

Subject: On God's Terms -- A Recap of This Week's Sermon from 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

Dear Church Family,

What a privilege it is to walk through God's word together each week. This past Sunday brought us face to face with some challenging and clarifying truths about who we are as the body of Christ -- not just what we do, but who we are. If you were with us, we hope this recap deepens your reflection. If you missed it, we trust this summary will encourage you to engage with the full message. We have some solid discipleship materials [[HERE](#)].

Summary: The sermon explored Paul's instructions to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, unpacking the two distinct expressions of biblical discernment -- one directed toward fellow believers within the church, and one directed toward those outside it. Drawing on the broader context of 1 Corinthians and a passage from Ephesians 5, the message challenged us to examine the DNA of an authentic Christ-following church. We were reminded that God's standards do not change, but our role and approach must be shaped by whether we are engaging those who know Christ or those who do not. The sermon also confronted the widespread corruptions of our day that dilute and distort the gospel, calling us back to the full authority of Scripture and a life that genuinely testifies of Jesus Christ.

Takeaways:

1. The church is called to be both holy and missional. Paul made clear he was never instructing the Corinthians to withdraw from the world entirely -- the Great Commission demands we remain present and engaged in it. However, we are not to bring the world's values into the body of Christ. We go into the world to give something, not to get something. When we become increasingly like the world, we have lost our way.
2. Biblical discernment operates differently inside and outside the church. Within the body of Christ, we hold one another to the standard of Christlikeness and do so in a Christlike manner -- through love, accountability, grace, and truth. Outside the church, we cannot hold unbelievers to a standard they have no capacity to meet. Instead, we testify of Jesus through wise conduct, compassion, integrity, and genuine biblical love, trusting God to do what only He can do in their hearts.
3. God tolerates the sinner but not the sin -- and that distinction is where grace is fully realized. As Ephesians 5 reminds us, Christ gave Himself for the church to make her holy, washing her through His word. We do not discard those struggling with sin. We walk with them. Yet when someone actively and openly rejects the authority of God within the body, the church, under the headship of

the Holy Spirit, must act -- always with the door open for repentance and restoration, but on God's terms, not our own.

As you go into this week, we encourage you to ask yourself a simple but searching question: when others see me, are they seeing Him? That is the calling placed on every one of us -- not as a burden, but as the greatest privilege we have been given. If you are in a season where you need someone to walk alongside you, please do not hesitate to connect with one of our Connect Ministry Team members, Pastor Jim, the elders, or staff. You do not have to navigate this journey alone.

In Christ,

Pastor Jim

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 On God's Terms

- I. Prologue: It's not about what we do, but about who we are.**
- II. Introduction: Right Christian Judgment**
- III. 1 Corinthians 5:9: Are you Listening?**
 - The central issue in view is authority. Is Jesus and His word your authority or is it man and his/her word?
- IV. 1 Corinthians 5:10-11: Are you Obeying**
- Additional Scripture References: Eph 5:21-30
- V. 1 Corinthians 5:12-13: Are you making judgments from a Biblical perspective?**
 - Two distinct expressions of discernment type judgment...one applied to Christian brethren and one applied to unbelievers.
- VI. Closing: Judging in Christlikeness**
 - Inside the church, we CULTIVATE Christlikeness in building up God's people in love, grace, truth, forgiveness, righteousness, and accountability.
 - Outside the church we DEMONSTRATE Christlikeness to a watching world.

