

**Women's Bible Study – Autumn Ridge Church**  
**Unity in Morality – 1 Cor. 5 & 6**  
**February 15, 2017 ~ Svea Merry**



Ladies, we've got some juicy stuff to talk about today! I'll admit to you that when I read through these chapters after we divvied up our teaching assignments, I made an attempt at switching weeks, because in these two chapters, we've got a guy sleeping with his stepmom followed by an instruction to give him over to Satan for destruction, an apparent list of sinners who won't make it into heaven, and a discussion of sex with temple prostitutes. Makes a gal wanna go back to studying Numbers, doesn't it?!

BUT, as has been my experience 100% of the time, after I studied these chapters in depth, I fell in love with them and discovered incredible truths that speak into our lives and help us to become more Christ like. Paul's point is not to shock us with salacious sin, but to present three extremely relevant underlying principles, principles as important for us today as they were for the church in Corinth. So, lest you think you're off the hook this week because these are not sins you've struggled with, think again. The three principles Paul gets at in these chapters is our attitude towards sin in our fellow believers, our attitude when we face conflict with them, and our attitude about caring for our bodies. Sound relevant?!

My goal for this morning is that you will gain a strong grasp of what's in these chapters, what Paul's words meant to the Corinthians, and by extension, what they mean for us today. You'll see I structured your outline in that way, and so if you like to take notes, I hope I've made it easy for you to organize your thoughts that way. These two chapters cover three distinct issues, and I'll just let you know up front that I'm going to handle them distinctly, but what they all have in common is the importance of our attitude in how we deal with these issues. So let's start with chapter 5 and explore our attitude towards sin.

Attitude towards Sin (1 Cor 5)

Turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 5. While you're finding it, I'll remind you that in these first 6 chapters, Paul is responding to some bad stuff he knew was going on in their church. In chapter 7 through the rest of the book, he'll answer specific questions they had for him, but up through chapter 6, he clearly feels the need to address certain issues before he gets to their questions.

Verse 1 starts, *"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife."* Whoo, and we're off, right? Now, as you've heard before, the Corinthians were famous throughout the Mediterranean world for having an anything-goes attitude towards sex, but this kind of incest, then as it would be now, was scandalous even amongst the non-Christian community.

So this sets up an interesting question. Why is the Corinthian church allowing this sinful scandal to go on, and how should they, and by extension every church, handle it when someone in their community is living in blatant, in-your-face, unrepentant sin?

The Corinthian church knew the truth that because of Christ, all our sins are forgiven and we are covered in grace. But they took it to an unhealthy extreme and lived as if it didn't matter if they sinned or not because grace would wash it all away. We'll see in the next chapter that they had a common saying "All things are lawful for me." They reveled in the idea that since they were not

obligated to live according to Mosaic Law, they could basically get away with anything because God's grace covered it all.

And that's a good point for us to stop and reflect on for a moment. It is true that for all who believe and accept God's gift of salvation, Jesus's death and resurrection paid the price for every sin in our past, present, and future. But to intentionally indulge in sin is to feed off of what Dietrich Bonhoeffer termed, "cheap grace." It is taking advantage of God's gift of forgiving our sins. It is like the entitled college kid whose dad gave him a credit card to cover expenses, but abused the privilege and racked up a ridiculous bill with frivolous, irresponsible purchases. Paul says in a different letter, in his letter to the Romans, "Should we go on sinning so that we can receive more grace? By no means!" And here's a fun fact. Anyone know where Paul was when he wrote that letter to the Romans? Corinth.

This was the mindset of the Corinthian church. They indulged in this cheap grace, flaunting it even, claiming pride over their acceptance of incredible sin because they had God's grace as the ultimate get-out-jail-free card.

So, Paul continues in verse 2:

*<sup>2</sup> And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? <sup>3</sup> For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. <sup>4</sup> So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, <sup>5</sup> hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord."*

Wow, Paul. What does he mean by handing this guy over to Satan?! Well, if we only focus on the "handing him over to Satan" part, we won't get it. Paul's whole instruction is to hand him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. The focus here is to do whatever it takes for this dear brother to be eternally saved. Paul's heart is not hard or cold towards this man. Quite the opposite. He is devastated to hear of this guy living a life that could destroy himself and the church around him, so drastic actions are warranted to rescue him. And what Paul means by handing him over to Satan is not as horrific as it may sound on the surface. Paul often refers to Satan as the ruler of the world, the one who has authority over the non-believing world. So, Paul is basically saying the church needs to practice some tough love and send him out of the comfort of their fellowship where he's been allowed to wallow in this sin and go out into the pagan world where Satan reigns, with the goal of waking him up and restoring him to a right relationship with God and back into fellowship with the church.

