



JUNE 2010 TEACHING PLANS

HERE'S THE CHURCH

BY SHARON HODDE MILLER

When it comes to the church, we all bring our own strengths and weaknesses. Our similarities may unify us as members of the body of Christ, but it's our differences that can bring refreshing variety to our lives and to our churches. When we work together, embracing and loving one another, the church functions as God intended.

Paul knew this, and that's one of the reasons he worked so hard to help the Corinthian church overcome its division. The Corinthians weren't divided as the result of disagreement. At its root, the division was caused by sin. The Corinthians had let the world seep in, and eventually their sin ate away at the core of their unity.

First and 2 Corinthians teach us that the way we live our lives is deeply connected to the community around us. We can't hope for unity if we aren't submitting our own lives to God. In 1 Corinthians Paul addressed the sin that infiltrated the church and explained how to squelch it. In 2 Corinthians Paul focused more on the relational healing that needed to take place as a result of the problems within the Corinthian community.

Corinth wasn't unlike our culture today, so the story of their church is a cautionary tale. As Christians today become more and more convinced that what they do only affects themselves, the story of Corinth warns us otherwise.

WHAT'S INSIDE ...

The goal of the *Collegiate* online features is to bring you a structured teaching plan with additional helps and relevant questions to equip you to lead a strong discussion-based lesson. Here's a breakdown of what's inside: "Getting Started" helps introduce the topic and get your students engaged in the lesson. "Need to Knows" provide the lesson overview and key verses of each lesson. "Explore the Bible" leads your students through the Scripture passages of the lesson, helping them understand the text, its historical and cultural context, and what it means to them today. "Apply to Life" gives you ideas for furthering the application of the Scripture, so students can take active steps to process what they're learning and how it impacts their lives. Be sure you also utilize the commentary provided (threadsmedia.com/collegiate) to help with your preparation and personal study of the lessons.

As always, we're here for you. Please send us your questions, thoughts, and suggestions. Let us know what we could do better and how these teaching plans could be even more relevant to your students and your ministry.

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THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 28 OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "ONE TRUE GOD" BY JAMES TEALY, FROM THE ALBUM *THE HARDEST STEP TO LAND*.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson explores the source of division, or "drama," in college ministries and examines the Gospel-centered way to combat it.

FOCAL PASSAGES

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10,21-25,26-31; 3:9-10,16-17



UNITY: THE CURE FOR AN AILING CHURCH

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "One True God" by James Tealy playing in the background as students arrive.

Although we tend to describe gossip, cattiness, and back-biting as being "so high school," these behaviors unfortunately continue long after we graduate and move on. This is especially true of college students who are emerging into adulthood, figuring out who they are and navigating the anxieties of new independence, dating, and determining their life's direction. With all of these factors, college ministry sometimes serves up the perfect recipe for drama, drama, *drama!*

- Do you think drama is a problem for Christians?
- What do you think is the cause of drama among Christians?

In 1 Corinthians 1 and 2, Paul was facing some major drama of his own. The Corinthians were bickering, and the church was fractured as a result. By examining Paul's example, we can learn how to cut off the drama in our own communities, instead of feeding it.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 28 in the Summer 2010 issue of *Collegiate* magazine for a quote related to this topic and a video to watch.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 28 of the Summer 2010 *Collegiate* magazine.

1) ADDRESS THE SYMPTOM: DIVISION

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10.

¹⁰Now I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all say the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.

Have someone read “Address the Symptom: Division” on page 28 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Begin by reflecting on the manner in which Paul approached the Corinthians:

- **Paul didn’t beat around the bush with his intentions. He was up front about his concerns, and he was clear. How was Paul’s approach different from the way most people deal with conflict?**
- **Why is it important to address division the way Paul did: up front and straightforward?**

Whenever someone comes to you with a problem, it’s easy to sit with them and brainstorm about how to respond, or feed off of one another about how wrong the other person is. But Paul did neither one. He went straight to the source. Rather than become a middleman, he brought the issue out in the open so that there was no room for miscommunication or misunderstanding.

