



# DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: 1 CORINTHIANS •

MESSAGE: HOLDING ONE ANOTHER ACCOUNTABLE •

1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13 • 5/29/2022

## MAIN POINT

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Out of love for one another, believers should judge sin and hold each other to discipline and accountability.

## INTRODUCTION

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As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What was the most trouble you got into as a child? How did your parents discipline you for your behavior? What did their discipline teach you?**

**What role do you think the church should play in disciplining its members?**

Discipline was not the most pleasant experience as it happened. But in retrospect, we can see that our parents' discipline made us into the people we are today. Discipline

teaches right from wrong; it teaches us hard work and grace. The church disciplines members to preserve the health of the body.

## UNDERSTANDING

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Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5.**

**Why does Paul react so strongly about the immoral brother in the Corinthian church? What does he tell them to do?**

**What shocked Paul more—the sin or the church’s attitude toward the sin? What shocked the church at Corinth?**

**What wrong attitude did the Corinthians have (v. 2)? What attitude did Paul think they should have?**

Paul connected lack of church discipline to arrogance within the corporate body (v. 6). They were so consumed with inflated pride that they were blinded to the most offensive sins within the church—sins that even pagans in Roman Corinth would not tolerate.

**How could “handing this man over to Satan” (v. 5) actually be for his good? Why might isolation and a lack of spiritual support drive people to genuine repentance?**

**How can we regain our capacity to be shocked? What will we face in this world if we allow sin to shock us?**

One big danger for us inside the church is becoming just like those outside the church. The church has taken a lot of heat for being filled with hypocrites. Yes, we are all sinners, but when we begin acting in ways that turn people outside the church off to the God we follow, there's a big problem.

**What is the difference in dealing biblically with sin in the Christian community and becoming judgmental?**

**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 5:6-8.**

**From the yeast imagery, what is Paul's concern about allowing this situation to go on without discipline?**

**What did Paul propose the Corinthian church do to fix their pride issue?  
What does Jesus' death do for our struggle with sin?**

**How does reflecting on the gospel impact the way we approach our sinfulness and church discipline?**

Paul offered a threefold solution to this corporate arrogance: (1) remember what Jesus did to deliver them from death, (2) acknowledge that Jesus rendered them clean, and (3) live in sincerity and truth. Reflecting on Christ's work of reconciliation in our lives reminds us of our need to repent of sins and our reliance on His grace.

**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-13.**

**What standards does Paul give for relating to those outside the church versus those inside the church? Why is there a difference?**

**What happens when a church is more concerned with judging those outside the church than evaluating its own behavior and motives? Are you more lenient toward Christians or non-Christians? Why?**

The church-versus-world distinction is key in this discussion. We aren't to hold those who don't know Christ to the standards of Christ (v. 10). God will do this, but we shouldn't. If we are going to reach people who are far from God, then we can't boot them from community because they have sin. We are, however, supposed to disassociate with "anyone who bears the name of brother" (v. 11) who is unwilling to deal with ongoing sin.

**How would you feel if you were hearing this letter read at Corinth and were one of the sexually immoral church members? What about if you were the one who had to break fellowship? What must we do regardless of how we feel?**

## **APPLICATION**

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Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What is our responsibility when we see Christian friends not dealing with their sin?**

**What are the dangers we should be on guard against when it comes to church discipline?**

If we fail to practice this tough teaching and refuse to hold church members accountable for their actions, what do we risk happening in our church?

## PRAYER

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Pray each person in your group will take sin seriously, both in their own lives and in each other's lives. Pray for honest reflection, then confession and repentance.

## COMMENTARY

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1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13

5:1. The sin of divisions within the Corinthian church was not the only problem reported to Paul. A scandalous immoral relationship existed among the members of the Corinthian church. Paul preached the need for sexual purity in response to salvation. In his absence a serious case of immorality emerged and the leadership of the Corinthian church failed to respond. Paul rebuked the church for their lack of moral indignation and response to the sinner who was a professing Christian.

5:2. Paul did not address the sinner. The sin was obvious, public, and scandalous. He focused his criticism on the congregation that ignored the sinner's conduct. They should have been filled with grief, both for the sinner who had fallen into sin and for the reputation of the church that was suffering because of the scandal. Instead of grief, they were filled with pride. Pride fails to admit wrong, allowing the members to tolerate the sinner and continue to treat him as a brother in good standing. They appeared unaware or unconcerned about what the scandal was doing to their church.

