

Lesson 7 Problems in the Church Today

INTRODUCTION

We sometimes think that the early church was perfect, and that the church today has gone wrong. The early church, however, also had its problems, many of them similar to ours today.

1. Ask the students to think about some of the problems that face their local church. Make a list of them on the board.
2. There is one book in the Bible that deals specifically with the problems of one of the early churches, the church at Corinth. Paul had heard about some of their problems from other people. They had also written him a letter asking his advice about some the problems they had.
3. Read the following passages and for each, list what problem Paul is dealing with:-
 - (a) I Corinthians 1: 10-13 - divisions into different groups.
 - (b) I Corin. 7: 1,25 - marriage.
 - (c) I Corin. 8:1 - food offered to idols.
 - (d) I Corin. 12:1 - gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 - (e) I Corin. 16:1 - money.
4. Compare this list with the one you made in Step 1. Many of the problems in the church today are similar to those in Corinth. We will study this letter to help us with some of our problems.

5. Background to the letter

Acts 18: 1-11 tells about Paul's first visit to Corinth.

How long did he stay there?

Who did he meet there?

Was he successful in his mission there?

LESSON 8

DIVISIONS OVER BELIEF AND TEACHING

1. Read I Corin. 1: 11-13.
What do you think the people in Corinth were really quarrelling about?
(they followed different teachers in the church).

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2. SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Apollos: According to Acts 18: 24-28, Apollos was a Jewish Christian. He taught well and enthusiastically, but he did not understand the gospel fully at first. Note that Priscilla and Aquila took him privately to their home and helped him to understand better.

Peter: Galatians 2: 11-14 shows that Peter and Paul had an argument about whether Jewish Christians could eat with Gentile Christians and about what laws Christians had to follow.

3. It seems then that the Corinthian Christians were divided over different teachings and beliefs. Some followed one teacher, some followed another.

What are some different teachings which divide Christians today?
(baptism, second coming, sabbath, food laws, speaking in tongues, etc.)

4. Paul's Advice

1. I Corin. 3: 5-9. Teachers are partners, not rivals. This means that God gives each teacher a different understanding of Himself, but they should work together and not oppose each other. God uses each one at different stages. God uses all of them to help the plant to grow.
Think about some different teachers you have had, in school or at Sunday School. What did you learn from each one? We have to learn new things as we get older and more mature.

2. Read I Corin 1: 13, 30-31, 4: 1-2. Who is the most important teacher?
We have to judge every teaching by: "Is it true to what Christ taught and showed us about God?"

ACTIVITY

Draw a picture of a plant with one person planting and another watering etc.