

1 Corinthians Chapter 5

1 Corinthians 5:1 "It is reported commonly [that there is] fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife."

Fornication, in this particular Scripture, means harlotry. We notice first about this, that it seems to be common knowledge. This sin and incest (so prevalent in our day), are so bad that even the heathen, who do not know God and His laws, do not practice this sin. In the book of Leviticus, there are definite regulations about this very thing.

This sexual immorality was so vile that even the church's pagan neighbors were doubtless scandalized by it. The Corinthians had rationalized or minimized this sin which was common knowledge, even though Paul had written them before about it (see verse 9).

The Greek for "immorality" is the root of the English word "pornography". "His father's wife" is referring to a stepmother, with whom having sexual relations bore the same sinful stigma as if between him and his natural mother. Incest was punishable by death in the Old Testament and was both uncommon and illegal under Roman law.

1 Corinthians 5:2 "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."

These Christians know about this and have done nothing about it. Some were so arrogant and carnal as to excuse even that extreme wickedness.

This is like so many in our day, who believe if you have been baptized, you are not guilty of sins you commit. "Taken away": Paul is saying, why have you not forcibly removed him from your group? It is as if you approve of what he is doing.

This could give this church a very bad name in the community. The fact that they have not dealt with this within the church would make it even worse. They are puffed up with pride that they are Christians and are not dealing with the sin that is in the church.

Eph. 5:11 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove [them]."

Reprove is better translated "expose". The believer's duty is expressed here in two ways. Negatively, he is not to have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, that is, not to indulge in the sins of the unsaved. Positively, he is to "expose" (reprove), these sins, that is, bring them to light and show them for what they really are, so that the unbeliever may see their hideous nature and their terrible consequences.

So what are Christians to do? Let's look at this scripture from Matthew.

Matthew 18:15-17 "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." "But if he will not hear [thee, then] take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell [it] unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

If the violator of God's Word will not listen after the things (in Matthew 18:15-17), are done in a lovingly manner, pursuant to (verse 17), they are to be regarded by the church as "a heathen and a tax collector".

The idea is not merely to punish the offender, or to shun him completely, but to remove him as a detrimental influence from the fellowship of the church, and henceforth to regard him as an evangelistic prospect rather than as a brother. Ultimately, the sin for which he is excommunicated is a hard-hearted impenitence.

1 Corinthians 5:3 "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, [concerning] him that hath so done this deed,"

Paul has just heard of this sin from afar, and he knows exactly what should be done about this matter. Those who were in the church in authority should have already handled this.

Paul had already passed judgment on the sinner and those of the church needed to also.

1 Corinthians 5:4 "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

"In the name of our Lord": Consistent with His holy person and will. "Gathered together": This action is to be done when the church meets publicly. "Power": Authority is in view. Action against unrepentant sinning in the church carries the weight of the Lord's authority.

The prescription for church discipline must be read considering the parable of the lost sheep (in Matthew 18:12-14). The goal of this process is restoration. If successful, "you have gained your brother". The first step is to tell him his fault privately.

1 Corinthians 5:5 "To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

"Deliver ... unto Satan": "Deliver" is a strong term, used of judicial sentencing. This is equal to excommunication of the professed believer. It amounts to putting that person out of the blessing of Christian worship and fellowship by thrusting him into Satan's realm, the world system.

"The destruction of the flesh": This refers to divine chastening for sin that can result in illness and even death.

“Spirit Saved”: The unrepentant person may suffer greatly under God’s judgment, but will not be an evil influence in the church; and he will more likely be saved under that judgment than if tolerated and accepted in the church.

This is not saying that they would automatically be saved because of the suffering of the flesh. This is saying that the protection is removed from this person, and Satan can do with this sinner's body whatever he will. This is done to cause the sinner to repent. If you repent of sin, your spirit will be saved, even if your body is ravaged by that sin. Paul is saying also, in the verse above, that these are not his own personal wishes for this man, but the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 5:6 "Your glorying [is] not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"

Just the fact that a person has accepted Jesus as their Savior does not exempt them from punishment for their sin. Paul is saying here, if you let this go without taking care of this, the sin will spread in your church. You must remove the one who is infected with sin, so that this disease will not spread to the other members.

“Glorying” as in this case means “boasting”. It was not good because their proud sense of satisfaction blinded them to their duty regarding blatant sin that devastated the church.

“Leaven” in scripture is used to represent influence, and in most cases, evil influence.

“Whole lump”: When tolerated, sin will permeate and corrupt the whole local church.

1 Corinthians 5:7 "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:"

Leaven in the verse above, is sin. Paul is saying, clean up your church, so that it will be without sin again. Purge in this Scripture, means to cleanse thoroughly. Do not leave anything at all that is associated with this sin. Christ was the unleavened Bread. He was without sin. If we are truly followers of Him, we must be free of sin, as well. Jesus' sacrifice for us was to do away with the sin in our life. A person who sins must repent quickly and get forgiveness for that sin.

“Christ our Passover”: Just as unleavened bread symbolized being freed from Egypt by the Passover, so the church is to be unleavened, since it has been separated from the dominion of sin and death by the perfect Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. The church is therefore, to remove everything sinful in order to be separate from the old life, including the influence of sinful church members.

