



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

**FOLLOWING CHRIST THROUGH CHAOS ·
CONFRONTING IMMORALITY IN THE CHURCH ·
1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13 · 6/5/2022**

MAIN POINT

There are biblical reasons and methods for confronting immorality in the church.

INTRODUCTION

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 bad behavior? What did their discipline teach you?

What is the purpose of God's discipline in the life of a believer?

If we know God has great purposes for disciplining His children, why don't we like being disciplined?

All believers have a “sin sensitivity meter.” For some of us, our sin sensitivity meters are working as designed. Whenever we do things, say things, or think things that don’t line up with the Holy Spirit, we get a negative reading, allowing us to make adjustments to our actions and thoughts. Others have broken sin sensitivity meters. This was a problem among Corinthian believers. Their “sin sensitivity meters” were broken. People were openly living immoral lives, and no one in the church was trying to help.

UNDERSTANDING

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

**Does living in an immoral society justify casual acceptance of immorality?
Why or why not?**

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?
Why?**

Paul connected the problem of ignoring church discipline to arrogance within the corporate body (v. 6). They had been blinded to the most offensive sins within the church—sins that even pagans in Roman Corinth wouldn’t tolerate. They should have removed the offender from their fellowship. The purpose of this measure is revealed in verse 5.

What is the purpose of discipline for the offender?

What are some of the reasons we overlook or ignore the sin in other's lives, especially in the church?

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 if this situation is allowed to continue without discipline?

Why is discipline necessary for the church body?

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

Publicly known sin in the church must be handled with church discipline. Paul claims that when it's not, the consequences of this sin will spread throughout the church. When handled, this discipline helps the church focus on the greater cause and remain pure and healthy. On both a personal and corporate level, reflecting on Christ's work of forgiveness and reconciliation in our lives reminds us of our need to repent of sins and rely on His grace.

How is discipline a reflection of God's love for us?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-13.

In this passage, Paul wrote about the extreme end of the “sin confrontation” scale—removing the unrepentant person from the church. But the point of this passage is the starting point for anyone who wants to know when, where, and how to confront sin in another’s life.

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

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

If you were one of the believers at Corinth hearing this letter read, how would you have felt if you were one he said should be put away? If you were one who had to do the putting away? What must we do regardless of how we feel?

APPLICATION

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

Why is purity within the body of Christ so important? How can help each other be pure?

What should we do when we see unrepentant sin in our church?

Why is discipline sometimes the necessary means for maintaining purity? How does discipline allow us to plant seeds with unbelievers?

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

PRAYER

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

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 inflated with pride. Pride fails to admit wrong and the members tolerated the sinner and continued 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 on the appointed Day of the Lord (Rom. 2:6,9).

5:6. Boasting within the corporate body gives rise to tolerance of corporate sins (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 lamb, 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.