



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

www.bibleradio.org.au

BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1752 ~ A Letter to the Corinthians.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

A young male university student living on campus found out that one of the female students also living on campus was an actress. All the young men living on the same floor of their dormitory entered a competition to see who would first take the actress out on a date. One evening on his way back to his room, the young man walked past a store selling freshly made popcorn. A voice he heard behind him said how good it smelt. When the young man looked over his shoulder, he discovered it was the actress. He agreed with her yet walked on. Later, realising how much of an opportunity he'd passed up in getting to know the actress better, he vowed that he would never be that flustered and unprepared again.

So many of us can think of the right thing to say five minutes after we've missed an opportunity to say something about the Lord! How we disappoint ourselves! Sometimes we can think that we don't have the 'gift of the gab' or can make a meaningful instant response to a surprise situation. But if we're really honest with ourselves, we have to admit that if we're committing all our conversations each day to the Lord, we can trust that the Holy Spirit will enable us to always have the right words to say at the right time.

This whole situation is quite different for writers in this computer age. After a first draft is written and reviewed, there are corrections and changes to be made. By the time the last draft has been polished, read and reviewed by an editor, only then is the piece of writing ready for publication. Yet imagine the Apostle Paul working out what he would like to say to help and correct the thinking and behaviour of the immature Christians at the church in Corinth while still staying in Ephesus! If he made a mistake in what he said, the scribe writing the words onto a scroll would have to start all over again on another expensive piece of parchment.

To avoid such a situation from occurring, Paul would think through what he wanted to say and prepared the words in advance of the writing stage.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

In this *Bible Adventure*, we look at Paul's teaching on the rights and responsibilities of Christians as recorded in 1st Corinthians, chapters 5 to 8.

The citizens of Corinth had a reputation for their bold sexual immorality and this immorality had crept into the church. Perhaps the new Corinthian Christians had supposed that having once put on faith in Christ and receiving salvation, they could then behave in any way they pleased. If so, they were falling back into their old way of life in sin.

One particularly bad case in the church that Paul needed to address was a man who called himself a Christian yet was living in a sexual relationship with his stepmother. Even the ungodly citizens in Corinth did not do such things. And to make matters worse, no one in the church protested about this wickedness in their midst. They just tolerated the situation and minded their own business.

Many times in society over the generations, people have had a mistaken idea that tolerance is always a virtue while intolerance is always evil. In the name of tolerance, every evil can be exalted and proudly defended, while those who resist and condemn evil with intolerance can be called ‘narrow-minded bigots’ or ‘religious fanatics’. Yet like all those who are self-righteous, the dogmatic zealots of tolerance often reveal themselves as being extremely intolerant of anything they disapprove of, as they refuse to see any fault in themselves or what they believe.

Both tolerance and intolerance can be used for evil. The anti-Christian people in our society criticise all those who condemn sin as intolerant people. Because unsaved people must understand the seriousness of their sin before seeing a need for a Saviour, condemning sin goes hand-in-hand with bringing people to Christ. Christ’s love requires Christians to condemn every evil, so that sinners will recognise their guilt of sin and just how far they fall short of God’s standards. If we have no standard, anything goes.

While God wants us to condemn sin, He doesn’t want us to be nasty to those who are guilty of such, as we’ve all been born into sin. Christians are no more righteous than non-Christians by their own efforts; only Christ can save a sinful person who is willing to repent. And God certainly doesn’t want us to break civil and spiritual laws in our quest to rid society of its evils.

Because some people in our society would like to see all religions worship harmoniously together, they want Christians to tolerate falsehood and condone those who contradict God’s Word. However, the Bible makes it perfectly clear that there is no salvation apart from faith in Jesus Christ. If we deny this fact by our tolerance of accepting false religion, then many souls could be lost.

God Himself doesn't tolerate any false gods. He never has and He never will! As far as He is concerned, those who regard Him as just one god among many are actually idol worshippers, no matter how tolerant they appear to be.

In 2 Kings, Chapter 17, the Lord God taught the children of Jacob saying: "You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them, nor serve them nor sacrifice to them. ... but the Lord your God you shall fear; and he will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies."

The Romans had many gods and they were proud of the temple consecrated to all gods in Rome. In the 1st Century AD, the Romans wanted Christians to worship Caesar as god. The Christians refused and usually paid with their lives to remain true to the Lord Jesus. It wasn't the 'intolerant' Christians, but the 'tolerant' Romans who tortured those who disagreed with them.