1 Corinthians 5:8 "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth."

“Keep the feast”: In contrast to the Old Testament Passover feast celebrated annually, believers constantly celebrate the “feast” of the new Passover, Jesus Christ. As the Jews who celebrate

Passover do so with unleavened bread, so believers celebrate their continual Passover with unleavened lives.

The life of a Christian should be a continual remembrance of the great sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Jesus (the perfect Lamb sacrifice), was our Substitute. We deserved the death on the cross, but He took our place. I see in this a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. In the Passover, the lamb was killed and the blood drawn of the animal, but had they not put the blood over the door, death would have come to that house.

We must not only believe that He gave His body at Calvary for our sin, but we must individually apply that precious blood to our life. He must be our personal Savior. We must desire to be like Jesus. This next Scripture tells it all.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Sin should not be tolerated in your life, if you are a Christian. Anyone proclaiming Christianity should have no desire in their heart to sin. We should constantly be sincere with the Lord. Truth should be our standard.

1 Corinthians 5:9 "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:"

We become like those we keep company with. Paul had warned of the dangers of fellowshiping with sinners. Fornicator, in this Scripture, is taken from the word pornos, and can be translated male prostitute. This includes homosexuals. This leaves no doubt as to the danger of those who associate with those who are involved in sex sins. This is primarily speaking of unnatural acts in sex relations, but includes adultery between male and female, as well. One thing we must note in this, it is alright to go and witness to the lost, this is just speaking of not getting caught up in their sin.

Eph. 5:11 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove [them]."

In (Eph. 5:11), Paul's instruction is plain and direct: Christians are to faithfully live in righteousness and purity and have nothing at all to do with the evil ways and works of Satan and the world. The two ways of living are unalterably opposed to each other and mutually exclusive. The Christian's responsibility does not stop with his own rejection of evil. He is also responsible for exposing and opposing darkness wherever it is found, especially when it is found in the church.

1 Corinthians 5:10 "Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."

The statement, "not altogether" just means that he did not forbid casual association with these sinners, but continuous association, which might cause you to get involved in their sin. We are in

this world with those who commit these sins, but we are not of this world. We are a holy people set aside for the purposes of God. We are not holy in our own right, but have put on righteousness which Jesus provided for us when He washed us in His precious blood. There would be no point in us staying in this world, except we have the opportunity to win people out of these sins to the living God.

1 Corinthians 5:11 "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no, not to eat."

Paul clarifies his intention in the earlier letter. He expected them to disassociate with all who said they were brothers, but had a consistent pattern of sin. The meal was a sign of acceptance and fellowship in those days.

Notice the fact that Paul called him a brother here, which means they were of like persuasion. It seems it is much worse for a Christian to be caught up in these sins, than it is for those who have not repented and given their lives to the Lord. To sin in full knowledge is much worse than to sin and not be aware that you are sinning. It does not say, again, that you are not to come in casual contact with them, but not to eat with them. We are not to turn our head the other way when a brother or sister sins, and act as if it did not happen. When you fellowship by eating with them, it is as if you are condoning what they are doing.

1 Corinthians 5:12 "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?"

Paul is interested in keeping the converts that the Lord has given him. He cannot change the world, unless they want to be changed. His instructions are for those he claims as his own converts.

1 Corinthians 5:13 "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

There is a day of judgment coming when the Lord Jesus will judge the whole world. Paul is saying here, we do not judge the world, Jesus does. If someone is determined to live in sin like the world, put them out there in the world with the rest of the sinners. Let God judge them on judgment day, just as He will the rest of the sinners. Those who are determined to sin should not be left with the Christians to contaminate them.

1 Corinthians Chapter 5 Questions

1. What had been reported to Paul about the church at Corinth?
2. This sin was such a bad one that not even the _____ committed this sin.

3. Exactly what was the sin?
4. What does fornication, in verse 1, mean?
5. What is a similar sin prevalent in our day?
6. Where do we read who we can sleep with and who we cannot?
7. Who was this woman probably?
8. Did that make it any less a sin?
9. What have the members of the church done about this sin in their church?
10. What did Paul say they should do with this sinner?
11. What is this church puffed up with?
12. Paul was absent in body, but present in _____.
13. In verse 4, Paul is speaking this in whose name?
14. Who were they to deliver this sinner to?
15. Why?
16. That the spirit ____ be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
17. What is this done for?
18. A little leaven _____ the whole lump.
19. Is a person exempt from punishment just because he has accepted the Lord Jesus?
20. Why must the sinner be removed?
21. What is leaven in verse 7?
22. What does purge mean in verse 7?
23. Who was the unleavened Bread?
24. What is meant by keep the feast?
25. Who was our Substitute?
26. Jesus must be our _____ Savior.
27. Who had Paul written them not to company with?

28. What does fornicator, in verse 9, mean?
29. What type of sin is this primarily speaking of?
30. What does the statement "not altogether" mean?
31. What other sins are mentioned in verse 11?
32. What one word shows that Paul was speaking of someone professing Christianity?
33. Why is it necessary for the believer to stay on the earth, instead of being immediately raptured?
34. Why should they not eat with them?
35. Paul cannot change the world, unless they _____ _ _ _____.
36. Who judges them who are outside the church?