

“Ye Are the Temple of God”

Lesson 33

1 Corinthians 1–6

Purpose

To inspire class members to seek the blessings that come from being unified in Christ, following the Spirit, and being morally clean.

Preparation

1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
 - a. 1 Corinthians 1:10–13; 3:1–11. Paul exhorts the Saints to avoid contention and be one in mind and judgment.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 1:17–31; 2:1–16. Paul counsels the Saints to rely on the Spirit rather than the wisdom and philosophies of the world.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 5; 6:9–20. Paul exhorts the Saints to be morally clean.
 2. Additional reading: 1 Corinthians 7–10; Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles: Epistles to the Corinthians,” 743–44.
 3. Suggestion for teaching: Elder Boyd K. Packer counseled: “It is essential for a teacher to understand that people are basically good. It is essential to know that their tendency is to do the thing that is right. Such an exalted thought is productive of faith. It makes all the difference when we stand before our own children or go before a class of young people to teach them” (*Teach Ye Diligently* [1975], 73).
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Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity

As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson.

Draw a road on the chalkboard, and draw a car or another vehicle on the road. Then share the following experience related by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin:

“While traveling along a mountainous road one evening through a driving rainstorm punctuated with frequent claps of thunder and flashes of lightning, Sister Wirthlin and I could barely see the road, either in front of us or to the right and the left. I watched the white lines on that road more intently than ever before. Staying within the lines kept us from going onto the shoulder and into the deep canyon on the one side and helped us avoid a head-on collision on the other. To wander over either line could have been very dangerous. Then I thought, ‘Would a right-thinking person deviate to the left or the right of a traffic lane if he knew the result would be fatal? If he valued his mortal life, certainly he would stay between these lines.’

“That experience traveling on this mountain road is so like life. If we stay within the lines that God has marked, he will protect us, and we can arrive safely at our destination” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 80; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 64).

Explain that at the time Paul wrote his first epistle to the Saints in Corinth, some of them had begun to stray outside the lines of the gospel. This lesson will discuss Paul’s exhortations for the Saints to repent of three of the ways they had

begun to stray. Draw three lines on the chalkboard that show the vehicle going off the road. At the end of the first line write *Contention and disunity*. At the end of the second line write *Relying on the wisdom of the world*. At the end of the third line write *Immorality*.

Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how Paul's counsel applies to our day and how we can apply his teachings in our own lives.

1. Avoid contention and be unified.

Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 1:10–13; 3:1–11.

- What problem did Paul address in 1 Corinthians 1:10–13? What did it mean that some of the Saints claimed to be “of Paul,” some “of Apollos,” some “of Cephas [Peter],” and some “of Christ”? (Instead of being unified as followers of Jesus Christ, some of the Saints divided themselves into groups or factions within the Church.) How do we sometimes make this same error? What are some consequences of these types of division? How do divisions and contention affect our fellowship as disciples of Christ? (See Mosiah 18:21–22; 3 Nephi 11:29–30; D&C 38:27.)
- What did Paul counsel the Saints to do to be more unified? (See 1 Corinthians 1:10. As a class member reads this verse, list each part of Paul's counsel on the chalkboard as shown below.) How can we apply this counsel at home and in the Church?
 - a. “Speak the same thing.”
 - b. Have “no divisions among you.”
 - c. “Be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
- Why had the Corinthian Saints received only the “milk” of the gospel? (See 1 Corinthians 3:1–4.) Why does contention prevent us from receiving the “meat” of the gospel? How can we prepare ourselves to be fed the “meat” of the gospel?
- Paul taught that there are many ministers (servants) of the gospel but that Jesus Christ is the only sure foundation (1 Corinthians 3:5–11). Why is it important that we have the Savior as the foundation for our faith? (See Helaman 5:12.)

2. Rely on the Spirit rather than the wisdom of the world.

Discuss 1 Corinthians 1:17–31; 2:1–16. Invite class members to read selected verses.

- Paul taught that God's wisdom will “make foolish” the wisdom of the world (1 Corinthians 1:18–21). How is God's wisdom different from the world's wisdom? (See Isaiah 55:8–9; D&C 38:1–2.) What are some examples of God's wisdom making foolish the wisdom of the world?
- In what ways can secular learning be a blessing to us? (If necessary, explain that *secular* means nonreligious.) In what ways can it be a stumbling block to us? How can we balance secular and spiritual learning? (See 2 Nephi 9:28–29.)

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “There is opportunity to get both [secular and spiritual learning] simultaneously. . . . If we spend our mortal days in accumulating secular knowledge to the exclusion of the spiritual then we are in a dead-end street, for this is the time for man to prepare to meet God; this is the time for faith to be built, for baptism to be effected, for the Holy Ghost to

be received, for the ordinances to be performed. Contemporary with this program can come the secular knowledge, for even in the spirit world after death our spirits can go on learning” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 390).