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On God's Terms

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

I. Prologue: It's not about what we do, but about who we are.

1. This last week, I was brought to a place of again considering the DNA of our church family; **more specifically, how does the newcomer experience the amazing Biblical community that is CCA?** This was prompted because someone noted how scary last week's sermon was. **And, frankly, I can understand why it could be for some.**
2. For many of us, being confronted with God's truth is scary because it reveals how far from Him we are on one hand, along with just how desperate for Him we are on the other. **It requires us to live in a manner making clear we are foreigners in our own home towns.** It requires we deny ourselves in accepting the new heart and transformed mind that comes with surrendering our lives to Christ. **Indeed, victory looks nothing like we thought it would and it turns out that Jesus doesn't much like many of the things we value and His standards seem pretty high.**
3. So, I just want to take a minute to say thank you to so many of you walking through life with others at different places with their faith – **from seasoned, on-fire believers to new believers and those considering whether to give their lives to Christ.** I also want to say to those that are fearful or otherwise needing someone to come alongside you in your faith journey, we get it and there are people here looking forward to walking with you. **Let one of our Connect Ministry Team members know if you have questions how this works.**
4. Lastly, there is an overriding sentiment involved in this and all of our teachings. **While we do offer biblical counsel regarding our everyday lives, our teaching is not primarily about what we do, but about who we are...given the revelation of who Christ is.**

II. Introduction: Right Christian Judgment

1. As we have traveled through 1 Corinthians, we have had the opportunity to speak of the church's duties, responsibilities, and privileges. In great contrast to the authority of God's word and His infinite wisdom, we looked at the great limitations of man-wisdom, traditions, culture, hierarchy, and life experiences.

We have seen that it is wise for us to be living in God's will both individually and as His church. And referencing the story of Esther, we particularly noted that if we refuse to live in His will, He will raise up another church to complete what we won't.

2. Here in chapter 5, in addition to tackling the thorny issue of judgment, we are offered pictures of both the authentic Christ-following church and the worldly church. In our study last week, we also found there are two kinds of judgment in view including:
 - A. God's exclusive eternal judgment of the motivations of heart; and
 - B. A Christians discernment, which we use to examine ourselves and others, according to God's word, including our duties and responsibilities therein.
3. This week, we will unmask the two distinct expressions found under discernment as Paul widens his lens to the church's interaction with the world.

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III. 1 Corinthians 5:9: Are You Listening?

1. For those having read this verse in the past, did you note that 1 Corinthians is NOT Paul's first letter to this church? There are, I think, two points we can zero in on here:
 - A. First, should we be concerned there is a missing book of the Bible? The answer is a resounding 'no'! If God had meant Paul's MIA letter to be in the Bible, it would be in the Bible. To

suggest otherwise is to suggest mankind has more power, more sovereignty than God. For whatever reason, God simply did not think we needed this content to reveal God and His plan further.

B. Second, Paul had previously addressed the issue of sexual immorality with the Corinthians. *It seems sexual sin was a long-standing issue whose roots were deep in the hearts of too many in that church.* What's clear is that Paul is having none of their Scriptural gymnastics, excuses, nor self-righteous attitudes and behaviors as he calls them out for continuing in being ambassadors of sin's corrosive and corruptive power.

2. Of course, those Corinthians were, you know, Corinthians. So, we might ask why God preserved this letter? Well, at the root, it has to do with whether God's word has authority or not. Do people get to write and live a gospel to their liking OR does God's word stand and we are offered the choice of following or not? I can only imagine how much it grieves God to, some 2,000 years later, have so many claiming to be the church teaching, preaching, and living as modern day Corinthians. *Consider some of the widespread corruptions in our day such as:*

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Taking Scripture out of context	Subordinating Scripture to culture
Distorting the gospel of grace	Preaching a prosperity gospel
Elevating experience over Scripture	Misrepresenting the Holy Spirit
Turning prayer into a formula	Exaggerating believers' authority over demons
Adding extra-biblical revelation	Restoring unbiblical apostolic authority
Elevating contemporary prophets	Making Christ's return depend on a dominion mandate
Turning spiritual warfare into a dominion strategy	Redefining sin and repentance so as to be unrecognizable to God
Confusing the covenants & shielding leaders from accountability	Undermining the Biblical account of Creation and the Fall
Neglecting the whole counsel of God	Teaching God's love as affirming rather than transforming

*An expanded table can be found at the end of this teaching.

