Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Bad Company Corrupts Good Character
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15
Code: BQ011111

Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." Become sober–minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. (1 Corinthians15:33–34)

Paul warned the Corinthians that they should **not be deceived** about the danger of **bad company**. *Homilia* (**company**) basically means an association of people, but also can have the connotation of a lecture or sermon. It seems possible, therefore, that the Corinthians were both listening to some wrong teaching and associating with some evil people. Whether the teaching was in formal messages or not, it was **bad** and corrupting.

People who think wrongly invariably behave wrongly. Wrong behavior comes from wrong thinking, from wrong beliefs and wrong standards. It is impossible to associate regularly with wicked people without being contaminated both by their ideas and by their habits. The context implies that the **bad company** was teaching the heretical theology that there is no resurrection of the dead, and that bad theology had corrupted **good morals**.

One incentive the hope of resurrection gives is for sanctification. Looking forward to resurrection should lead to more godly living and spiritual maturity. Denying the resurrection destroys the incentives both for service and for sanctification. Why then bother serving the Lord or serving others in His name, and why bother to be holy and pure?

Just as hoping in the resurrection is an incentive to obedience and holiness, so disbelief of it is an incentive to disobedience and immorality. As Paul has just pointed out, if there is no resurrection, we might as well **eat and drink, for tomorrow we die**. If death is the end, what great difference does it make what we do?

Some in the Corinthian congregation had **no knowledge of God**, and therefore no knowledge of His truth. Their bad theology was leading to bad behavior, especially because they denied the resurrection.

The Greek historian Thucydides reported that when a deadly plague came to Athens, "People committed every shameful crime and eagerly snatched at every lustful pleasure." They believed life was short and there was no resurrection, so they would have to pay no price for their vice. The

Roman poet Horace wrote, “Tell them to bring wine and perfume and the too short–lived blossoms of the lovely rose while circumstance and age and the black threads of the three sisters fate still allow us to do so.” Another Roman poet, Catullus, penned the lines: “Let’s live my Lesbia and let’s love, and lets value the tales of austere old men at a single half penny. Suns can set and then return again, but for us when once our brief light sets there is but one perpetual night through which we must sleep.”

Without the prospect of a resurrection, and of the accountability it brings, there is no incentive for doing anything but what we feel like doing here and now. If behavior has no reward or condemnation, it is uncontrollable.

What tremendous power the resurrection has, and what wonderful hope it gives! Jesus rose from the dead; He is alive; and we also shall live because one day He will raise us up to be with Him eternally. What greater incentive, what greater motive, could we have for coming to Him, for serving Him, and for living for Him?

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