Paul starts the next paragraph saying:

*<sup>6</sup> Your boasting is not good.*

Not only were the Corinthians tolerating this blatant sin, they were apparently priding themselves on their tolerance. In many ways, American Christianity wrestles with this just as the Corinthian Christians did. We too live in a culture where tolerating sin is more comfortable than calling someone out on it. We have read in our history books about the Victorian era prudes and the Puritanical zealots who seemed to shun sinners for sport. And the pendulum has swung back to the other extreme where our secular culture tells us that tolerance and acceptance are the same thing and to tell a person that the way they are living is wrong makes you a closed-minded bigot. But what Paul is saying to them, and to us by extension, is that tolerating blatant sin in someone who claims to be a Christian is not something you should feel good about, but rather

should recognize that it is a disease that may infect others and accepting it flies in the face of what Jesus did for us. And that's exactly his point in the rest of this paragraph. Let's keep reading.

*Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? <sup>7</sup> Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

This is one of those cases where the people reading this letter would have know exactly what Paul meant by yeast, leavened bread, the Passover lamb, and the Festival, but for us, unless we've studied the Old Testament, much of that might be lost on us. But it's really cool stuff and I think you're gonna like it once we unpack it a bit.

Any bread bakers out there? I love to bake homemade bread. We're lucky enough to live in a day and age when every grocery store carries little packets of yeast so that making a loaf of bread is as simple as mixing the ingredients, kneading the dough, letting it rise, and baking it. In the Bible era, though, they didn't have access to little packets of Fleischmann's or Red Star yeast and had to cultivate it themselves. Since that took time and added complexity, what they would typically do would be to save some yeasty dough from one batch to the next to use like a sourdough starter. What Paul was saying here is that this guy is like a really funky, leavening agent gone bad, and by using that yeasty leaven, they're contaminating everything. The only way to uncontaminate things is to purge all the rotten yeasty dough out.

And what they would have immediately thought of when they read that, was about the week every spring around the Passover when all Jews, even practicing Jews to this day, eradicate every single speck of yeast and leavening agents from their homes as part of the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread celebrations. And what they celebrate when they do that is that they were spared the curse of death by following God's instructions about protecting themselves with the blood of the Passover lamb. And Paul's making an incredible point here that through Jesus's sacrificial death, Christ is the ultimate Passover lamb, His blood having saved every believer from the curse of sin which is death. So, to tolerate this sin in the church is like saying, we no longer want to celebrate that Christ has paid the price for our sins and freed us from them, we'd rather keep mixing them into our community.

Paul takes an interesting turn next. He wants to clarify that the goal is not to turn the church into an inwardly focused group of self-righteous isolationists who refuse to interact with anyone outside the Christian community. He says in verse 9,

*<sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—<sup>10</sup> not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. <sup>11</sup> But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.*

*<sup>12</sup> What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? <sup>13</sup> God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you."*

He's saying that we are to have a different attitude towards non-Christian people who live lives of sin than we do towards people who claim to be believers but still live like they're not. He's even suggesting that we should not even bother with passing judgement on the sins of the non-believing world because God Himself will sort that out. They're not in our jurisdiction. Paul's saying that it's sin in the church that should concern us. I want to be clear here. All Christians still sin. I do, you do, Paul did. The key difference is our attitude towards sin. Do we recognize that it is wrong

when we miss the mark of God's holy standard, repent of our shortcomings and desire to live better by the Spirit's help? That's a healthy attitude towards sin. What this passage addresses, where the danger is, is in the person who knows what is wrong and chooses to do it anyway. The person who has been lovingly confronted about his or her destructive choices and refuses to listen. The person who has rejected God's standards and put their own fleshly desires ahead of everything else. That is the person Paul is saying should be expelled, with the hope, as he said in verse 5 that they'll be saved once that action wakes them up to their sin.

#### Attitude towards Conflict (1 Cor 6:1–11)

Alright! Chapter 6!

Paul makes what seems like an abrupt transition here. Remember that Paul often dictated his letters. Some scholars suggest he did this because he had poor eyesight leftover from being temporarily blinded on the road to Damascus. They suggest this because in some of his letters he finishes them saying that he himself is writing the ending in his characteristic large handwriting. So, I wonder if as he was dictating this letter, his thought about judging sin triggered his memory about wanting to address this next issue: believers taking their conflicts to the secular judges rather than being able to handle it themselves.