IV. 1 Corinthians 5:10-11: Are you Obeying?

1. Subtitle: Come On, Are You Kidding Me? Paul's language makes clear he is put off by their disobedience. It seems clear they fabricated a silly response in suggesting that Paul's prior direction of NOT associating with those living in sexual immorality (and other sins listed) applied to those outside the church and not those inside.
 - A. Given the Corinthians pride, their attempts to evade Paul's meaning may have bought them a sense of smug security, but Paul was having none of it. Of course he could not have been telling them to leave the world when the Great Commission demands they (and every church) be a missional church in testifying of Jesus.
 - B. The Corinthians had gone to great effort to justify themselves and remain in their sexual immorality sin...at least one person in the practice of sexual immorality with the church more broadly purposefully enabling that sin – which is itself sin as it led them to war against God's word. With his extended list of sins including covetous, extortioners, or idolators, we also see his point is, in principle, to be applied to all sin. They were to be holy, set-aside in their testimony of Jesus Christ as Lord.
2. It is easy to point and wag a finger at the Corinthians and even "the church" today because the precept of living a testimony of our God is broadly understood in the evangelical community. Yet, the application of Paul's letters to the Corinthians is meant to be personal for them and every generation of the church.
 - A. Regarding both the sinners and the church body, they (and we) are meant to call the recipients out of sin and into to the will of God. They are meant to cast off lethargy, self-centeredness, apathy, and every other reason keeping us from the great privilege of living to please Christ.

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- B. Right Biblical doctrine is to engage in this world for the sake of Christ. Sometimes we engage quietly. Sometimes pointedly. Sometimes loudly. Sometimes in service. Sometimes speaking. Sometimes modeling. Sometimes subtly while other times in-your-face. We are ALWAYS representing Christ and we are to live our lives that when others see us, they are seeing Him.
3. In v11, Paul strips away the Corinthians veneer of righteousness via man-wisdom. While the church is full of sinners, God does NOT tolerate, much less affirm and celebrate, sin. Because many see this statement as presenting two opposing truths, I want us to see this is where God's grace is fully realized...or NOT. Turn with me to **Ephesians 5, beginning in v21**; I will be reading out of the NLT translation:

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²¹ And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. ²⁴ As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

²⁵ For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. ²⁹ No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. ³⁰ And we are members of his body. - Ephesians 5:21–30

You see, Jesus tolerates the sinner, but NOT the sin. By His grace, He transforms those struggling with sin through the washing of His word. While standing against sin always, we don't throw out those struggling with sin. Instead, we walk with them and help them carry their burden.

4. At the same time, as we see in Paul's instructions here in 1 Corinthians, because sin is of the world and not of God, we do remove those actively rejecting the authority of God. [Under the headship of the Holy Spirit, the authentic church follows Christ's lead in allowing the recalcitrant their hearts desires for living in sin in their open warfare against Jesus.](#) Even then, we never fully abandon them as we are to pray and encourage their return to the body of Christ, but on God's terms and not their own.
5. In all this, there is a great distinction regarding the DNA of the authentic church versus the worldly church I heard a friend teach more than a decade ago. [The worldly church goes into the world to GET something while the authentic church goes into the world to GIVE something.](#) In this, we can know if we become increasingly like the world, we have lost our way.

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V. 1 Corinthians 5:12-13: Are You Making Judgments From a Biblical Perspective?

1. Last week, we zeroed in on two distinct forms of judgment. [The first was eternal judgment.](#) This judgment involves judging the motivations of the heart and is reserved exclusively for Jesus. [The second was discernment-based judgment which, while also God's, is also for you and me.](#)
2. In our passage today, Paul makes clear that there are TWO different expressions of God's unchanging standards of discernment-type judgment. [Expression 1 is when a believer applies discerning judgment to a believer;](#) this is the application we have spent most of our time on to this point. [Expression 2 is when a believer applies a discerning judgment to an unbeliever;](#) this application is very much in view in today's passage.
3. The essence of the expressions are that our response changes and not that God's standards change. [We hold the believer to the standard of being Christlike AND we do so in a Christlike manner.](#) Since the unbeliever does NOT know Christ, we cannot hold them to the standard of being Christlike. [Yet, Paul reminds us that Christ](#)

uses us in the world – and that still requires discernment-type judgment be used. Said differently, we are God's whether inside or outside the body of Christ so our expression (role and approach) may change, but our identity remains fully in God.