If you read on after verse 10, we discover that the Corinthians were following different leaders. Some were following Paul, some were following Peter, and some were following Christ, but they were doing so competitively. They fought over whose teacher was better and whose teaching was truer. The Corinthians were mangling the gospel as a means for building up their own pride and self-righteousness. In response to this ego-driven quarreling, Paul urged them to “say the same thing.”

- **Within the context of their argument, what do you think Paul meant by “say the same thing?”**
- **Why is it important that Christians in general “say the same thing?”**

2) DIAGNOSE THE ILLNESS: SIN

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:21-25.

²¹For since, in God’s wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of the message preached. ²²For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. ²⁴Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom, ²⁵because God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

Have someone read “Diagnose the Illness: Sin” on page 28 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- **Here Paul commended the “foolish” ones who believed the message of Christ. What did he mean by “foolish?”**
- **In light of the Corinthians’ conflict, why did Paul criticize the wisdom of men? What’s wrong with it?**
- **Underlying these verses is a deeper problem, a sin that is causing it. What’s the sin?**

It’s easy to look down on the Corinthians for being childish, but rarely do Christians set out to cause division. Division erupts when two opposing opinions genuinely think they’re right or justified, and refuse to hear otherwise. That’s why Paul’s second step in confronting the conflict was to address their pride. Not only is pride the main cause of the fighting, but pride might have also prevented the Corinthians from listening to Paul’s criticism.

- **How does this situation challenge us to respond when we’re involved in conflict with someone else?**
- **How might Paul’s encouragement to be fools for Christ speak into our circumstances when we genuinely think we’re right?**
- **What does Paul’s example teach us about responding to another person’s drama?**

Whenever we’re faced with conflict, it’s easy to address the symptoms of the problem without addressing the cause. Paul’s example challenges us to dig deeper and find out what’s really going on. If we diagnose the problem incorrectly, then we’ll offer the wrong solution as well.

3) ADMINISTER THE CURE: THE GOSPEL

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31

²⁶Brothers, consider your calling: not many are wise from a human perspective, not many powerful, not many of noble birth. ²⁷Instead, God has chosen the world’s foolish things to shame the wise, and God has chosen the world’s weak things to shame the strong. ²⁸God has chosen the world’s insignificant and despised things—the things viewed as nothing—so He might bring to nothing the things that are viewed as something, ²⁹so that no one can boast in His presence. ³⁰But from Him you are in Christ Jesus, who for us became wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written: The one who boasts must boast in the Lord.

Have someone read, “Administer the Cure: The Gospel” on page 28 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- **According to Paul, why did God choose us?**
- **How should this knowledge impact the way we respond to conflict? For example, consider some of the following scenarios and how you would respond:**
 - 1) Roommates who can’t get along (the example from the reading)

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 30 OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "THE LOST GET FOUND" BY BRITT NICOLE, FROM THE ALBUM *THE LOST GET FOUND*.
- ENOUGH PENS, MARKERS, AND PAPER FOR EACH STUDENT TO WRITE ENCOURAGING NOTES TO CHURCH LEADERS.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson takes a look at the Scriptural teaching that our church leaders are a gift from God. It also explores the importance of following and respecting our leaders' authority, as well as taking the time to affirm and encourage our leaders.

FOCAL PASSAGES

1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-5,9-13,14-20



SERVING OUR LEADERS

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "The Lost Get Found" by Britt Nicole playing in the background as students arrive.

Today's culture has taken criticism to a whole new level. Thanks to blogging and tweeting, everyone has their own personal soapbox for airing their opinions and complaints, and Christians are no exception.

- What are some of the reasons Christians criticize church leaders?
- Why is it so tempting for Christians to criticize?
- Is it ever hard for you to trust your leaders?

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 30 in the Summer 2010 issue of *Collegiate* for a statistic related to this lesson and a recommended read.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 30 of the Summer 2010 *Collegiate* magazine.

1) REFUSE TO BE CRITICAL

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-5.

