



FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS

1 Corinthians

Drama-Free Zone

Day 1 — Ice Breaker

1. It's time to settle the debate once and for all. Apple or Android? GO!

Read It

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10–17.

2. What is Paul's appeal to the Corinthian believers (1:10)?
3. What five words or phrases does Paul use to describe Corinthian believers getting along (1:10)?
4. What did the Corinthian believers quarrel over (1:11–12)?
5. How did Paul try to move the focus off himself and onto Christ (1:13–17)?
6. What can result from preaching the gospel with "words of human wisdom" (1:17)?
7. What did Christ send Paul to do (1:17)?

Day 2 — Today's Theme: Drama

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10–11.

Have you experienced drama with your friends? In my many years as a student ministry pastor, I have seen students who were the best of friends get to the point where they can't stand to be around each other. Drama can happen because of two girls "fighting" over a boy or two boys "fighting" over a girl. It can be because of jealousy over a friend's accomplishments. Probably the number one reason I have seen drama among friends is because of words. Someone shares some "tea" about their friend that may or may not be true and that friend finds out about it and then the drama begins.

There is no place for drama in the church. The bottom line is that drama is sin. Especially since drama usually starts with jealousy, gossip, or revenge. When we choose to not get along with others, especially in your small group or others in our student ministry, then we break the heart of God.

"You may come into contact with two church members who have had a falling out. Perhaps one has sinned against the other and is denying it. You can speak to the one who has been sinned against and open up Proverbs 19:11 to remind that person, 'It is the glory of a man to overlook an offense.' Can you overlook this offense—can you set it aside and continue to relate to that person as if it never happened? If not, then you can take that person to Matthew 18:15 and help him understand the process God gives us to resolve conflict: Go to that person alone, describe the offense, and see if they will ask your forgiveness; if not, take one or two other people and do it again; and if even then they won't repent, take it to the church.

Of course maybe it's you who needs to obey God when he says, 'as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.'"¹ Would it be said of you that you live at peace with everyone?

In these ways and so many others, you can imitate God by serving as a peacemaker. You can bring peace between man and man."²

8. What causes drama among students at your school?

9. Have you experienced drama with your friends? If so, what caused the drama?

10. Quarreling in the church or student ministry is divisive and it detracts from the Church's mission to be a beacon of light for Jesus in a dark world. Knowing this to be true, how can you seek to be a peacemaker in your church or student ministry with the people around you?

¹ Romans 12:18

² <https://www.challies.com/articles/being-a-peacemaker/>

Day 3 — Today's Theme: Pedestals

Read 1 Corinthians 1:10–16.

School has begun and many of you are taking art class. You will create something so amazing that when you are finished, the art teacher will host an art show at school and place it on a pedestal for all to look at and admire.

Some of us put people on pedestals, whether it's music artists like Taylor Swift, athletes like Patrick Mahomes, or maybe even an adult in your life or a popular kid in your school. Some people put their pastor, student ministry pastor, or other Christian leader on a pedestal, where in their mind, he can say or do nothing wrong. This is what was happening in the church of Corinth. Believers were putting Christian leaders, such as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas on pedestals and were becoming divided based on who they were following. The truth is that every person who ever lived since Adam and Eve, was born and lived as a sinner³ (except Jesus of course). It's only by the grace of God that we are rescued from our lives of sin and transformed through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The only One who should be on a pedestal is Jesus. He is the only One worthy of all of our worship and praise.

However, that doesn't mean that we aren't supposed to look for mature believers that we can learn from on how to follow Jesus closely. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul says to "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ."

11. Who are people that students put on pedestals today? Why are they on their pedestal?

12. Paul talks about divisions in the Corinthian church. Why are divisions so damaging to a local church? How can divisions be damaging to our student ministry?

13. How does Paul use the unity of Christ and His Body as a strong argument against divisions and against following specific leaders against other leaders?

³ Psalm 51:5, Romans 3:23

Day 4 — Today's Theme: Set Apart

Read 1 Corinthians 1:2.

"To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours" (1 Corinthians 1:2).

In 1 Corinthians 1:2, there are three words that describe our identity in Christ. The first two words, "sanctified"⁴ and "saints,"⁵ come from the same root word "holy." "Holy" means to be "set apart," meaning that we are set apart from how the world around us lives and thinks. The third word is "church,"⁶ which means "called out ones." We are called out from the world to live a life committed to following Jesus. Paul reminds the Corinthian believers of who they are in Christ. If they understand who they are in Christ as being set apart and called out, then they need to hold a mirror to their lives to show that disagreements and divisions within the church are not honoring Jesus and not how we are to be living. I remember being a senior in high school and the first time I checked out the Wednesday night student ministry in my church. What drew me to those teens and ultimately to Jesus was how they were different from any other group of students I saw in my public high school. They loved Jesus and they had a united love for one another in Christ that you don't see in the world.

14. Consider the disagreements you have observed among your friends who claim to follow Jesus. How would seeing ourselves and one another as holy help with conflict resolution?

15. How is living in unity attractive to unbelieving friends who visit our student ministry?

⁴ https://www.preceptaustin.org/1thessalonians_523-24#sanctify

⁵ https://www.preceptaustin.org/philippians_11-8#s

⁶ https://www.preceptaustin.org/1_corinthians_159_commentary#c

Day 5 — Today's Theme: Gospel-Centered Leadership

Read 1 Corinthians 1:17.

Dr. Dwight Slater served as a missionary doctor in the country of the Ivory Coast in Africa. When Dwight speaks, he is soft spoken and contemplative. In my early years as a student ministry pastor, I remember that he was asked to speak on a Wednesday night to our high school students. I remember the high school pastor thinking that the students would quickly tune out because of his soft-spoken tone. He wasn't the typical high energy fast paced stereotypical youth speaker. However, when Dwight spoke, yes, he still had his soft-spoken tone, but students were locked in to every word he shared, not because he spoke with human eloquence, but because he spoke with power when he talked about the cross. I knew the secret to Dwight's ability to capture the hearts and attention of the high school students. It was his continual prayerful dependence upon the Lord as he spoke. Dwight mentored me for 2 years and I watched how there was always a short pause before he would answer one of my questions. I learned during those pauses, he would take a few seconds to ask the Lord for wisdom before opening his mouth. I know that before he spoke to our high school students that Wednesday night, he spent a good amount of time in prayer asking the Lord to empower him and his words.



Many of you know Ken Rudolph, the high school speaker at Lake Ann Camp. Ken has been speaking to teenagers at Lake Ann Camp for the past 37 summers; he is currently 73 years old, and students love hearing Ken preach. Do you know the secret to Ken's powerful preaching? It's not his eloquent words! It's his prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit and belief in the power of the cross. I too know this from firsthand experience, because every year I take students up to Lake Ann Camp. Ken always invites me to pray with him and a few other pastors before he preaches in chapel. He may have preached a sermon several times before, but he realizes it's not his own eloquence but the Lord who empowers His message and messenger.

Paul dissociates himself from the pedestal that the Corinthian believers are trying to put Paul on. He shares that Christ called him not to be a leader to bring division within the Corinthian church, but he was sent to preach the cross and the power that comes from preaching that message.

16. How can you tell if a church leader has the proper focus?

17. How can humility and servant leadership prevent division within the church?