

Warm Up Activity or Discussion: Choose *one* and pursue as a group.

Activity

1. Name the popular TV game show that ran from 1950 to 1988 where contestants were given a few seconds to answer a difficult question, and should a contestant not answer correctly, they had to perform a comical stunt. *Hint: A host of this program was a young Bob Barker who later hosted the Price is Right.* [Answer here.](#)
2. As we come to the end of our study, how might the title of this game show apply to Paul's concerns with the Corinthian church?
3. What comical stunts might Paul, as the game show host, assign to the Corinthian contestants? Have some fun with this!

Discussion

Some time ago, an Amish farmer's barn was blown down in a bad storm. To solve this problem, thirty Amish neighbors gathered to build a large new barn for the farmer which they completed in about ten hours. Watch a time-lapse [YouTube video](#) (about one minute long) of the barn raising then discuss the following questions as a group.

1. How do you think the Amish community's solving a serious problem for one farmer strengthened their entire community? Did they do the right thing?
2. According to Matthew 18:15-18, what should the Corinthians have done to solve the problems in their church thus saving Paul from writing such difficult letters?

Read and Discuss God's Word

1. We tend to not write letters anymore, but a few brave souls still do. Can you recall a time in your life when you received a meaningful letter from a family member or a close friend? If so, please share with the group something about the letter and the writer. What were the motivations of the writer? Why was the letter meaningful?
2. Read aloud 2 Corinthians 12:11 to 13:14
3. In verses 12:11 to 12:21, Paul shames the Corinthian church for boasting about the super-apostles. Try to imagine Paul's sarcastic tone of voice when he wrote "I have been a fool!"
 - a. Normally, we avoid shame. Under what circumstances could shaming be appropriate?
 - b. Why do you think Paul shamed the Corinthians?
 - c. If you can, please share with the group a time when you or someone close to you were shamed into changing a poor behavior or dangerous lifestyle.
4. In verse 12:19, Paul writes that instead of defending themselves "... we have been speaking in Christ, all for your upbuilding..." to clarify that his motives were as a spiritual parent to the church. If you have or have had a spiritual 'parent', share with the group about this person and how they enhanced your life in Christ.

5. In chapter 13, Paul warned the Corinthians that if he returned to Corinth, he would “not spare” those who continued to sin. Such tough words!
 - a. Consider compassion and then consider truth. What can happen when there is too much compassion and not enough truth)
 - b. How about when there is too much truth and not enough compassion?
 - c. Always, Jesus spoke the perfect amounts, each, of compassion and truth. See, Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well in John 4:4-42. Also, see Matthew 12:34 where Jesus called the Pharisees a “brood of vipers”. How do these two interactions differ? Why do you think they differ?
 - d. What’s was Paul’s ‘ratio’ of compassion and truth in this part of his letter? Did he use more of compassion or more of truth?
6. In verse 13:5, Paul tells the Corinthians to “examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith”. Ouch!!
 - a. While Paul clearly challenged the faith of the Corinthians, how does examining ourselves, as believers, help us grow?
 - b. What benchmark should we compare ourselves against? Why?
7. In verse 13:9, Paul’s prays for restoration of the church. Restoration of what? In verse 10, what does he hope to avoid in his next visit?

Live it Out

As we close out this sermon series, someone in the group read Paul’s final words in his second letter to the Corinthian church:

“Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (ESV)

Notice the underlined words. Remember these as you go forth this week noting that with these actions, the “God of love and peace will be with you”. What a wonderful promise!

Closing Prayer

Jim and Tyler have led us on an amazing journey called “Never Give Up”. They discussed God’s Promises, Transformation, Suffering, the Future, Reconciliation, Godliness, Apologizing, Generosity, Fighting Battles, Our Character, Jesus, and finally Growing. Paul loved the Corinthians so much, that he bared his soul to them, spoke hard truth to them, prayed for them, and encouraged the church to return to the one, true gospel. How generous our God was to transform the persecuting Pharisee Saul into the servant leader Paul knowing that the Christian church would need his words for many generations to come!

Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit: May we Never Give Up on loving others and speaking the gospel truth, like Paul, so that they might choose the epic offer Jesus gave to the world!