¹A person should consider us in this way: as servants of Christ and managers of God's mysteries. ²In this regard, it is expected of managers that each one be found faithful. ³It is of little importance that I should be evaluated by you or by a human court. In fact, I don't even evaluate myself. ⁴For I am not conscious of anything against myself, but I am not justified by this. The One who evaluates me is the Lord. ⁵Therefore don't judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God.

Have someone read "Refuse to Be Critical" on page 30 of *Collegiate* magazine.

In the face of criticism, Paul instructed the Corinthians not to judge him, arguing that the time for judging is Judgment Day. What's ironic about this instruction is that it seems to conflict with Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 5:12:

"For what is it to me to judge outsiders? Do you not judge those who are inside?"

In chapter 5, Paul dealt with blatant sexual immorality. Responding to that rebellion, he gave the Corinthians permission to "judge."

- **Knowing that Paul permitted the Corinthians to judge the sexually immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5, why did he instruct them not to judge in this circumstance? What's the difference between the two situations?**
- **According to Paul's usage, when should we be careful not to judge?**

We should always be wary of judging our leaders when we're simply speculating about their motives. It's one thing if a leader is engaging in unashamed immorality, but most of the time leaders are criticized on the basis of assumptions: They're described as being superficial, or they're accused of showing favoritism. When tempted to criticize, Paul instead encouraged us to recognize our leaders' service and humbly accept their guidance.

2) RECOGNIZE THEIR SERVICE

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:9-13.

⁹For I think God has displayed us, the apostles, in last place, like men condemned to die: we have become a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. ¹⁰We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! ¹¹Up to the present hour we are both hungry and thirsty; we are poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless; ¹²we labor, working with our own hands. When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; ¹³when we are slandered, we entreat. We are, even now, like the world's garbage, like the filth of all things.

Have someone read "Recognize Their Service" on page 30 of *Collegiate* magazine.

In this passage Paul's words drip with sarcasm. He contrasted the state of wealth and comfort of his critical followers against the sacrifice and suffering of the apostles. He mockingly concluded that God must favor the Corinthians more. Paul was really exposing the Corinthians' lack of commitment. The Corinthians weren't actually wiser, stronger, or more honored. They only thought they were in their own minds.

- **In what ways do our leaders sacrifice for us that we may not always acknowledge?**
- **According to Paul's words in verses 10-13, what distinguishes a Christian leader?**

- **How should we respond to our leaders if they don't always measure up to these standards?**

3) ACCEPT THEIR GUIDANCE

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:14-20.

¹⁴I'm not writing this to shame you, but to warn you as my dear children. ¹⁵For you can have 10,000 instructors in Christ, but you can't have many fathers. Now I have fathered you in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ¹⁶Therefore I urge you, be imitators of me. ¹⁷This is why I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you about my ways in Christ Jesus, just as I teach everywhere in every church. ¹⁸Now some are inflated with pride, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will know not the talk but the power of those who are inflated with pride. ²⁰For the kingdom of God is not in talk but in power.

Have someone read "Accept Their Guidance" on page 31 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- **What do you think Paul meant in verse 15 when he said he had "fathered" the Corinthians?**
- **Why do you think Paul reminded them of this relationship?**

It seems that the Corinthians were acting like spiritual teenagers. Paul was their spiritual father, but rather than respect and honor him, they thought they were smarter and wiser. Like a young teen who naively believes he knows more than his parents, the Corinthians sat in judgment over Paul.

With this in mind, compare the following two passages of Scripture:

"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing in the Lord" (Colossians 3:20).

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 32 OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "WHAT FAITH CAN DO" BY KUTLESS, FROM THE ALBUM *IT IS WELL*.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson explores the ways in which our personal morality affects our relationship with God, our friends, and those outside the church.

FOCAL PASSAGES

1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-6,7-9A,11,13B-17,18-20



LIVING THE 'GOOD' LIFE

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "What Faith Can Do" by Kutless playing in the background as students arrive.

The word "hypocrite" comes from the Greek word *hypocrites*, meaning "stage actor." In ancient Greece it was common for actors to put on masks. The facial expressions of the masks helped to exaggerate the emotions of the actor, and in an age before microphones they were also designed to amplify the voices of the actors. An actor who donned one of these masks was therefore called a "hypocrite."

