

1 CORINTHIANS (continued)

SUMMARY: Because many things have occurred in our study of 1 Corinthians, a little summary is in order... Paul had already established a church in Corinth and had gone to Ephesus...it was at this time that he was informed that "there was some trouble back in Corinth" ...he begins this letter by stating that this should not have happened....the first few verses of the letter explain his dilemma...it was like a well-supplied refrigerator....you thought it was full and "ready to go" and you discover that someone has been tampering with what you thought you had...it is **no different today on some levels**....especially in our culture and the "global view"....moral indifference and selfishness seem to be penetrating the scenes of our lives...in other words, we can relate to Paul and his positions on a number of issues...and so it is that some (10) issues are discussed....from divisions in the church, to incest, the state of marriage and service, the offering of meat to idols...and now his apostolic authority....

(9) APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY: (vs.1-14) Paul again begins by stressing that **LOVE LIMITS LIBERTY**...just because we are believers, does not mean that we have a "right" to do what we always want to do....our love for the body of Christ does set some limits...and now this chapter is an "example" of what he is addressing....

HIS APOSTLESHIP: Paul sets down his proof of apostleship by asking a series of questions: **his rights as an apostle and his right to maintenance by the church itself....**"am I not free, am I not an apostle, have I not seen Jesus our Lord and are you not my work in the Lord" (vs.1-2)...it further maintains that **the church of Christ in Corinth was the seal of his apostleship in the Lord....**

In ancient times, a seal was used on merchandise and documents to indicate the **genuineness or authenticity of the contents**...likewise, the church at Corinth was a living seal of his apostleship...

DISCUSSION: Our society struggles today with the issue of authority...List some reasons why people resist authority?

1 CORINTHIANS (continued)

HIS APOSTLESHIP (continued): Now Paul moves from his commissioning by Jesus Christ to his right to be maintained by the church...more questions: don't we not have the right to eat and drink, don't we have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, or is it only Barnabas and I who must work for a living? In their culture of the Greeks they despised manual labor and none but slaves ever did menial tasks to enable the more educated to better themselves...

THREE EXAMPLES OF MAINTENANCE: (v.7)...Paul gives (3) examples that are found in their society: **a soldier who is fighting for souls - he is giving of himself, a vine-dresser - a minister is planting churches, and a shepherd - a minister should get food from the church...**

FURTHER RIGHTS OF MAINTENANCE: (v.8, 12-14)...Paul cites other rights: God's law (Deut.25:4), support of other teachers, Jewish priests, (Lev.7:28-36; Num.18:18-20) and the Lord's teaching (Lk.10:7)

VALIDATION OF THE LAW OF DEFERENCE: (v.19) Paul now finishes this chapter by using himself as an example of the Law of Deference (he will do nothing to hinder the furtherance of the gospel or cause a weaker brother to stumble)...and an example of his refusal to take the support that was **his right to do....he uses an example of a race....He asks what are some factors that are necessary for the strict training of an athlete??? What is the prize for them??? What is different about the believer's crown?....in other words, Paul wants nothing to destroy or mar his witness for Christ....he runs along with all believers that can win a prize and it is not persishable....**

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHP: The factors involved are: sacrifice (Heb.13:18-21), accountability (2 Cor.5:10; 13:5), rules (2 Tim.2:5); attitude (Ps.143:8), joy (Heb.12:2), endurance (Ps.40:29-31); victory (2 Tim.2-7-8) and obedience (1 Peter 1:13-16)

1 CORINTHIANS (continued)

THE CONCERN OF PAUL: In the Isthmian games, a contestant who could not meet the requirements could not run, let alone win...he did not "shadow-box"...it was a real fight! He even made his own body black and blue in order to make it behave in a winning manner....he did not want to spend his life preaching about the requirements to others, and fail to be an effective witness for himself...to fail to pay the price of permitting the world to impact him, his own personal interests or even laziness to hinder his own spiritual growth....**his possible disqualification was not salvation, but his effective witness....what a spiritual goal!**

CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT MEANS CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY!

DISCUSSION: What has this tragedy in France by Islamic Jihadists done to make you rethink your own Christian witness?

POINTS TO PONDER: We don't change the message, the message changes us!

NEXT WEEK: CHAPTER 10

- . what is the warning concerning Israel's past history?
- . did they experience the help from God?
- . who was the "rock"?
- . what is the great promise in v.11?
- .what does v.23 mean to you?
- .what is the final conclusion in vs.31-33?
- .what is my own strategy in my witness to the world around me?
- .will the world listen to me?
- .if not, what will my future response continue to be?
- .do I have a walk with some fellow believers to whom I am held accountable and also evaluated by them?