

### Biblical Perspectives on Life & Ministry

#### Introduction

- ❑ Many serious problems in the church at Corinth: **divisions, immorality, lawsuits, marriage/singleness, idolatry, drunkenness, abuse of spiritual gifts, confusion about eschatology, etc.**
- ❑ They recognized their need for help & contacted Paul – 3 different times & ways (1:11; 7:1; 16:17).
- ❑ A major cause for these problems – immature or childish thinking & understanding (3:1-3a; 14:20).
- ❑ Immature thinking & understanding leads to jealousy, strife, arrogance & confusion (3:3b; 4:7, 18; 5:2a; 8:1b; 11:16; 14:33).
- ❑ Paul is writing to correct these serious problems in the life & ministry of the church at Corinth.
- ❑ A biblical perspective is essential to address these & all problems in a Christian's life – regarding time, priorities, God's will, etc.

#### I. The Relevance of Time

##### A. God has complete rule over time

*God alone is eternal with no time boundaries (Ps. 90:2) – no beginning, no end. Time was included in creation – God created & started time (Gen. 1:1). God intervenes in time when necessary (Josh. 10:13-14). Time has a beginning & an end.*

##### B. Time has a limited rule over humanity

*God as Creator established time boundaries for His creation (Job 14:1-5). Believers must learn & accept that the length of our life is determined by God – limited, predetermined lifespan (Ps. 90:12). So believers must wisely use the limited time of life & ministry (Eph. 5:15-16) – **URGENCY**.*

#### II. The Divisions of Time

Paul is correcting immature thinking about life & ministry for believers who are not considering the eternal future – NOW & THEN (1Co. 13:8-13).

##### A. The Present

*The present time & age is NOW (v. 12). In the present time we need spiritual gifts for ministry (v. 8). In the present time our knowledge, understanding & ministry are flawed – less than perfect (v. 9, 12a, c). So it is foolish to live only for the present (even in ministry – 1Co. 3:14-15; 15:32).*

##### B. The Future

*The eternal & glorious future is THEN (v. 12). THEN we will not need spiritual gifts (preaching, teaching, knowledge, wisdom...or the Bible); our knowledge & understanding will be perfect or complete (v. 10, 12b, d). THEN = “when the perfect comes” is the eternal & permanent state of believers. But it is foolish to live only for the future (2Th. 3:10-12).*

##### C. The Past

*Biblical history was intended to benefit the believer in this present life & ministry (Rom. 15:4). We should learn from the past – good & evil (it's all recorded in the Bible). However, it is foolish to live only in the past (Lk. 5:33-39).*

**ILL:** Jesus displayed the proper balance in perspective in Jn. 13:3-5. Jesus knew His past, His future & His present ministry. This is a balanced perspective in life & ministry.

**APPL:** The same should be true for each believer – you & me. We should be familiar with biblical history & our own history; familiar the eternal future that the Bible describes for us; and familiar with the life & ministry that God is calling us to individually & collectively.

## CONCLUSION

Our perspectives regarding time affects our decisions at home, work, ministry, school, recreation...all aspects of our lives. Our perspectives regarding our past & future affect our plans & priorities in the present. What you believe will happen in the future affects how you spend your time & money today. Some of the mistakes you've made in the past or that others have made affect your decisions today. We learn from the serious mistakes of Abraham, Sarah, Moses, David, etc. & this affects our decisions today. We also learn from the way God blessed & directed many people in the OT & NT which affects us today. We must keep these biblical perspectives in balance & live wisely because all of us have a fixed & limited amount of time given to us by God; and we need to make the best use of it!

And if you are not a Christian, you need to think about your past, present & future too. You will have to stand before Christ to give an account of your time, actions, decisions, etc. You need to make sure that your life & living is not in vain... Jesus is the only hope for the future. Will you trust Him & believe today...?

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