- What did Paul mean when he said that God had chosen “the foolish things of the world to confound the wise” and “the weak things of the world to confound the . . . mighty”? (1 Corinthians 1:27). Why does God often choose the “weak things of the world” to fulfill his purposes?
- What weaknesses did Paul face as he taught the gospel? (See 1 Corinthians 2:1–3.) How were his weaknesses made into strengths? (See 1 Corinthians 2:2, 4–5.) How has the Lord helped you when you have felt inadequate or afraid to do his work?
- According to Paul, how can we know the “things of God”? (See 1 Corinthians 2:10–13.) Why do we sometimes rely more on our own wisdom and intellect than on revelation through the Spirit? What differences have you observed between the learning that comes by the Spirit and the learning that comes through the intellect only?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “Pure religion is a thing of the Spirit and not of the intellect alone, and its truths must be carried into the hearts of hearers by the power of the Spirit, otherwise the human soul is not changed . . . and the seeker after salvation does not become alive in Christ” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [1966–73], 2:318).

- Paul taught that it is impossible for the “natural man” to receive the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14). Why is this so? What must we do to overcome the natural man? (See Mosiah 3:19.)

3. Be morally clean.

Read and discuss selected verses from 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 5; 6:9–20.

- What did Paul compare our bodies to? (See 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20.) Why do you think this is an appropriate comparison? What things can defile our bodies? What should we do to treat our bodies as temples?
- In his warning against many serious sins of his day, Paul included several sexual sins (1 Corinthians 6:9). What is God’s law of sexual morality? (See D&C 42:23; 59:6.)

Elder Richard G. Scott said: “Any sexual intimacy outside of the bonds of marriage—I mean any intentional contact with the sacred, private parts of another’s body, with or without clothing—is a sin and is forbidden by God. It is also a transgression to intentionally stimulate these emotions within your own body” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 38).

- Why are sexual sins so serious? (See the following quotations.) What are the blessings of being morally clean?

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught: “One of the most pervasive deceptions in recent years is the notion that immorality is normal and acceptable and has no negative consequences. In truth, immorality is the underlying cause of much suffering and many other problems that are prevalent today, including rampant disease, abortion, broken families, families without fathers, and mothers who themselves are children” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 100–101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 76).

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught: “[Satan] knows that this power of creation is not just an incident to the plan, but the key to it. He knows that if he can entice you to use this power prematurely, to use it too soon, or to misuse it in any way, you may well lose your opportunities for eternal progression” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1972, 137; or *Ensign*, July 1972, 112).

- Paul counseled the Saints “not to company [associate] with fornicators” (1 Corinthians 5:9). How might this counsel apply to us? (Discuss how the friends and forms of entertainment we choose can affect our desire and ability to be morally clean.) How can we avoid immoral influences?
- What methods does Satan use in trying to persuade us that there are exceptions to God’s laws of morality? (See the quotation below.) How can we withstand these temptations? What assurance does 1 Corinthians 10:13 give us as we strive to resist temptation to commit sexual sin? How have you been blessed as you have sought the Lord’s help to resist temptation?

Elder Richard G. Scott said: “Satan tempts one to believe that there are allowable levels of physical contact between consenting individuals who seek the powerful stimulation of emotions they produce, and if kept within bounds, no harm will result. As a witness of Jesus Christ, I testify that is absolutely false. . . . Decide what you will and will not do. When temptation comes, do not change your standards” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 38).

- What promise does the Atonement of Jesus Christ offer those who repent of sexual sin? (See 1 Corinthians 6:11; Isaiah 1:18; D&C 58:42.)

Conclusion

Testify that, like Paul, the apostles and prophets of our day continue to teach us what we should do to stay within the boundaries the Lord has set. You may want to briefly discuss a recent conference address in which the prophet or one of the apostles spoke on a topic Paul dealt with in his letter to the Corinthians, such as avoiding contention, relying on the Spirit, or staying morally clean. As appropriate, share how you have been blessed as you have applied counsel from Paul or one of the latter-day apostles or prophets.

Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or both of these ideas as part of the lesson.

1. “The things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9)

- What is the most wonderful or beautiful thing you have ever seen or experienced?

Have a class member read 1 Corinthians 2:9. Testify that the blessings that God has prepared for us if we love him and keep his commandments are more wonderful than anything we can imagine.

2. “Brother goeth to law with brother” (1 Corinthians 6:6)

Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 6:1–8.

- How did many of the Saints in Corinth resolve their disputes? (See 1 Corinthians 6:1–8.) How did this cause greater disunity? How is this problem evident today? What can we learn from Paul’s counsel?