Let's read verses 1–8:

*If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? <sup>2</sup>Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! <sup>4</sup>Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? <sup>5</sup>I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? <sup>6</sup>But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!*

*<sup>7</sup>The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? <sup>8</sup>Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters.*

Before we break down some of the implications behind this passage, it's helpful to have some cultural background about the legal system in Corinth. The Greeks of that time sued people at the drop of a hat, and people would go to watch court proceedings as one of their chief amusements. Hanging out at the courts was like their Netflix. It was Judge Judy before a live studio audience every day.

You also have to understand that these courts did not uphold the principles of justice that we expect in our day. A fair hearing and trial, and jury of your peers were not guaranteed or even likely. It was widely accepted that whichever party was richer or more powerful would win the case. So if you were the less powerful person, or if both parties had roughly equal social status, then your only path to victory was to slander and discredit your opponent and make him look like an idiot so that the judge would be swayed to your side. You can see pathetic entertainment factor here in watching people take each other down. I bet they made Judge Judy look tame. So can you imagine how devastating it would be to the unity of the church if Christians are intentionally destroying each other's credibility and reputation in these courts?

Let's work through this passage, but I'd actually like to go through it backwards. Let's think about verses 6–8 first. Paul says they've defeated themselves already. They're doing these horrible things

to themselves and to each other. Imagine what it would be like if Autumn Ridge got into a petty fight with another local church and went to court over it. Just think how quickly KTTC and the Post Bulletin would be all over that and how badly damaged the reputations of both churches would become. I shudder to think.

Do you remember one of the key themes from the beginning of 1 Corinthians? Gold star if you said Wisdom. This was a community that prided itself about being really wise. So, in verses 4 and 5, Paul is showing his disbelief that on one hand they think they're wisdom personified, but in practical matters, they can't even settle little disputes peacefully among themselves and are instead dragging their own fellow believers through the mud in the secular courts.

And he based his frustration with them on the juicy nuggets in verses 2 and 3. Did those verses catch your eye? We're going to be judging the world and angels? Where does Paul get that idea? In Matthew 19, Jesus told his disciples "in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The idea being that believers will have the amazing privilege of serving with Jesus as he ushers in the final establishment of the kingdom of God. And the angels part? That we can find in Daniel 7. We don't have time to read the whole passage so let me sum it up for you and you can go back and study it further later if you like. In this amazing passage about the day when Jesus returns to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, once and for all, Daniel sees a vision of the Ancient of Days (ie. God) sitting on His throne joined by the Son of Man (ie. Jesus). And when the saints were judged righteous (and in the Bible, the term saints is essentially synonymous with believers) they are given dominion over the kingdom. Daniel 7:27 says, "And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; His kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." This is subtle, but Paul is drawing on this idea that all who are saved believers in God will rule the future kingdom with Christ. And that word dominions? One of Paul's favorite terms for angels. So his point is that once Jesus has returned and the final kingdom of God is established, we are going to play a key role in judging, overseeing, leading this kingdom, so if that's our destiny, how embarrassed should these petty Corinthians feel for not being able to handle small conflicts among themselves. It's like how indignant we'd be if we heard about a couple of Harvard Law student roommates arguing over their apartment's utility bill and going on Judge Judy to have her solve it for them. They should know better!

Let's consider how this applies to our life.

I don't think this passage alone can be used to establish a clear guideline about whether or not the Christian should take someone to court. If you did the study questions ahead of time, I had you consider that Jesus chose not to defend himself in the court before he was crucified and humbly submitted to its unjust ruling. But on the other hand, we see Paul, who seems to be making a case for staying out of the secular courts in this passage, in the end of the book of Acts appealed to the courts in Rome in order to establish his own innocence and rights. I think in both cases, their decisions were consistent with what was better for the advancement of the gospel and God's clear will for their lives, and that was the far more important factor than being vindicated in human eyes.

