who is threshing out the grain?
- ◆ Vs. 10 What is the key point Paul wants them to see here about why people do their regular jobs?
- ◆ Vs. 11 What is Paul wanting to know about those who are called to preach and teach in a local church when it comes to getting paid?
- ◆ NOTE: Remember Paul is not currently at Corinth and they have had other pastors come and go at this church in his absence.
- ◆ Vs. 12 Why would Paul feel he had the right of being considered as some who should be paid for preaching and teaching in the church at Corinth?

- ◆ Did Paul take any money from them while he was there setting up the church? What reason did he give for this?
- ◆ Vs. 13 What was one of the ways the priest and Levites were paid in the temple for their service?
- ◆ Vs. 14 How are those who share the Gospel supposed to meet their personal financial needs?
- ◆ What authority does Paul site for this practice?

#### **PAUL'S PERSONAL APPROACH AT CORINTH EXPLAINED**

- ◆ Read 1 Corinthians 9.15-18
- ◆ Vs. 15 What was Paul's attitude toward getting paid by the church at Corinth?
- ◆ Vs. 16 Even though he was not getting paid why did he share the message with them?
- ◆ Vs. 17 What would be a wrong reason for Paul to share the gospel with them?

#### **◆ EXAMPLE ONE**

- ◆ Read Matthew 27.6 Here the word is translated
  - \* money in the NIV;
  - \* price in the NASB;
  - \* payment in the NLT.
- ◆ Read Acts 5.3 Here the word is translated
  - \* money in the NIV;
  - \* price in the NASB;
  - \* money in the NLT.
- ◆ Read 1 Corinthians 6. 20 Here the word is translated
  - \* price in the NIV;
  - \* price in the NASB;
  - \* price in the NLT.
- ◆ In these three examples what is the concept behind the word and how it is used?

#### **◆ EXAMPLE TWO**

- ◆ Read Romans 2.10 Here the word is translated
  - \* honor in the NIV;
  - \* honor in the NASB;
  - \* honor in the NLT.
- ◆ 2 Timothy 2.20 Here the word is translated
  - \* noble purposes in the NIV;
  - \* honor in the NASB;
  - \* special occasions in the NLT.
- ◆ Hebrews 3.3 Here the word is translated
  - \* honor in the NIV;
  - \* honor in the NASB;
  - \* more praise in the NLT.
- ◆ In these three examples what is the concept behind the word and how it is used?

### **HOW MUCH TO PAY A PREACHER?**

- ◆ Read 1 Timothy 5.17-18
- ◆ Vs. 18 What is Paul talking to Timothy about?
  
- ◆ What does he use as his illustration to make his point here?
  
- ◆ Where else did he make this same point that was covered in this lesson?
  
- ◆ Vs. 17 Who is Paul talking about here in this section?
  
- ◆ What is their responsibility to the local church?
  
- ◆ What does Paul say they should receive for doing this for the local church?
  
- ◆ Note the word translated HONOR here is the Greek work *τιμή* - pronounced 'time.' The word is used 40 times in the New Testament and has two key ways it can be interpreted. We will look at three examples of both ways here.

- ◆ Vs. 18 Even though he had not been paid by them was it something he could have expected from them? Explain your answer.

### **PAUL'S APPROACH IN HIS MINISTRY TO VARIOUS GROUPS**

- ◆ Read 1 Corinthians 9.19-23
- ◆ Vs. 19 What was Paul's attitude when it came to serving others as he share the Good News about Jesus?
  
- ◆ Vs. 20 How did Paul work to relate to the Jews?
  
- ◆ Why would he do this and how would it help them understand Jesus?
  
- ◆ Vs. 21 How did Paul work to relate to the Gentiles (non-Jews)?
  
- ◆ Why would he do this and how would it help them understand Jesus?
  
- ◆ Vs. 22 What is Paul's approach to ministering to various people?

- ◆ How could this be applied to the church in today's world?
- ◆ Vs. 23 What is Paul's personal goal in sharing the good news about Jesus in this way?

### **WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A WINNER BEFORE GOD**

- ◆ Read 1 Corinthians 9.24-27
- ◆ Vs. 24 In the race of life what is the ultimate goal of every believer?
- ◆ What does this mean to you?
- ◆ Vs. 25 What is the key to becoming a winner?
- ◆ How should a believer apply this to their personal lives?
- ◆ Vs. 26 What two athletic events does Paul compare the believers life to?
- ◆ What is the aim or goal the believer is living for?

- ◆ Vs. 27 NOTE: the word discipline literally means "to strike under the eye." Paul has just used a boxing illustration in verse 26 and follows up with the concept that the believer needs to know how to take a punch. How would a believer get ready for a spiritual or physical fight of this type?
- ◆ What was Paul's greatest fear in sharing the good news about Jesus with the world?

### **REVIEW**

- ◆ What rights did apostles and preachers have? See 1 Corinthians 9.4-6
- ◆ What is the responsibility of a church to someone who served them as a preacher and teacher of the gospel message of Jesus? See 1 Corinthians 9.14

That leaves one question still to answer. How much should they be paid for preaching and teaching the gospel? Paul does not answer this in the letters to the church at Corinth but he does handle it in another letter.