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## **Unholy cocktail - sex, idols, church!**

Talks from 1 Corinthians 5-11



**Paul Harrington**

**TRINITY CITY - SUNDAYS 5PM & 7PM**

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*all welcome*

*Integrated Bible Study*



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## How to get the best value out of these Bible study guides...

**...if you're using these guides in a small group,** it is helpful for you to have done preparatory work before you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of the group.

**...if you're doing these studies individually,** make sure you let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with prayer, asking God to change your heart and life so that you - with God's people - might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

# 1 You Mustn't Judge

## 1 Corinthians 5

### *Getting Started.*

1. Do you think we elevate sexual sin above other sin in our Church? (i.e. in practice treat it as worse than other sin).
2. Our society treats matters of sexuality as a private/personal choice. How does a biblical approach vary from this?

### *Digging Deeper*

3. Why is the report in 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 so shocking?
4. It might be worth reminding ourselves of background theme of pride in the first 4 chapters – check out 1 Corinthians 1:29, 31; 4:21; 4:5; 5:2, 6).
5. In 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 a process for Church discipline is outlined.
  - What does it mean to hand someone over to Satan?  
(How does this tie in with verse 2?)
  - What is the goal of the discipline?

## 4 | 1 Corinthians 5-11

6. Why is the Church discipline important for the rest of the Church? (verses 6-8)

7. How does our thinking about relationships and sin vary with respect to Christians and unbelievers? (verses 9-13).

*What does this mean for us?*

8. Should we exercise Church discipline like this today?  
What would hold us back from doing so?

9. 1 Corinthians 5:11 identifies a range of sin (greed, idolatry, slander, etc) How would we identify and deal with a sin like greed today?

10. How do we stop from becoming a 'spot it and stop it' Church (i.e. a Church which is harsh legalistic and unloving) while still retaining a concern for holiness?

## 2 I Want Justice And I Want It Now!

### 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

#### *Getting Started*

1. Say you get run over (accidentally!) in the Church car park by someone in your gathering, would it be appropriate to sue them for compensation given this would be paid by the government through the compulsory insurance/ registration premium?

#### *Digging Deeper*

2. Why is Paul so against Christians taking one another to secular courts to sort out their legal problems?
3. What is the logic of the way the secular/ unbelieving / ungodly judges are contrasted with the saints / brother judges?
4. Do you think we should see legal disputes more from a spiritual perspective (among believers)?

## 6 | 1 Corinthians 5-11

5. Why does Paul suggest it is better to be cheated and wronged rather than be stressful in a lawsuit against a brother in Christ? (verse 7)

*What does this mean for us?*

6. In what areas do you think we are blind to the 'spiritual' dimension of a fight between fellow Christians?
7. As a society we are big on our individual rights. When is this likely to cut across our Christian family responsibilities?
8. What does Paul warn us 'not to be deceived' about in verse 9?
9. Why is the example in verse 11 one that should give us great hope?



## 8 | 1 Corinthians 5-11

5. Clearly prostitution (probably temple cult prostitution) was an issue for believers. What does it mean "to have sex with a prostitute is to become one with her in body"?
6. What makes sexual immorality different from other sin (verse 18)?
7. What does it mean to say "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (verse 19)?"

*What does this mean for us?*

8. Why doesn't Christian freedom lead to sin?
9. Why does Paul see our bodies as so important?
10. Sexual sin causes untold pain and heartache. Why is that?
11. List all the motivations in this passage to fight sexual sin. How could you apply these to the scenario that we began this study with?

# 4 God, Sex And Marriage

## 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

*Getting Started*

Jot down some of the stereotypes that our society operates with in relation to marriage and compare with a Christian perspective.

<b>MARRIAGE</b>	
<b>Non Believer</b>	<b>Christian</b>

*Digging Deeper*

1. Chapters 5-7 form a block of teaching on sexual holiness. Here in 1 Corinthians 7:1 Paul starts to address very specific questions raised by the Corinthians i.e. 'Now for the matters you wrote about...'

## **10** | **1 Corinthians 5-11**

2. Read through verse 1-9 and think about the following:
  - a) Should Christians remain single or marry?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) What are the reasons given to marry?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c) What is the issue that overrides the question of whether to marry or remain single (especially verse 2 compare with 1 Corinthians 6:18)?
  
3. How does Paul express the obligations of married couples to each other?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What are the instructions about divorce and separation? How does this vary if a believer is married to an unbeliever?