So what's the principle for us? What do we do when we face conflict with a fellow believer? I think we do well to heed the principle of prioritizing our unity with our fellow believers and the reputation of the gospel ahead of our own personal vindication. What does that mean practically? I think that in the yuck of conflict, we evaluate very carefully if we are fighting for justice, defending godly principles, or if we are seeking personal vindication. How do we evaluate that? From the context of this passage, I think we ask ourselves two questions: 1) What will engaging in this conflict do to

my relationship with my fellow believers and to the unity the Bible calls us to have? and 2) What effect will this conflict have on how the non-believing world understands the gospel? Let me repeat those. 1) What will engaging in this conflict do to my relationship with my fellow believers and to the unity the Bible calls us to have? and 2) What effect will this conflict have on how the non-believing world understands the gospel?

Well, Paul finishes this section with a reminder to the Corinthian Christians that should everything in perspective for them. Let's read verses 9–11.

*Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men<sup>r</sup> <sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

The reaction to a list of sinners like that should not be to feel good about ourselves if we don't count ourselves among them. Nor should it be for us to use this as ammunition against unbelievers whose lifestyles we don't agree with. Remember from the last chapter, God will judge them, and we are to leave that to Him. Rather, the amazing key to this passage is verse 11. "That is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God. Friends, this is incredible. Paul's saying that we are sinners, and some of us come from backgrounds that included the lifestyles on that list. BUT, and underline that but if you want to, But you were washed, meaning God's grace has cleansed you off all your sin, you were sanctified meaning the Spirit is in you to make you more Christ like, and you were justified meaning that God has declared you to be as righteous as if you'd never sinned in the first place.

You've been forgiven incredible debts. And in the context of this passage, Paul's reminder of how much we've been forgiven and restored because of Jesus's work through the Spirit should overflow into how we approach our fellow believers when we are in conflict with them. We who have been forgiven should be quick to forgive. God has shown so much grace to us, we have more than enough grace to show to others. So, this is not easy, but when we find ourselves in conflict with a fellow believer, let's be quick to show grace, passionate about our unity, and protective of how we represent the gospel.

#### Attitude towards Our Bodies (1 Cor 6:12–20)

Alright, we're going to transition to a different topic again. Paul has one more issue he wants to tackle. Let's read the rest of the chapter starting in verse 12.

<sup>12</sup> "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything. <sup>13</sup> You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."<sup>17</sup> But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. <sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. <sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who

*is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*

I hope you'll come to see as we work through this passage that Paul's approach here is nothing short of brilliant. He already knows that many in the Corinthian church don't want to acknowledge their problem with sin, so rather than simply telling them what not to do, he shows them a new and better way to think that if they understood, and friends, if we understand, will forever change how we view of bodies.

In verses 12 and 13 Paul quotes two common Corinthian phrases to point out some destructive thinking about their bodies. The first one, "I have the right to do anything" we already talked about a bit. This was the idea that since they no longer live under the old Law, and grace covers all their sins, they can basically do whatever they want. It was like "whatever happens in Corinth stays in Corinth" all the time. They were completely abusing their freedom in Christ. The other phrase, "food is for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both" reveals their incorrect beliefs about their bodies. It may seem like an odd jump to us for Paul to connect this phrase about food to sex, but it makes sense with a bit of background in their culture. Secular philosophy in Paul's day taught that the body was limited to this lifetime, only the spiritual soul would remain in the afterlife. Consequently, it was widely accepted that all things spiritual were holy, and all things material, like the body, were not. The body was viewed as completely distinct from the spiritual; the pure soul was unaffected by the dirty body. Many in Corinth, including some in the church to whom Paul is writing, took this way of thinking a step further, figuring that if what you did with your body had absolutely no effect on your spiritual self, you may as well satisfy each and every one of its desires, particularly if you know that this lifetime is your only shot at doing so.

Without getting into too many graphic details, it was socially acceptable in their culture to have a wife to bear you children, a mistress for romance, and sex with prostitutes to gratify any additional unmet desires. Their attitude towards sex was that it had no bearing on their morality, their family life, or their spiritual life. And that phrase in verse 13, food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God destroys them both" is basically saying that one should satisfy the body with what it wants, and the body is meant to be satisfied, and it doesn't matter what you do because in the end it's all destroyed anyway.

Lest any of us think we are so morally superior to the Corinthians, have you seen this quote? If you can't read that, it says "Eat well, Stay fit, Die anyway." American thinking, once again, is not that far off from Corinthian thinking. Many of us, myself included, struggle with thinking that how we care for our bodies ultimately doesn't really matter because we're all gonna die someday right?