5:3. As an apostolic judge, Paul issued a "judicial opinion"—a banishment of the offender but with a view toward ultimate restoration. Taking up the language of a

legal trial, he used at least 10 legal idioms in these verses. Beginning with the phrase I have already decided . . . as though I were present (literally “I have judged as one who is present”), Paul’s terms echoed the language from secular courts.

5:4-5. Paul declared that the assembled corporate body was capable of judging the offender in the name of their Lord because he, as an apostle, had already rendered his legal decision as though he were present. Paul’s legal perspective on this case would have supported the church body that possessed the authority of the Lord Jesus to render a decision on this sin. They had the authority to remove him (2:2) from their midst for the destruction of the flesh. This may refer to physical judgments such as sickness or even death (11:30). If the person were a true believer, banishment to Satan’s domain would cause misery and possibly repentance. Paul expressed hope for the guilty person’s ultimate restoration with the legal phrase, so that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord (Rom. 2:6,9).

5:6. Boasting within the corporate body gives rise to tolerance of corporate sins (see also v. 2, “inflated with pride”). The yeast of arrogant hypocrisy had spread throughout the Corinthian batch of dough.

5:7-8. With a wordplay on the expression Christ our Passover, Paul offered a threefold solution to this corporate arrogance: (1) their recognition of what Christ as their Passover did to deliver them from death; (2) their acknowledgment that Christ as their Passover rendered them clean (unleavened) before the Lord; and (3) their remembrance that as they observed Christ as the Passover, they were to purge their household of malice and evil to celebrate with sincerity and truth.

5:9. Paul reminded the Corinthian church how they should respond to immorality and other sins in the church. It is evident from Paul’s mention of a previous letter that 1 Corinthians was not the first correspondence he had with the church. Paul had previously addressed these issues in a letter that has not been preserved. He had given them a command not to associate with sexually immoral people, but they had misunderstood what he meant.

5:10. When Paul referred to sexually immoral people, he did not intend for the believers to avoid business or social contacts with unbelievers (this world’s immoral people). To separate from such people would mean Christians would have to leave the world. Paul referred to normal associations but not entanglements such as marriage, business partnerships, and other ties that he would forbid as unwise involvements with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14). Paul included the greedy . . . swindlers, and idolaters as

examples of sinners who fall under the general category of immorality. He wanted to make sure the church understood that sexual sins were not the only sins that needed to be addressed by the church.

5:11. It was not unbelievers that Paul commanded Corinthian Christians not to associate with, but fellow church members involved in unrepentant sin. Paul said they should avoid anyone who bears the name of brother, meaning any fellow Christian. He added those with reputations as a reviler or drunkard to the list of sinful behaviors. A reviler can be someone who insults or slanders others (1 Cor. 4:12) and is the opposite of someone who blesses others. He described the separation to include a prohibition of having a meal with such a person. This would certainly include the communal meals and observance of the Lord's Supper (11:17-26).

5:12-13. Paul told the Corinthian church that they were not responsible to judge outsiders, meaning unbelievers. He assured them God would judge unbelievers. Christians have an obligation to judge those who are inside, referring to professing Christians. If Christians will not respond to correction, they are to be put away. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned against hypocritical judgments (Matt. 7:1-5). We must judge ourselves before making judgments about others. Our judgments should be guided by love and a desire to help others. Spiritual Christians are obligated to apply biblical principles to others to help them and to maintain the reputation of the local church.

Paul's instructions should not be misinterpreted or misapplied. Paul is not referring to a Christian brother or sister who is struggling with sin and asking for help. These individuals are to be spiritually restored by those who are spiritually mature (Gal. 6:1). Paul addressed Christians who refuse to acknowledge serious, sinful conduct. The Corinthian man who lived with his father's wife refused to admit he was doing anything wrong. He wanted to be treated as if the situation were normal. Paul said this kind of sinner needs discipline and, if necessary, exclusion from the fellowship of the church, with the hope that the exclusion would lead to repentance and restoration to church fellowship.