- What sorts of masks do Christians wear?
- When are we most likely to wear them?
- What specific behaviors are Christian college students trying to hide?

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 32 in the Summer 2010 issue of *Collegiate* for a video to watch.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 32 of the Summer 2010 *Collegiate* magazine.

1) TO HELP YOUR CHURCH

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-6.

¹Does any of you who has a complaint against someone dare go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ²Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest cases? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels—not to speak of things pertaining to this life? ⁴So if you have cases pertaining to this life, do you select those who have no standing in the church to judge? ⁵I say this to your shame! Can it be that there is not one wise person among you who will be able to arbitrate between his brothers? ⁶Instead, brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

Have someone read “To Help Your Church” on page 32 of *Collegiate* magazine.

In 1 Corinthians 6:1-6, Paul urges the Corinthians to keep their fighting between themselves, rather than bring non-Christians into the argument.

- Do you think Paul wants Christians to hide their sin from the world?
- Why is it hypocritical to tell non-Christians about a fight you’re having with a Christian friend?
- How does this practice impact our witness?

We should not mistake Paul’s words here; he wasn’t encouraging hypocrisy by telling Christians to be fake around non-Christians. He was trying to guard their witness and protect the integrity of the community.

We destroy any chance at setting an example when we slander our Christian friends in front of non-Christians. We also reveal the true location of our trust: the opinions of others, instead of the opinion of God.

2) TO SHOW YOUR SALVATION

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:7-9A,11.

⁷Therefore, it is already a total defeat for you that you have lawsuits against one another. Why not rather put up with injustice? Why not rather be cheated? ⁸Instead, you act unjustly and cheat—and this to brothers! ^{9a}Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit God’s kingdom?

.....
¹¹Some of you were like this; but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Have someone read “To Show Your Salvation” on page 32 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- Why did Paul suggest that the Corinthians allow themselves to be cheated?

The purpose of morality is to display transformation, to show that we’re different from the rest of the world.

- How can we exemplify this difference when someone wrongs us? For example, what’s the godly response in the following situations:
 - 1) Someone cuts in front of you at the grocery store check-out line.
 - 2) You’re walking home one night, and outside your dorm a drunk hall-mate spills his drink all over you.
 - 3) One of your Christian friends says something that hurts your feelings in front of a non-Christian friend.

The key is to remember that the Christian lifestyle isn’t just about not drinking or not having sex before marriage. It’s a way of life that signals your salvation to everyone around you. You may not drink, but if you’re constantly argumentative or unforgiving, you’re still engaging in hypocrisy.

3) TO MAINTAIN YOUR GODLINESS

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:13B-17.

^{13b}The body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴God raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are the members of Christ? So should I take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Absolutely not! ¹⁶Do you not know that anyone joined to a prostitute is one body with her? For it says, The two will become one flesh. ¹⁷But anyone joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Have someone read “To Maintain Godliness” on page 32 of *Collegiate* magazine.

Although Paul referred to a literal prostitute in this example, prostitution was also used in the Bible as a metaphor. Take Leviticus 20:6:

“Whoever turns to mediums or spiritists and prostitutes himself with them, I will turn against that person and cut him off from his people.”

- What is meant by the term “prostitute” in this passage? (Begin by examining the difference between a married woman and a prostitute.)
- Why is God so opposed to our spiritual prostitution?
- What are some of the ways college students “prostitute” themselves? Here are a few examples:
 - 1) A girl sleeps with a man, not for money but for attention
 - 2) A guy compromises himself to be accepted into a fraternity or group of friends
 - 3) A student doesn’t stand up for the gospel in her religion or science class because she’s afraid of being looked down on by her classmates

Spiritual prostitution is when we take the parts of ourselves that are meant for God — our purity, glory, worth, security, career, education, and so forth — and sell them to the world in exchange for temporary pleasure or gain.

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 34 OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "FREE TO BE ME" BY FRANCESCA BATTISTELLI, FROM THE ALBUM *IT'S YOUR LIFE — EP*.
- ASK A HUSBAND AND WIFE TO COME TO THE CLASS TO FIELD QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRIST-CENTERED DATING AND MARRIAGE.

