

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Wrestling with Life's Gray Areas
1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 9:19-27; 10:14-33

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Important note to the Bible Study leader for today: The Bible study plan for today (the actual teaching guide that you take with you to lead the session) may be too long for the time you have. Be careful to not take more time than is allotted to you. (The Guide is only a "helper". Shorten it or change it to meet your needs). You may have to

delete some of the material in order to give the “Worship Time” leader enough time to challenge the church with his or her part.

Worship Time Leader: If you have a youth group who does the suggested activity for youth, ask them to share their work with the larger group during worship time.

Enlist readers for the reading which serves as a Call to Worship. If you use children, enlist them the week before so they can practice. Adults may also appreciate knowing ahead of time so they can adequately prepare.

Have copies of the four principles found in 1 Corinthians 10: 31-33 which are found at the end of the worship time.

Music Sources:

Worthy of Worship, *The Worship Hymnal* #3; CCLI # 82869

I Worship You, Almighty God, *The Worship Hymnal* #16; CCLI # 20807

Great is the Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #61; CCLI #1149

We Will Glorify, *The Worship Hymnal* #22; CCLI #19038

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Wrestling with Life's Gray Areas*****Focal Text**

1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 9:19-27; 10:14-33

Background Text

1 Corinthians 8:1—11:1

Main Idea

Even if a practice is not obviously in disobedience to Christian teachings, a Christian may still need to refrain from the practice out of loving concern for others and his or her witness to them.

Question to Explore

What principles can guide us in deciding what to do when the Christian choice is not obvious?

Teaching Aim

To guide the class to identify principles from this passage for dealing with areas of life where the Christian choice is not obvious.

Gathering together:

Sing **Worthy of Worship**, *The Worship Hymnal* #3; CCLI # 82869

First thoughts:

Non-Christians perceive Christians as having a rigid set of rules by which they live. Christians know that we live by principles which we learn from studying the life of Christ and from Bible teachings.

Sometimes we think it might be easier if we did have a set of rules. In fact, it is a human tendency to make rules for various life challenges.

Our lesson today demonstrates how Paul helped the new believers in Corinth to come to decisions about living their lives in a very secular society based first on their relationship to Christ and then on the principles which that relationship involves.

Paul indicates that love is our guiding principle. Love enables us to seek that which is best for others. This is a lifelong learning process for us as Christians. Today's lesson and worship time will help in our decision-making along that journey.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

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Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Wrestling with Life’s Gray Areas

Focal Text

1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 9:19-27; 10:14-33

Background Text

1 Corinthians 8:1—11:1

Main Idea

Even if a practice is not obviously in disobedience to Christian teachings, a Christian may still need to refrain from the practice out of loving concern for others and his or her witness to them.

Question to Explore

What principles can guide us in deciding what to do when the Christian choice is not obvious?

Teaching Aim

To guide the class to identify principles from this passage for dealing with areas of life where the Christian choice is not obvious.

Introduction to your personal study:

Ask the Lord for insight into how this lesson can be applicable to the lives of your students. Studying about whether to eat meat offered to idols seems far removed from today’s life. However, we too struggle with the tension between our Christian life and the realities of the world in which we live. There are no easy answers, but there are principles to guide us.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

The Bible is quite clear about many things that are morally right or wrong. An example would be the Ten Commandments. It is wrong to worship other gods, to break the Sabbath, to dishonour parents, to steal, to murder, to lie, to commit sexual immorality, to covet. It is right to honour parents, to tell the truth, etc.

However, there are practices which in and of themselves are neutral – playing cards, playing dominoes, watching television, or going to sporting or entertaining events. The list could go on. Other things are more obviously border line and sometimes cause division among believers – drinking alcohol as a beverage, gambling, dressing a certain way, smoking, the use of jewelry or cosmetics. Again the list could go on.

Focusing on the Meaning:

In Corinth a gray area was eating meat that had been offered as a sacrifice to a pagan god. In pagan worship animals were sacrificed as in the religion of the Old Testament. The difference was that the meat offered to idols was not burned or eaten by the priests. It was taken to the local meat market and sold for public consumption. Some believers could eat that meat with no pain of conscience. Others believed it would be sacrilegious to do such a thing. Paul gives some helpful guidelines for us to decide whether to participate or not. Here is what he advises.