4. Inside the body of Christ, we work together as a Biblical community toward increasing godliness seen perhaps most clearly in biblical love and obedience; [which together are a snapshot of maturing in Christ](#). This is a picture of discipleship broadly, and here in chapter 5, it more specifically includes church discipline as needed.
5. Since the unbeliever is NOT walking in the Spirit of God, they have NO ability to conceive of the things of God and we, therein, cannot serve them by trying to exercise spiritual authority over them. [Instead, we are given the freedom to share what Christ gives us to give them – we testify of Him in Christlikeness.](#)
6. In v13, Paul's tough love exhortation to "put away from yourselves the evil person" is a hard reminder. [It can be hard because it requires relationship to see.](#) It can be hard because we don't like conflict. [It can be hard because we fear making a mistake.](#) It can be hard because we don't really know their heart. [It can be hard because we are busy, have apathy, do NOT want someone to call them out of sin, or any other number of reasons.](#)

We must come to the place where we care more about their souls than their response and our comfortability or we simply won't be the Biblical community Christ has called us to be.

7. One final thought before we close. [Over the years many have asked how they can 'know' if someone's repentance is real?](#) The reality is in the moment we can't, because we don't know their heart. [Yet, we invite them back in the church because we forgive as Christ forgives us.](#) Oh, we may need to place hedges around them (and ourselves) to protect them and to protect the church, but we are to welcome them back as part of the brethren. [Christ will sort out the rest in His perfect timing.](#)

VI. Closing: Judging in Christlikeness

1. Inside the church, we CULTIVATE Christlikeness in building up God's people in love, grace, truth, forgiveness, righteousness, and accountability. Because we share one Spirit and one body (Eph 4:4-6), we share a common worldview, common calling, common hope, common cost of dying to oneself, and maturing in Christlikeness all for the glory of God.
2. Outside the church we DEMONSTRATE Christlikeness to a watching world. This does NOT mean we ignore evil outside of the church for we still speak truth and uphold righteousness. It does mean we live our testimony of Jesus through wise conduct, gracious speech, integrity, compassion, actively listening, and genuine biblical love as we seek to be our part in inviting others into relationship with Jesus.

5-Day Devotional

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

On God's Terms

Day 1: The Authority of God's Word

Reading: 2 Ti 3:16-17; Ps 119:89

Devotional: God's word does not bend to culture, preference, or convenience. It stands as the unchanging foundation upon which every generation must build. The Corinthians attempted to reinterpret Paul's instructions to suit their comfort, and the church today faces the same temptation. When Scripture confronts us, the discomfort we feel is not a sign that something is wrong with the text -- it is a sign that something needs to change in us. Ask yourself today: where have you allowed personal preference or cultural pressure to quietly replace the authority of God's word in your life? Surrender that ground back to Him.

In what specific area of your life are you most tempted to rewrite God's standards to fit your own comfort? Identify one teaching from Scripture you have been avoiding or softening. Sit with it honestly today and ask God to give you the courage to receive it fully.

Day 2: Called Out, Sent In

Reading: Jn 17:14-18; Mt 28:18-20

Devotional: The Corinthians made a costly error in thinking that separation from sin meant withdrawal from the world. Paul corrected them sharply. The Great Commission demands that the church remain present and active in the world -- not absorbed by it, but genuinely engaged with it. There is a critical difference between being in the world and being of it. The authentic follower of Christ goes into the world not to get something from it, but to give something to it -- the testimony of Jesus. Your neighborhood, workplace, and community are not distractions from your calling. They are the very field where your calling is lived out.

Are you currently more shaped by your surrounding culture than you are shaping it through your witness? Identify one person in your life who does not know Christ. Commit this week to one intentional act of Christlike presence toward them -- not with an agenda, but with genuine care.

Day 3: Holy and Present -- The Balance of Grace

Reading: Eph 5:25-27; Ro 5:8

Devotional: Jesus does not tolerate sin, but He never abandoned the sinner. This is the tension the church must learn to hold without collapsing to either side. To affirm sin in the name of love is not love at all -- it is a failure of care for the soul. To cast out the struggling believer in the name of holiness is not righteousness -- it is a failure of grace. Christ's model, as described in Ephesians 5, is to wash His church through the word,

presenting her holy and without fault. We are called to walk alongside those who struggle, carrying burdens together while always pointing toward transformation, not away from it.