NEED TO KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson takes a look at the biblical perspectives on singleness, dating, and marriage. It also examines how each of these stages in life can be used for the kingdom of God.

FOCAL PASSAGES

1 CORINTHIANS 7:10-11,12-16,32-35,36-39



A STATUS OF ONE

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Free to Be Me" by Francesca Battistelli playing in the background as students arrive.

- Do you think it's better for a Christian to stay single or get married?
- What are the advantages of singleness in the Christian life?
- What are the advantages of marriage?

Ever since the start of the economic recession, there are two major industries that have remained unaffected. While the rest of the economy has plummeted, they have instead flourished. What are they? The pet industry and the dating industry. Why? Because the one thing people always crave, especially when their life circumstances are struggling, is companionship.

Although the divorce statistics indicate a low valuing of marriage, perhaps our problem is just the opposite: we over-value marriage. We make it into an idol. We rank it as the one thing to be desired above all other things. And it inevitably disappoints. That's why Paul takes the time in 1 Corinthians 7 to put marriage in its rightful place.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 34 in the Summer 2010 issue of *Collegiate* for a Bible study related to this lesson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 34 of the Summer 2010 *Collegiate* magazine.

1) WHERE TO BEGIN

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7:10-11.

¹⁰I command the married—not I, but the Lord—a wife is not to leave her husband. ¹¹But if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband—and a husband is not to leave his wife.

Have someone read “Where to Begin” on page 34 of *Collegiate* magazine.

The person you are today determines who you’ll become tomorrow. Our habits and our lifestyles shape us, which means that our behaviors as single people will shape the way we may one day live as married people.

- What are some of the habits and choices that you can make as a single person that will serve you in marriage?
- What are some of the habits and choices that you can make as a single person that will hurt your marriage?

2) SHOULD WE FLIRT TO CONVERT?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7:12-16.

¹²But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she is willing to live with him, he must not leave her. ¹³Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband, and he is willing to live with her, she must not leave her husband. ¹⁴For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the Christian husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. ¹⁵But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to peace. ¹⁶For you, wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Or you, husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?

Have someone read “Should We Flirt to Convert?” on page 34 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- Why isn’t “flirting to convert” a valid form of evangelism?
- Why are so many Christians tempted by it?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14.

¹⁴Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

Although this passage is talking more generally about Christian fellowship than it is about marriage, it certainly applies to marriage as well. A yoke was used to join two oxen as they plowed a field. If one ox was weaker, slower, or smaller than the other, then most of the work would fall onto the shoulders of one, and they would be unable to plow in a straight line.

- With this visual in mind, what happens when a Christian is unequally yoked in a dating or marriage relationship?
- This analogy also indicates that the ox’s work is hindered by its unequal yoke. What work is hindered when a Christian is unequally yoked?
- What does this tell us about the ultimate purpose of marriage?

God gave Eve to Adam to make him more effective at the work He’d given him to do. In the same way, two people should only marry if they can serve God better together than they could apart. The purpose of marriage is to work more effectively for God. That’s why it’s important that both men and women find a spouse with whom they are equally yoked.

3) THE SINGLE LIFE

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 7:32-35.

³²I want you to be without concerns. An unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. ³³But a married man is concerned about the things of the world—how he may please his wife—³⁴and he is divided. An unmarried woman or a virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. ³⁵Now I am saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but because of what is proper, and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

Have someone read “The Single Life” on page 34 of *Collegiate* magazine.

- What makes it so hard to be single?
- What are some ways Christians waste their singleness?
- What does it look like when a Christian is taking advantage of their singleness for the kingdom of God? Be specific.

If you want to get married someday, sometimes it’s hard to be single because you don’t know how long the season will last. That’s why it’s important to trust in God, who does. Knowing that God is sovereign and good should set you free to maximize your singleness rather than wasting those years by trying to make marriage happen before God is ready. Use your singleness so that when you get married you don’t have to look back with regret.