Ask if another believer would be hindered if you allow yourself to participate. 8:9-13

Ask if God would be offended if you allow yourself to participate. 10:18-22

Ask if your doing it would be beneficial or constructive. 10:23

Ask if your doing it would glorify God. 10:30

Other help can be found in Romans 14-15.

Each student needs to hear that there are times when “Others may but you cannot”. Sometimes the Lord will restrict one believer and not another.

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

8:1-3 Paul begins to address the issue of meat offered to idols, but stops to remind his readers that knowledge is always incomplete. Verse 2 says ***The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.*** A recent humorous comment by a senior citizen was: “There has been a recent increase in things I know nothing about.” Age often brings the understanding of the inadequacy of both the amount and scope of knowledge gained. Paul speaks to this.

Love, then, rather than knowledge is what is essential in judging others and in making choices which might affect others. ***But the man who loves God is known by God***, Paul states. Morris states “People who truly love God are brought within the sphere of those on whom God is graciously pleased to set his knowledge” (Morris, Leon. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. 1 Corinthians. Grand Rapids: Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Reprinted, 1990, p. 122.) Love, rather than knowledge, is the Christian’s guide. We desire to have love which is informed by God himself.

8:4 Paul here agrees that an idol has no real existence. It is wood or stone. Paul emphasizes the Jewish understanding which is equally important to the Christian. ***There is no God but one.***

8:5 However, there are so-called gods. Idol worshippers referred to the objects of their worship as gods. The heathen world worshipped a multitude of deities, but none of them was real.

8:6 Here, Paul beautifully affirms that there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ. From the Father all things came and exist; from Jesus Christ, all things came and have their being. Since he is emphasizing that there is one God, the Father and the Son are one. Paul’s purpose here is not to examine the complexity of this concept, but to affirm that in contrast to the many gods of the Corinthian culture, the Christians worship but one God.

8:7 From this verse through verse 13, Paul will stress that Christian love means that strong Christians must act with consideration for the weak.

The “knowledge” referred to in verse 1 is mentioned again. Some Christians “knew” that the idol was “nothing at all”. Some Christians may have been so accustomed to the habits of their pre-Christian days that they have difficulty in shaking off the thoughts associated with eating meat coming from an idol temple. They feel they are in some way participating in idolatry.

What one of the strong Corinthian believers might do without a tremor, fully assured that the idol is nothing, is a sin to the weaker brother.

8:8 But the eating of a particular kind of food is a minor matter. Eating does not matter either way, it must not be insisted upon.

“Christians today are apt to find it a little strange that there could be doubt about the attitude of believers to meat offered to idols. It seems to us so obvious that they could have not truck with idolatry. But it was not as easy as that to a new convert at Corinth in the first century. The situation was complicated by two facts. First, it was an accepted social practice to have meals in a temple, or in some place associated with an idol. ‘It was all part and parcel of the formal etiquette in society’ (Moffatt). The kind of occasion,

public or private, when people were likely to come together socially was the kind of occasion when a sacrifice was appropriate. To have nothing to do with such gatherings was to cut oneself off from most social intercourse with one's fellows. People from the lower classes, moreover knew meat almost exclusively as an ingredient in pagan religious celebrations. Some of them would not want 'to miss out on what little bit of meat was offered to them by pagan feasts and institutions' (Thiessen, pp. 128f). But some Christians might well eat it with a guilty conscience. Others, firmly convinced that there was but one God, might well reason, 'How can there possibly be any harm in eating before a block of wood or stone? What difference can it make if meat has been offered to a non-existent deity?'

Secondly, most of the meat sold in the shops had first been offered in sacrifice. Part of the victim was always offered on the altar to the god; part went to the priests, and usually part to the worshippers. The priests customarily sold what they could not use. It would often be very difficult to know for sure whether meat in a given shop had been part of a sacrifice or not. (Morris, p. 120).

From this description we see that the issue is far more complex than we usually understand. Paul's purpose is to help the believers keep this situation from becoming an issue which disrupted the fellowship of the believers.

