

Study Aids
Discussion Questions
For “What’s the Message?” Lessons

Lesson 124

Comment:

The divisions in the church at Corinth cut deep, and filled the congregation with tension. But it was probably the fourth group, the so-called "Christ-men" that caused the greatest problem. Although Luke gives us minimal information about this group, they reflect ideas of Gnosticism and Greek philosophy. As Dr. Franzmann writes: "(they) treasured the gifts of the Spirit primarily as a means to knowledge of God, as the way to wisdom. And this knowledge, they claimed, made them free." They boasted that "All things are lawful for me." In other words, they were above the law, and it did not apply to them, so they could do anything they wanted to do. It was a persuasive kind of liberalism, and it led to a collapse of the moral standard of the church.

Questions:

Have you ever experienced any similar kind of teaching in any congregation, or heard of it? If so, what was the result of this type of teaching? If you have no direct experience along this line, try to imagine what destruction such a theology could produce in a congregation. Share your expectations with others in your study group.

In Corinth this theology led to the immoral behavior of one man, and led others to boast that they were demonstrating their spiritual maturity in tolerating it. Paul called that "arrogance." What do you call it? Was it truly "spiritual maturity"?

Should such acts within a congregation call for church discipline? What kind of discipline do you think is proper, or justified? What is the proper purpose of church discipline?