Is there someone in your life you have either enabled in their sin or abandoned because of it? What would a Christlike response look like? Reach out today to someone you know who is struggling. Not to correct them, but simply to be present. Let your presence be the first word before any others are spoken.

Day 4: Discernment as an Act of Love Reading: Heb 5:14; Pro 27:17; Gals 6:1-2

Devotional: Biblical discernment is not criticism dressed in spiritual language. It is love that refuses to leave a brother or sister in a place that is harmful to their soul. The church in Corinth had confused tolerance with love, and the result was that sin was celebrated rather than confronted. True discernment requires relationship, humility, and courage. It requires that we know someone well enough to speak, that we are humble enough to examine ourselves first, and that we care more about their spiritual health than our own comfort in the conversation. Discernment exercised in Christlikeness builds up rather than tears down.

Do you tend toward avoiding difficult conversations out of fear of conflict, or do you tend toward correction without sufficient relationship and grace? Ask a trusted, mature believer in your life to speak honestly into one area where they see room for your growth. Receive what they say without defensiveness.

Day 5: Living as a Testimony

Reading: Col 4:5-6; 1 Pe 2:11-12

Devotional: Every believer is always representing Christ -- in the grocery store, in the boardroom, in moments of conflict, and in moments of celebration. This is not a burden to be managed but a privilege to be embraced. The closing charge of this passage in 1 Corinthians calls the church to be distinct -- not in a way that is harsh or self-righteous, but in a way that is unmistakably marked by the character of Jesus. Wise conduct, gracious speech, integrity, compassion, and genuine love are the instruments of a living testimony. The world is watching. Not to catch you failing, but because somewhere beneath the surface, it is looking for something real.

When people observe your daily life, what conclusions are they most likely drawing about who Jesus is? At the end of each day this week, ask yourself one question before you sleep: "Did someone see Jesus in me today?" Let your honest answer guide your prayers for the following morning.

Small Group Study Guide

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

On God's Terms

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would open your eyes to see and understand His word as you discuss the sermon.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. God's word has authority -- not us. The Corinthians tried to reshape Paul's instructions to fit their preferences. The same temptation exists today. The church does not get to write a gospel to its liking. God's standards stand, and we are each offered the choice of following or not.
2. There are two expressions of discerning judgment. The first is applied to the believer -- holding one another to the standard of Christlikeness in a Christlike manner. The second is applied to the unbeliever -- not holding them to a standard they cannot meet, but instead testifying of Christ through how we live among them.
3. The authentic church gives; it does not just get. When the church begins looking more and more like the world, it has lost its way. We go into the world to give something -- the testimony of Jesus Christ -- not to absorb the values and patterns of the culture around us.
4. Jesus tolerates the sinner but not the sin. Grace is not affirmation of sin. Grace is transformation through the washing of God's word. We walk with those struggling in sin. We do not throw them out. But we also do not celebrate or enable what God calls sin.
5. Church discipline is an act of love, not rejection. Removing an unrepentant person from the body is difficult precisely because it requires relationship, honesty, and courage. The goal is always restoration -- but on God's terms, not the individual's.

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. The sermon mentioned that last week's message felt scary to some people. Have you ever had a moment where God's truth felt more like a threat than an invitation? What was going on in your heart during that time?