5. What does it mean that an unbelieving spouse can be 'sanctified' through a believing spouse?

*What does this mean for us?*

3. How would you respond to someone who said Christianity was 'anti-sex'?
4. Why is it important to remember that ultimately marriage is not permanent?
5. God is against divorce. So why does he provide circumstances where marriages may end?
6. What does this teach us about the first priority for both married and unmarried people?

5

# God, Sex And Singleness

1 Corinthians 7:17-40

### Getting Started

What are some of the stereotypes our society operates with in relation to singleness and how do these vary from the way Christians' think about being single?

<b>SINGLENESS</b>	
<b>Non Believer</b>	<b>Believer</b>

### Digging Deeper

1. What does it mean 'retain the place in life the Lord has assigned' (verse 17)?

-What does it mean for married people (verses 10-16)?

-What does it mean for single people?

2. What is the argument for remaining in the same situation you were in when you became a Christian (verses 17-24)?
  
3. How should the shortness of the time impact our thinking about marriage and singleness?
  
4. What does it mean for a married man to live as if he is not married (verse 29)?

*What does this mean for us?*

5. What is the big overriding issue that should dominate our lives (beyond whether we are married or not)?
  
6. If you are single what does it mean to use this gift/ situation of singleness to devote yourself to the work of the Lord?
  
7. Do you think our church puts pressure on people to either stay single or get married?
  
8. A lot of the messages in our culture link sex with being satisfied and fulfilled. How does 1 Corinthians 7 operate as a corrective to this thinking?

## 6 My Rights vs Your Weak Conscience

### 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

#### *Getting Started*

Your regular youth group/bible study meeting has just finished and someone in the group suggests going to the Casino for a drink, listen to a band and put a few dollars through the poker machines. A couple of people in the group are uncomfortable with the idea of going to the Casino while a few others ask whether it is appropriate to gamble. How do you work through this issue?

#### *Digging Deeper*

Context: 1 Corinthians 8-10 interact with the issues of idolatry and the temple culture. Corinth was a very diverse religious culture. The Corinthians had questions like:

- Should they be present when food is sacrificed to idols?
- Should Christians eat food sacrificed to idols in the pagan temple context or in the home of a pagan acquaintance?
- Could Christians buy and eat food sacrificed to pagan idols?

*NOTE: the same response to a question formula as at 1 Corinthians 7:1 starts 8:1*

*'Now concerning food sacrificed to idols...'*

1. What do mature Christians know about food sacrificed to idols? (verses 4-6)
  
2. What is the danger with this knowledge? (verses 1-3)
  
3. How is this danger addressed? (verses 1-3)

4. Why can a knowledge without love stop you from knowing God?
5. What does it mean to have a weak conscience and how is this linked to lack of knowledge? (verses 7-8)
6. What is more important than exercising freedom that is informed by knowledge? (verses 9-13)
7. How is the cross the key to the relationship between those who understand their freedom and the weak?

*What does this mean for us?*

8. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Adelaide, what are some of the issues we wrestle with in our culture where we struggle to work out our freedoms (and where to limit them) for the sake of a brother/sister with a weaker conscience?
9. There are situations where it feels like the person with the 'weak' conscience is the 'strong' one because they have very definite views on a topic and they have been a Christian for a long time. Does that affect this 'weaker' brother/sister instruction?
10. Can you think of situations where you need to be careful:
  - not to upset a recent convert?
  - not to distress a Christian from another cultural background?

## Free To Be A Slave

### 1 Corinthians 9:1-27

#### *Getting Started*

1. Do you think pastors of churches should:
  - a) Live at the same standard as those they minister to?; *or*
  - b) Live above the level of most in their congregation?; *or*
  - c) Live below the average standard of living of those in their congregation?

Why?

#### *Digging Deeper*

2. Read through 1 Corinthians 9:1-18
  - a) What rights does Paul have?
  - b) Why do you think he is highlighting his rights here?
  - c) What rights has he given up?
  - d) What do verses 9-10 mean (compare with Deuteronomy 25:4)?
  - e) Why does he refuse his 'right' to financial support for the Corinthians (verses 15-18)?

3. What lesson is Paul aiming to teach the Corinthians in verses 19-23?
  
4. How do the two pictures in verses 24-27 illustrate his point?
  
5. What disqualification (verse 27) does Paul have in mind?

*What does this mean for us?*

6. How has this chapter affected your thinking on how we support those in vocational ministry roles?
  
7. What are ways we can 'become all things to all men' to win some to Christ?
  
8. Can we go too far to win others to Christ?
  
9. *A personal question:* In what area of your life can you change your attitudes and decisions resulting in sacrificial lifestyle choices to further the gospel?