Paul told the Corinthian believers not to associate "with a person who calls himself a believer but is immoral or greedy, worships idols, is a slanderer, a drunkard or a thief. Don't even sit down to eat with such a person." Thus the man committing sin with his stepmother was to be put out of the church congregation.

After dealing with this situation, Paul then wrote about the responsibility of believers in Christ to settle disputes between other believers within the church so that believers were not going to civil courts of law making accusations against each other. By going to public court, the believers took a stance of being their Christian brother's or sister's enemy. Paul said that instead of disputing with your brother or sister, it would be far better to give up the dispute and let your brother or sister win – even if it meant suffering loss.

The Lord Jesus taught in Matthew, Chapter 5, that when an unbeliever is taking Christians to court, the Christians should make peace with the unbeliever while on the way to court and not to oppose his claims. If the Christians owe the unbeliever something, they are to pay up straight away. Paul said that the Corinthian believers were immature and worldly. In their disputes, they were sinning against one another. It's much better to suffer a little loss in this world than to suffer eternal loss on the Day of Judgment!

As Paul continued to write his letter to the Corinthians, in Chapter 7 he dealt with the responsibility of marriage among the believers. Paul spoke of one wife for each husband and each being kind and considerate of one another. A wife wasn't to walk out on her husband and a husband wasn't to divorce his wife. If one partner became a believer in Christ yet the other, an unbeliever, was willing to stay in the relationship, the believer wasn't to divorce the non-believing partner. As time went by, the non-believer might also become a believer. However, Paul was clear on this point: believers were not to marry non-believers by choice.

Paul noted that God can always change our outward circumstances: if we're unmarried and become a Christian, God can provide a husband or wife for us if we want one. If we are slaves, God can free us. But we ourselves must not try to change our situation by force or according to our own will. Instead, we must pray with thankfulness and wait for God's leading and action. God knows much better than we do what is best for us, and He certainly knows what the situation needs in bringing glory to Himself the most. We have only one duty: to lead a life worthy of the calling to which we have been called.

The Roman Empire had many slaves; these slaves had no rights, no property and no inheritance. Paul called on slaves to remain where they were when they became Christians. Yet if they had a chance to be free, they were to take it. In Colossians, Chapter 3, Paul wrote to Christian slaves telling them to obey their human masters in all things at all times out of reverence for the Lord. He said: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. Remember that the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve. And all wrongdoers will be repaid for the wrong things they do, because God judges everyone by the same standard.”

Paul also wrote about other responsibilities: Christians were to have a good conscience towards other believers who may be weaker in their faith. The more mature ones needed to be careful not to cause those weaker Christians to stumble in what they believed.

In Chapter 8, Paul wrote about whether or not Christians were to eat food offered to idols. In Paul’s New Testament times, the citizens of Corinth used to hold great feasts at the temples of various idols. They would worship the idols and meet together to have a good time. Some of the Corinthian Christians were joining in at these feasts.

But such behaviour caused problems for those Christians weaker in their faith. The Christians with weaker faith had written to Paul to ask if it was alright to eat meat dedicated to idols at these feasts, as well as meat that was for sale in the marketplace after being sacrificed to idols. Paul replied that as an idol is nothing at all, there’s no difference between meat offered to idols and meat that hasn’t been.

However, if a Christian considers that an idol is a spirit or a god, then that person shouldn't eat any of the food offered to idols. When a believer considers that an idol has no meaning whatever and that it's just a piece of wood, stone or metal, then that person can eat food sacrificed to idols without sinning. They are not worshipping a god or evil spirit when they eat such food. But they must not do so in the presence of a Christian who might be troubled in their own conscience by such actions. So eating was to be done in the privacy of each believer's own home.

Eating meat offered to idols was only one example of the kind of activity that could cause fellow Christians to fall into sin. And in some countries of the world, this is still an issue that Christians must face. Such behaviour isn't sin in itself, yet Paul warns Christians to consider one another and not do something if there is any chance that they will cause their brothers and sisters in Christ to sin against their consciences and thus, also their Lord.

In 1 Timothy, Chapter 1, Verse 19, Paul said, "... keep your faith and a clear conscience. Some people have not listened to their conscience and have made a ruin of their faith."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

< END OF SCRIPT >
