



1 CORINTHIANS 5

Community Group Study Guide Week of May 19, 2019

This week, we looked at 1 Corinthians 5 where Paul rebukes the Corinthians for failing to practice church discipline on a member who had been engaged in a sexual relationship with his step-mother. Paul will talk about sexual immorality in more detail later, but in this passage the focus is on how the church is commanded to respond to the clear unrepentant sins of its members. Rather than confront the man and call him to repentance, the church was celebrating his sin and taking pride in how tolerant they were. They had developed a twisted understanding of grace that was dishonoring Jesus, destroying their witness to the city around them, and leading them personally down paths of destruction.

It's interesting to note that Paul's focus is completely on the man, and not on the step-mother. Most likely this man claimed to be a Christian, but the woman did not. Paul reminds the Corinthians that it is not our place to judge or punish non-Christians for moral sins. That doesn't mean we should not be morally discerning. We are called to prophetically stand up for what is good, true, and right. It does, however, mean we relate much differently to those who are sinning in the church. In the church we "**are** our brother's keeper." We have a mutual responsibility to care for one another and lovingly correct one another when our lives are out of step with the teaching of Scripture. As a local church body, we also have a Christ given authority/responsibility to discipline and cast out those who call themselves Christians but persist in open sin and refuse to repent.

In a world devoted to moral relativism and expressive individualism, this teaching seems unloving, harsh, and archaic. When understood properly however, Scripture's teaching on Church Discipline displays an infinitely superior form of love. When dissected, the "tolerance" of our culture and the Corinthian church is little more than a facade for indifference. We don't care what people do, because we do care what people are. People are image bearers of God created to relate to him in faith, love, and obedience. Morality is not relative, God is not indifferent, therefore accountability is a necessary aspect of true love. The more we love people, the more we hate the things that harm them, even when the most harmful things in their lives are their own sinful choices and behavior. The more we understand the danger of our own sin, and the price Jesus paid to free us from it, the more we will welcome accountability from others as well. Only an unloving and indifferent parent would withhold discipline and instruction from a growing child. The same is true with the children of God. We see this in the very name, "disciples."

We have all been justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, but our sanctification is an ongoing process. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word and God's Church to help us uncover and repent of sinful behaviors and desires, and then fight temptation and put sin to death so that we refrain from committing those sins again. Paul reminds us that "Christ, our passover lamb, has been slain." We were slaves to sin, but Jesus paid the ultimate price to set us free from sin. Sin is no longer our master, Jesus is our Master. In light of this we must run toward the goal together and not look back.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To understand the biblical basis for church disciplines and when, how, and why it is to be practiced.

Heart

To love one another enough to welcome and practice accountability in the church.

Hands

To repent of sin personally, and commit to gently confront one another when we see clear unrepentant sin in our lives.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership or Baptism:

Contact
admin@mosaicboston.com to sign up for our next membership class or learn more about baptism.

Mosaic JP:

Please keep Mosaic JP and other faithful Boston church plants in your prayers. If your CG would like to serve Mosaic JP together on a Sunday please contact
andy@mosaicboston.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Matthew 18:15-20 & 1 Corinthians 5

- The Corinthian church was celebrating and taking pride in how “tolerant” they were of this man’s sin. How does this display a false understanding of sin, of grace, and of the Gospel?
- The idea of “church discipline” might be new to some of us, but we see it commanded throughout the New Testament. Why might it be tempting for churches to ignore these teachings? Why might it be dangerous for churches to ignore these teachings?
- In Matthew 18, Jesus teaches that the first step in the process of church discipline should not be to bring it to the whole church, or even the pastors, but to try to win them back one-on-one. What does this process teach us about the manner and the purpose of church discipline?
- Last week we talked about the importance of unity in the church, but this week we see that true unity does not mean we should tolerate impurity in the church. Why might a misguided pursuit of unity lead to impurity? How does tolerating impurity inevitably destroy true unity in the church?
- The motive for church discipline is always love. Why might that be hard for some people in our culture to believe or understand? How does a correct understanding of church discipline actually display a much deeper form of love than our culture’s understanding of love?
- (read 1 Cor 5:6-8) In what ways could the Passover story help the Corinthians (and us) better understand sin, Jesus’ sacrifice, and what it means to live as Christians?
- (read 1 Cor 5:9-12) What are the big ideas and important truths we should take away from these verses when we think about dealing with the sin in other’s lives?
- What are some of the common fears or objections people have to these passages? How does a proper understanding of this passage in light of the Gospel relieve those fears or answer those objections?