The Love that Confronts

Chapter 3
Audio Lesson: New Testament #46

Objective: To understand Paul's instructions to the Corinthians about spiritual leaders, judging others, and how to deal with sin in the church.

Judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

—1 Corinthians 4:5

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

—1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Many of the Corinthians had been judging Paul favorably above the other leaders in their church. But Paul told them that their favorable judgment meant little to him because he did not even feel qualified to judge himself, much less accept the judgment others were rendering about him. Since a man's heart is often deeper than his own knowledge, Paul taught that we are to leave the judgment of men's hearts to God.

The Bible does not teach that we should never judge another person for any reason. Sometimes it is necessary to make judgments about those who persist in their sin. It is our responsibility as a member of the family of God to confront those who are harming themselves or others within the body of Christ. Confronting another brother or sister in the Lord is difficult but essential. Our strategy for their restoration to fellowship with the Lord and the body of Christ should be to help them understand how harmful their actions are to their own lives and to their relationships. Our motive for confronting them must always be love, and with the goal of restoration.

1. True or **false**? Paul began his letter to the Corinthians with general solutions to their problems and then addressed specific problems near the end of the letter.

2. **True** or false? Spiritual gifts are evidence that the Holy Spirit is on us, and love is the evidence that the Spirit is within us.

3. True or **false**? In general, the Corinthians had no difficulty believing in the resurrection of Jesus.

4. True or **false**? The apostles are the source of the Christian faith.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. How should we perceive spiritual leaders?
      a. As the supreme authorities in our lives
      b. As servants of God and stewards of His mysteries
      c. As people whom God loves more than others
      d. As people who are more holy and pure than others

6. When Christians polarize around spiritual leaders, what does that indicate about their spiritual maturity?
      a. They are like spiritual babies—still very immature.
      b. They are discerning and mature enough to distinguish between true and false teachers.
      c. They really have never known Jesus or been filled with His Spirit.
      d. They are becoming as mature as the leader they follow.

7. How do ministers become effective spiritual leaders?
      a. By getting the right education
      b. Through the gifts God has given them
      c. By popular opinion
      d. Through forcing their authority on others

8. In what ways should a Christian judge others?
      a. We should never judge others under any circumstances.
      b. We should only judge those who are less righteous than ourselves.
      c. We should judge sin and not tolerate it in our fellowship, but we should not try to judge the motives of people's hearts.
      d. We have the mind of Christ, so we are free to judge anyone for anything we want to.

9. According to Paul's letter to the Corinthians, how should our belief in Jesus affect our moral behavior?

  a. Believing in Jesus changes our hearts but does not affect our morality.

  b. Believing in Jesus makes us want to be righteous but cannot help us live righteously.

  c. Believing in Jesus should change our hearts, our minds, and our moral behavior so that we leave our sin behind us.

  d. Believing in Jesus makes us so perfect that we never sin again.

10. How should Christians deal with open, intentional sin in the church?

  a. We should care enough to confront those who are persistently immoral and urge them to repent.

  b. We are not permitted to judge anyone, so there is nothing we can do when other Christians sin.

  c. We should notice when other Christians sin and report their immorality to everyone we know.

  d. We should not even associate with Christians who make minor mistakes or who sin once or twice and then repent.

11. What is the right motivation for confronting someone about sin?

  a. Anger

  b. Jealousy

  c. Self-righteousness

  d. Love

In what areas of your life do you think you need to mature most as a Christian? How can the Holy Spirit help you in those areas? What area will you ask the Lord to help you in this week?

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Thank God for the spiritual leaders He has brought into your life. Ask Him to help you continue to grow into greater maturity in Christ in your mind, your heart, and your actions.

Going Deeper

1. How can we relate to and apply the teaching of Paul in chapter 4 that we are to judge nothing until the Lord comes, and then in chapter 5 he rebuked the Church in Corinth for not judging the immoral man? _____
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2. Explain and apply the two specific kinds of judging in chapters 4 and 5. _____
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3. What is the Lord going to do when He returns that will make it possible for people like Paul and you and me to be favorably or unfavorably judged? _____
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4. Why is it so very important for us to apply the teaching of church discipline, as profiled in chapter 5? _____
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5. How can you summarize and apply the specific solution Paul prescribed for the problem that they were suing one another in the courts of Corinth? _____
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6. What is the application to the way Paul taught the Corinthian church (in chapters 3 and 4) to regard the role and function of those who had led them to Christ and nurtured them in their journey of faith? _____
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7. How are we to personally apply the clear statement by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:13 that our body was not made for sex but to be a temple of the Lord? _____
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