8:9-13 Further, Paul is concerned that those who can eat meat with a clear conscience do not cause others to do something which is against their own conscience.

These important words for the Corinthians certainly have meaning for us today. If we do something which causes a brother to fall into sin, we have not only sinned against our brother, but against Christ himself.

Some of the gray areas faced by North America Christians would include the following. You may think of gray areas that are more likely to create problems and difficulties where you live in the world:

Participating in casinos, raffles etc. which have as their goal earning money for schools, sports or other worthy causes.

Serving liquor at events such as weddings or adult birthday parties where many guests will expect it to be served and will wonder just how straight-laced people must be not to include it.

Allowing or not allowing children to participate in sports activities which practice or play games on the day in which the family is usually participating in corporate worship.

Choosing to listen to music or watch movies and videos with content which uses violence or coarse language. Choosing to read a steady diet of books which portray darkness, evil, or sorcery.

Dressing in an ostentatious way or dressing in an excessively casual or sensual way especially when exercising a leadership position.

Allowing a “good” thing such as exercise, nutrition, or environmental causes to become the most important thing in our lives.

Committed Christians might speak to these issues with greatly varying perspectives. Paul would remind us that two basic considerations must always exist.

Does my attitude or action express love and understanding for another person’s point of view?

Does what I do negatively influence another person? Am I a stumbling block to someone else?

1 Corinthians 9: 19-27

9:19 Paul was a free man and proud of his Roman citizenship, but was determined to be a slave to the needs of others in order to win them to Christ.

9:20 Paul was a Jew and that was important to him. However, he was no longer bound by Jewish law. Yet, in order to win Jews he respected Jewish law. He asked Jews not so much to give up the practice of the law, but to give up their confidence in it as a means of gaining salvation.

9:21 Those not under the law are the Gentiles and Paul wants to win them to Christ.

9:22 To the weak he wants to express understanding as he has done in chapter 8. ***I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.*** Sensitivity to the cultural realities of all people drove Paul’s ministry and must drive ours. We cannot expect people to become like us in order to receive salvation. With this in mind, the “gray areas” become even more problematic. How do we live our beliefs in such a way as to remain open to others and to present a winsome and appealing way of life to them?

9:23-27 Paul uses the symbolism of the one preparing to run a race. Strict training must be followed. Diet must be focused on those foods which give strength and energy. Late nights are avoided for sleep is essential to repair the body from the rigors of training. Today’s world is well aware of the training required – not only for the Olympic athlete but for the weekend runner of marathons.

Paul, however, points out that the crown or symbol of victory even in something as major as the Olympics is a transitory thing. The winner must continue competing for there is always another contest to be won. Someone else is ready to claim the victor’s honour.

The Christian runs the race; he/she disciplines body, mind and heart in order to stay qualified. Paul does not refer here to a discipline required in order to maintain one's salvation. He requires to the discipline required to be at one's best in service to God.

10:14-33 Verses 1-13 of Chapter 10 reminds the readers of Israelite history. Even in times of great victory, the Israelites fell in temptation and engaged in pagan worship. Paul will continue to warn in later verses that ***“no temptation has seized you except what is common to man. But God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear but will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (v. 13).***

10:14 ***Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.*** Paul has been understanding of the conflicts which the new believer faced in the Corinthian culture. However, after reminding them of the history of the Israelite failure again and again to remain faithful to God, he states very firmly ***flee from idolatry.***

10:15 ***I speak to sensible people.*** An expression used in North America to indicate that something should not be hard to understand is “It’s not rocket science”. This is the idea Paul conveys. It really should not be hard to understand that continuing to participate in any form of idol worship will lead one deeper and deeper into that worship and farther and farther away from God.

16-17 Paul uses the picture of Christ’s sacrifice and our remembrance of it through the drinking of the cup and the breaking of the bread as a visual symbol of the commitment the Christian has made in response to the Christ. He calls it “the cup of thanksgiving” and it is that. We give thanks for “a participation in the blood of Christ”. He died for me.

18-22 In contrast then to the picture of our participation in the remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice we consider participation in a sacrifice to an idol. Paul speaks strongly here – ***the sacrifice of pagans are offered to demons.*** It is impossible for one to participate in the Lord’s table and the table of the demons.

