

9. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

I. Introduction: "Concerning the matters about which you wrote" (7:1a) This letter was a second source of information about the issues at Corinth. The first was the report by Chloe's people (1:11). A third was the visit by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17), a visit that may have taken place after Paul began to write the letter. "Concerning" (peri) is a formula that appears later in the letter (8:1, 4; 12:1; 16:1, 12), but it is almost impossible to affirm that these other topics on which Paul offers advice were issues raised in the letter that he had received.

II. "It is well for a man not to touch a woman" (7:1). Husbands and wives (7:2-7) Widowers and widows (7:8-9, with a further note in 7:39-40) Those contemplating divorce (7:10-11) Those in a mixed marriage (7:12-16) A general exhortation: Stay in whatever situation of life you are, ethnic, social, or marital (7:17-25). The unmarried (7:25-38)

III. "Concerning food offered to idols" (8:1-10:23) The social situation. Banquets, The Marketplace, The Christian faith: "there is no God but one" (8:4) Two situations: Food eaten in the temple precincts (8:10) Food purchased in the market (10:26-28) Paul's response: Don't cause your brother to sin; respect his conscience (8:12-13; 10:28-30). Paul's Example (9:1-27) The example of the Israelites (10:1-13)

IV. How to wear one's hair in the assembly (11:2-16) v. The Lord's Supper (11:17-11:24) Paul had heard about something that was happening that did not make him proud of the Corinthians: 11:17-23. Paul's response recalls the institution of the Lord's Supper (11:23-26). Examine yourselves to see whether you are eating and drinking unworthily, without discerning the body (11:27-33a). More later (11:34b)

Review Questions

1. What does Paul teach about divorce?
2. Are there any situations today that are analogous to the Corinthians' situation with regard to idols?
3. Why does Paul remind the Corinthians about the origins of the Lord's Supper?