## Contemporary Idolatry

### 1 Corinthians 10:1-11:1

#### *Getting Started*

Say you and a couple of friends from work decide to check out a new Indian restaurant in North Adelaide. You are half way through the meal when you notice a statue in the corner where the owners are burning incense. Do you:

- a) Pretend you haven't seen it
- b) Rush over and destroy the idol
- c) Immediately leave (without paying)
- d) Point it out to your friends and ask what they think about it.

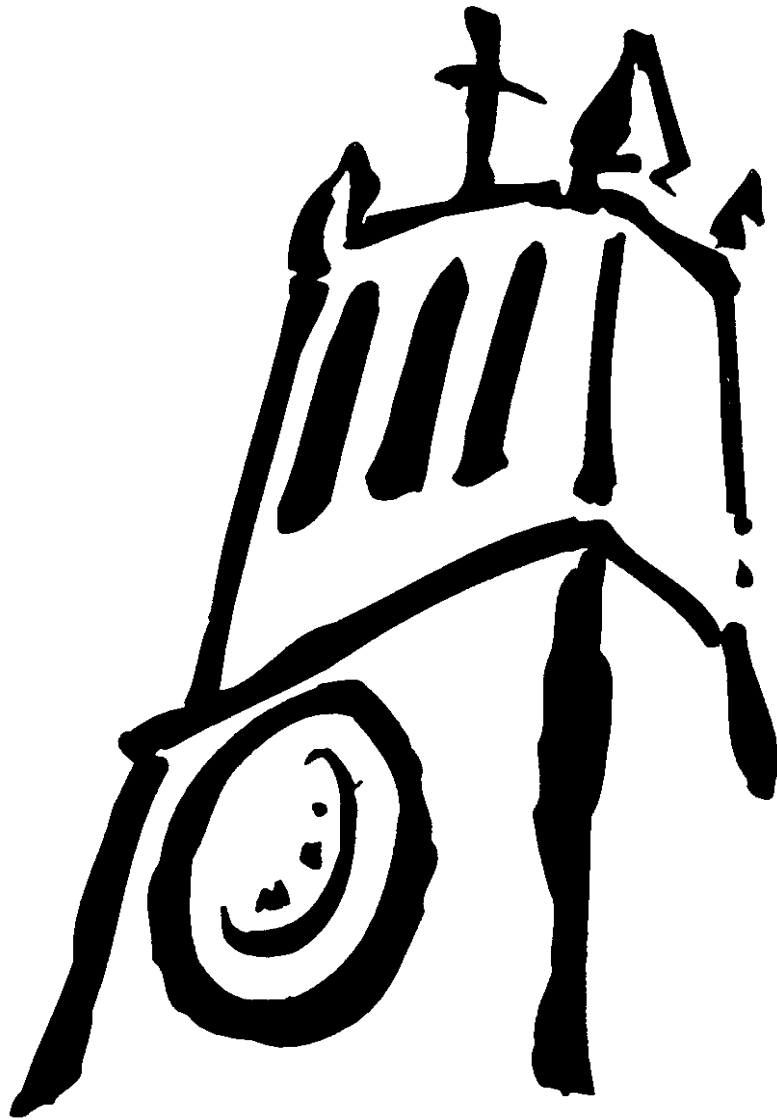
#### *Digging Deeper*

1. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-11:1. What are the big issues? What do you think were the real problems Christian in Corinth were struggling with?
  
2. What is the idolatry described in verses 1-10?
  - a) What is the link between pagan revelry and sexual immorality (verses 7-8)?
  
3. Does Paul think the idols represent real gods (verses 19-20)?
  
4. Why does Paul warn against Christians liking themselves to sacrifices offered to idols (work through the argument of verses 16-22)?

5. Were the Corinthians free to eat meat sacrificed to idols? When is it wrong to eat such food (verses 27-30)?
  
6. What is the controlling principle that governs Paul's thinking about his behavior with both believers and unbelievers (1 Corinthians 10:31 – 11:1)?

*What does this mean for us?*

7. What are the idols that seduce us today?
  
8. Australia is becoming increasingly multi-faith. Does this mean we will have to be more careful with this 'meat offered to idols' issue?
  
9. *DISCUSS:* A friend invites you around for a meal and it becomes clear that he serves you food he has offered to his god. What should you do?
  
10. How can we change our behavior to make our presentation of the gospel more compelling to unbelievers?



Holy Trinity Adelaide  
87 North Terrace  
Adelaide SA 5000  
t: 8213 7300  
[office@trinitycity.org.au](mailto:office@trinitycity.org.au)  
[www.trinitycity.org.au](http://www.trinitycity.org.au)