Paul has earlier stated that the idols of wood and stone are not real. But here he acknowledges the power these inanimate articles have in the lives of those who participate in their worship. Their worship is the means by which the forces of evil begin to have power in a life.

23-24 The words of this verse are so clear that they need little commentary.

Everything is permissible – but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible – but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

The “everything” referred to here relates to the issues being discussed. What relationship can one have to the sinful world of which he/she was once a part? You can

continue to maintain friendships with friends and family, but your aim should be to influence them for good.

25-26 Paul here states that the eating of meat from the market can be done with a clear conscience. As stated earlier, there was no clear way to know which meat had been offered to idols. *The earth is the Lord's and everything in it* is a quote from Psalm 24. The following line *the world and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters* reminds the reader of God as creator and sovereign Lord. We need that reminder when we are too involved in seeing things only from our limited perspective. This was what was happening in Corinth. The believers were focused on one issue and perhaps forgetting just how marvelous their salvation experience had been.

27-30 Paul might have said, "Use some common sense". If you go to an unbeliever's house, eat what is put before you. If someone raises the issue of meat offered to idols, explain why you choose not to eat it. Paul seeks to move the reader from a faith based on rules to one based on relationship to one who should always be honored.

31-34 Paul gives these principles:

- Do everything in order to glorify God.
- Do not cause anyone to be led astray.
- Seek the good of others so that they may be saved.
- Follow Christ's example.

We will use these principles as a guide in our worship time.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Lead participants to identify gray areas of decision-making which they may need to reconsider in the light of Paul's admonition to do all we do in love and with concern for our influence on others.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Wrestling with Life's Gray Areas

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 9:19-26; 10:14-33

Background Text

1 Corinthians 8:1—11:1

Main Idea

Even if a practice is not obviously in disobedience to Christian teachings, a Christian may still need to refrain from the practice out of loving concern for others and his or her witness to them.

Question to Explore

What principles can guide us in deciding what to do when the Christian choice is not obvious?

Teaching Aim

To guide the class to identify principles from this passage for dealing with areas of life where the Christian choice is not obvious.

Connect with Life:

Important note to the leader for today: This guide may be too long for the time you have. Be careful to not take more time than is allotted to you. You may have to delete some of the material in order to give the “Worship Time” leader enough time to challenge the church with his or her part.

Share: According to the Bible there are behaviours that are clearly wrong and others that are clearly right. Still there are many activities that are neither right nor wrong in and of themselves. Some of these are border line. Christians in every generation have had to ask: “Should I or should I not do a certain thing?”. What is helpful is to look for biblical principles that can guide us in border line behaviour. Some of these principles are found in this present passage for study.

Guide the Study:

Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 8: 1-13

Focus on verses 1-3.

Examine with your group the relationship of knowledge and love. Help the group to realize that knowledge is always incomplete.

Ask: Can we truly know the motivations behind a particular act which another person does?

Follow up with this question: How does understanding the motivation help us to appreciate or forgive a behaviour?

Discuss: Are there times when love helps us to accept a behaviour even when we don't understand the motivation behind it?

Continue: How important is love in forgiving an action which we feel has been harmful?

Have someone read verses 4-6.

Encourage comments: Does Paul feel that an idol has a real existence?

Also: What is the underlying truth which Paul learned as a Jew and is still important to him as a Christian believer. (There is no God but one).

Have a person read verses 7-8.

From the background material explain why this was such an important issue for Corinthian believers: Social events were often times when sacrifices were offered to idols; poorer Christians may only been able to eat meat as a part of a sacrifice to an idol; meat sacrificed to idols was sold in the market along with other meat – it was difficult if not impossible to know which was meat offered to idols.

Ask someone to read 8:9.

Explain that Christians are free to participate in behaviour that is not clearly wrong in Scripture.

Ask: What does it means to be a stumbling block to someone?

Have a person read 8:10 to see what can happen.

Then encourage someone to read 1 Corinthians 8:8-13.

Encourage the group to discuss some of the possible gray areas for Christians today. (See possibilities in the list below).