Well, Paul's response to this is that the body and the spirit are not separate or distinct, and what we do to our bodies has a spiritual impact as well. He draws on a principle from the very beginning of the Bible. God chose one relationship, that of a husband and a wife, to be the only holy sexual relationship and when they come together sexually they are regarded as one flesh. In a way, so it is with Christ and the believer. We who have accepted salvation from Jesus, are forever united with him. The Corinthians may have accepted that spiritually, but they did not see any connection between their spiritual union with Christ and their physical union with a sexual partner. Paul is saying there is no distinction. That when we engage in sexual immorality, prostitution in this specific case, but the same thing applies to any form of sex outside of marriage, we are in effect mixing the unholy union of sexual immorality with the holy union we have with our Savior. There is no division between the body and the spirit. God is infused in both and both will continue on not just in this life but in the next.

To drive the point home, Paul reminds them again of something he said back in chapter three that the believer's body is the very temple, the dwelling place of God. This is an amazing privilege we have friends, and it was not always the case. In the Old Testament, like we saw in Numbers, God's presence resided in the portable tent of the tabernacle. Later in the Old Testament, God's presence dwelled in the temple in Jerusalem. But after Jesus was crucified and resurrected, God's presence through the Holy Spirit was sent to live in all of us who accept His gift of salvation. God's presence lives right here in me, and right there in you and in you and in you.

So here's what I want you think about: Have you ever really considered that how you treat your body affects your relationship with God? I doubt that many of you are tempted to seek out a temple prostitute, but how about pornography, maybe in the form of romance novels or racy tv shows or movies? How is your relationship with God affected by the attraction you feed for that man you're not married to? How about how you care for your body? Do you fuel it well with healthy nourishing foods or grab the junk food that will maximize your quick physical pleasure. How about your thoughts about your body? Do you believe the truth that God created your body with as much passion and purpose as a master artist creating a beautiful sculpture, or do you focus only on what you perceive to be flaws?

I want to finish with a story from my life. It's not a story about sex in any way, shape or form, so you can relax a bit. This is me with my grandpa a few years ago. We've had a very special relationship since I was a little girl and he once did something for me that is probably the largest demonstration of grace I've ever received from someone not named God. Before my first husband was diagnosed with cancer, we were already planning to move here to Rochester and had purchased a spec home up near the north Walmart that was about halfway built. But about two months before we were to close on the house, Jon was suddenly incapacitated with surgeries and chemotherapy and could no longer work. We were honest with the bank that was financing our future first home about his diagnosis and that he was out of work, and they responded by cancelling the mortgage we were counting on at closing only 2 months away. On top of already reeling from the shock that he had only a matter of months to live, we suddenly found ourselves without any way to pay for the home we'd been building. Well, my dear grandpa saved us. He stepped in to finance the house for us and graciously allowed us to make payments to him as we were able. He made it clear that even though he was the one who technically purchased the home, we should consider it ours. We loved that sweet gray two-story. I painted its rooms my favorite colors, and planted flowers in the front and a garden in the back. Decorating and maintaining that home brought us great joy, a welcome diversion from the horrible reality of Jon's cancer. Can you just picture the sweetness it was whenever my grandpa would come to visit? I remember taking him from room to room, proudly showing him what I'd done with this house he'd made possible for us. I think my grandpa's incredible financial sacrifice, a true act of love from him to me, made me a better homeowner than I would have been if I had a traditional mortgage because I wanted him to be delighted with how I cared for the home he made possible for me.

Friends, that's what Paul's trying to say here. He's saying our bodies are like that sweet home. Our bodies were bought for us at the incredible price of the life of Jesus Christ and are home not only to us, but where God Himself has chosen to dwell. The theology of this passage should inspire us to recognize that what we do with our bodies, sexually and otherwise, affects our relationship with God. How we care for our body, how we keep it healthy and pure, demonstrates our appreciation for Christ's sacrifice on our behalf, and the incredible privilege it is to have God's presence dwelling in us.

So, I hope you feel that you have a strong handle on 1 Corinthians 5 and 6, and what their principles mean for us today. Though they read like three distinct issues, I think we can summarize them as being all about our attitude towards sin, conflict, and our bodies. I'm sure the Corinthians



stung a bit that Paul chose first to address these concerns he had about their church before he addressed their questions, but that's a good reminder that sometimes we need do a check on our attitudes about issues such as these before we're ready to hear what we want to hear about. It's not always easy for us to be humble or honest about our attitudes, but I think they are still as important for us to consider today as they were for the Corinthians. I hope you will have encouraging and edifying discussions in your small groups. Let's pray for that right now.

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