- ✚ Participating in casinos, raffles etc. which have as their goal earning money for schools, sports or other worthy causes.
- ✚ Serving liquor at events such as weddings or birthday parties where many guests will expect these to be served and will wonder just how straight-faced people must be not to include these.
- ✚ Allowing or not allowing children to participate in sports activities which practice or play games on the day in which the family is usually participating in corporate worship.
- ✚ Choosing to listen to music or watch movies and videos with content which uses violence or coarse language. Choosing to read a steady diet of books which portray darkness, evil, or sorcery.
- ✚ Dressing in an ostentatious way or dressing in an excessively casual or sensual way especially when exercising a leadership position.
- ✚ Allowing a “good” thing such as exercise, nutrition, or environmental causes become the most important thing in our lives.

Ask for other issues which seem to be gray areas.

Be careful not to spend time debating the right or wrong of these issues. The reason they are “gray areas” is because there will not be agreement on these issues.

Ask: What is the guiding principle which Paul wants the reader to understand. Consideration for a weaker brother is greater than my right or freedom to do a given thing.

Reread verse 12.

Now raise this issue: How serious is it when we choose to do what we want even when it has a harmful impact on another person? (When you sin against your brothers and wound their weak consciences, you sin against Christ).

Look for a brief discussion on this: How does this understanding help us in making decisions about what to do or not to do?

Seek someone to read 1 Corinthians 9: 19-27

Now ask: What was Paul's passion which is expressed to these verses? (Winning people to Christ).

Look for an answer: How did he propose to go about doing that? (Become all things to all people).

Say: This is a daunting task.

Then question them: How do we become all things to all people?

Discuss practical ways we try to do this.

Raise a discussion: Do we expect people to be like us in order to receive salvation?

Request a person to reread verses 23-27.

Ask: What is the picture which Paul uses here? (Running a race).

Add: Does he mean that we must stay in shape in order to be saved or to do our best in service to the Lord? (Not for salvation, but for worthy service).

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 10: 14-33

In verse 14, Paul says *Flee from idolatry*. Paul has been understanding of the conflicts which new believers faced. Nonetheless, he knows that they must flee from idolatry or be drawn into it.

Ask participants to silently consider what in their lives they need to flee from: The lure of material gain; pornography; time wasted on facebook, watching TV, playing video games; addiction to alcohol, tobacco, gambling.

Explain: In verse 15 Paul indicates that he expects the reader to understand what he is saying. He says: "I speak to sensible people."

Search for an answer: What is the picture in verses 16-17 which Paul uses to remind readers of their commitment to Christ? (the cup and the bread).

Comment: Verses 18-22 indicate Paul's awareness of how easily idol worship can corrupt. Although he has said that an idol has no existence, he says here that there are strong forces at work.

Now look for an answer: What does he say about the sacrifice of pagans? (They are offered to demons).

Have some read verses 23-24.

Ask: What principle guides us in making decisions about what we can and cannot do? (Seek the good of others).

Remind the people that God may sometimes prohibit them from participating in some activity but not restrict another believer in that activity. Encourage them not to let this affect them negatively.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Lead participants to identify gray areas of decision-making which they may need to reconsider in the light of Paul's admonition to do all we do in love and with concern for our influence on others. Some things may be shared publically; others may be very individual and personal.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Wrestling with Life's Gray Areas **1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 9:19-26; 10:14-33**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Do All to the Glory of God **1 Corinthians 10: 31-34**

Paul gives these principles:

- Do everything in order to glorify God.
- Do not cause anyone to be led astray.
- Seek the good of others so that they may be saved.
- Follow Christ's example.

On a large poster board, sheets of newspaper or white paper, draw pictures which illustrate these principles. These principles will be discussed in the worship time. Plan to use your pictures in the worship period.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Wrestling with Life's Gray Areas***
1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 9:19-26; 10:14-33**Beginning the Service:**

Sing:

I Worship You, Almighty God, *The Worship Hymnal* #16; CCLI # 20807
Great is the Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #61; CCLI #1149Reader 1***The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty***
the Lord is robed in majesty
and is armed with strength.
The world is firmly established;
it cannot be moved.Reader 2***Your statues stand firm;***
holiness adorns your house
for endless days, O Lord.Reader 3***Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations,***
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength,
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.
Bring an offering and come before him;
Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.Reader 4***The heavens declare the glory of God;***
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Psalm 93: 1-2; 5; 1 Chronicles 16: 28-29; Psalm 19:1

Offering:

Praying for the World:

Pray for the megacity of Yangon in Southeast Asia. If one can get there and one has the money, the city of Yangon is the place where the residents of the surrounding smaller cities and villages like to go. Its pagodas also draw religious pilgrims bringing their offerings. A bustling megacity, Yangon attracts those who desire to learn English and seek an education. Later they return to their native cities to live. Though animism and spirit worship have entered into their rituals, Buddhism is a central part of their daily lives. There is a Christian presence, but it is less than 0.4 percent of the population. A major break-through in this strategic city would impact the entire country for Christ.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Do All to the Glory of God 1 Corinthians 10: 31-34

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God – even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

It is easy for us to get bogged down in the decision-making of our daily lives. Paul indicates that we are to live to the glory of God. **The Message**, an interpretation of scripture by Eugene Peterson, uses this phrase “do everything heartily and freely to the glory of God.”

We are to be careful not to cause anyone to stumble. It is true that we can cause someone to stumble by participating in an unwholesome activity. Every thoughtful Christian wants to be aware of those within his/her circle of influence. These people will include family members, friends, co-workers, clients, patients and even those with whom we deal in stores and businesses. If we are a person in a place of influence our circle of influence is even greater. We may at some point make someone unhappy by a decision we must take, but we must guard against setting an example which would not bring glory to God.

We will not have the opportunity to lead all of those people to Christ. We may, however, be one of the influences which make it possible for someone else to lead them to Christ. At all times and in all places, we need to be aware that our goal is to make it possible for the Good News to be shared.

Christ is our example. Christ loved the sinner; the outcast; the unlovely. We need faith as small as a mustard seed; humility as a child; willingness to give up our attachment to wealth in order to follow him. We need to seek the last place, not the first place. We need to understand that we must take up our cross daily and follow him.

We must ask ourselves each morning. What will my day be like if I do all to the glory of God. I can't snap at my spouse or children; take an extra long coffee break; eat an unhealthy lunch; drive recklessly on the freeway; share in the sexual innuendos at the water cooler. I need to be aware of the worry on my co-workers face; work overtime to get a job done well; be scrupulously honest on my tax-return; watch my attitude when talking about my favorite political candidate and give my spouse and children the time and energy they need. I must use technology wisely. I need to refuse to forward e-mails or posts whose veracity I have reason to question.

I need to walk when possible and enjoy flowers, trees, sky and sunset to renew my spirit. I need to read the word of God with and to those I love. I need to pray throughout the day. I need to ask myself if I am growing in the Lord – am I different than I was a year ago.

Paul gives these principles in three short verses.

- Do everything in order to glorify God.
- Do not cause anyone to be led astray.
- Seek the good of others so that they may be saved.
- Follow Christ's example.

They are amazing principles which can guide and transform our lives.

Call to Commitment:

Hand out copies of the four principles (a list is found at the end of the Worship Time) or have them copied on a white board or large piece of paper. Ask that the group repeat them together.

Let us pray that we will do all to the glory of God – this day, this week, this year, this lifetime.

Concluding the Service:

Close by prayerfully singing Let us pray that we will do all to the glory of God – this day, this week, this year, this lifetime.

We Will Glorify, *The Worship Hymnal* #22; CCLI #19038

Make copies for the four readers which should be enlisted before the worship time.

Reader 1

***The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty
the Lord is robed in majesty
and is armed with strength.
The world is firmly established;
it cannot be moved.***

Reader 2

***Your statues stand firm;
holiness adorns your house
for endless days, O Lord.***

Reader 3

***Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength,
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.
Bring an offering and come before him;
Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.***

Reader 4

***The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.***

Psalm 93: 1-2; 5; 1 Chronicles 16: 28-29; Psalm 19:1

++++++(Cut here)++++++

I Corinthians 10: 31-33

***Do everything in order to glorify God.
Do not cause anyone to be led astray.
Seek the good of others so that they may be saved.
Follow Christ's example.***