2. Pastor Jim noted that being confronted with God's truth reveals both how far from Him we are and how desperate for Him we are. Which of those two realizations tends to hit you harder, and why?
3. Paul had already written to the Corinthians about sexual immorality before this letter, and they were still at it. What does it tell you about human nature that a church could receive direct apostolic correction and still find ways to justify ongoing sin?
4. The Corinthians twisted Paul's earlier instruction to mean it only applied to people outside the church. Have you ever seen -- or personally used -- a similar kind of Scriptural gymnastics to avoid an uncomfortable truth? What made it feel justified at the time?
5. The sermon draws a clear line between the two expressions of discerning judgment -- one applied inside the church and one applied outside. In your own words, how would you explain the difference to someone who had never heard it framed that way?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 5:11 in your Bible and consider the list of sins Paul names. Why do you think Paul expanded beyond sexual immorality to include covetousness, idolatry, and extortion? What does that tell us about the scope of what holiness actually requires?
7. The passage from Ephesians 5:21-30 was used to illustrate that Christ loves the church by washing her with His word -- not by affirming her as she is, but by transforming her into what she is called to be. How does that picture change the way you think about what it means to love someone in the church who is struggling with sin?
8. The sermon said the authentic Christian goes into the world to give something, while too often the church goes into the world to get something. Be honest -- in your own interactions with unbelievers, which posture do you tend to operate from? What would it look like to shift that?
9. Pastor Jim listed several reasons why putting away an unrepentant person from the church is hard -- fear of conflict, not knowing someone's heart, personal apathy, not wanting to be called out yourself. Which of those resonates most honestly with you, and why?
10. The sermon closed with the observation that we let someone back into the church because we forgive as Christ forgives us, even when we cannot know for certain whether their repentance is genuine. How do you hold together genuine

forgiveness and wise, protective accountability at the same time? Where does that feel most difficult for you personally?

11. The sermon reminded us that these letters are not primarily about what we do, but about who we are. What does your current way of engaging with both believers and unbelievers say about who you are?
12. Is there someone in your life -- inside or outside the church -- with whom you have been avoiding a hard, honest, loving conversation? What is one step you could take this week toward that conversation?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Identify one area where you have been applying Scriptural reasoning to justify something God's word does not actually permit. Bring it honestly before God in prayer and ask Him to replace your reasoning with His.
2. Reflect on your posture toward unbelievers in your daily life. Are you primarily giving testimony of Christ, or are you absorbing the values of the culture around you? Ask God to show you one specific way to be more intentional.
3. If you are aware of a brother or sister in Christ who is walking in unrepentant sin, pray this week about whether God is calling you to have a courageous, loving conversation with them. Ask a trusted, mature believer to help you think through how to approach it wisely.
4. Consider whether there is someone you have distanced yourself from who needs to be walked with rather than avoided. Reach out to them this week.
5. Think of one unbeliever in your regular life -- a coworker, neighbor, or family member. This week, look for one opportunity to demonstrate Christlikeness through wise conduct, genuine listening, or simple compassion -- without an agenda other than reflecting Him.

Closing Prayer Points:

- That God would give your group the courage to hold one another accountable in love and truth, without apathy or self-protection getting in the way.
- That God would make each of you a clearer testimony of Jesus to the unbelievers in your lives.
- That your church would be the kind of Biblical community where people at every stage of faith -- from seasoned believers to those still considering Christ -- feel genuinely walked with and not left alone.

Discussion Questions

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

On God's Terms

1. Paul's letter reveals that the Corinthian church had been given clear instruction before and still chose to distort its meaning to justify ongoing sin — in what ways might we be tempted to do the same with Scripture in our own lives or church communities today?
2. The sermon draws a sharp distinction between God tolerating the sinner but not the sin, and uses the marriage metaphor from Ephesians 5 to illustrate how Christ transforms through the washing of His word — how does this change the way you think about walking alongside someone who is struggling with persistent sin?
3. Pastor Jim notes that the authentic church goes into the world to GIVE something rather than GET something, and that becoming increasingly like the world is a sign of losing our way — where do you see this tension most acutely in your own engagement with culture?
4. Church discipline is described as an act of tough love that requires genuine relationship, courage, and a willingness to prioritize someone's soul over personal comfort — what personal obstacles most prevent you from engaging in this kind of accountability with fellow believers?
5. The sermon presents two distinct expressions of discerning judgment — one directed toward believers and one toward unbelievers — and emphasizes that our role and approach change while our identity in God does not: how does this framework reshape the way you interact with people who do not yet know Christ?
6. Paul's original letter to the Corinthians is not in the Bible, and the sermon affirms that God's sovereignty determined what Scripture we needed — how does this truth challenge or strengthen your confidence in the sufficiency and authority of the Bible as we have it?
7. The closing describes the church inside its walls as a place of cultivating Christlikeness through love, grace, truth, and accountability, while outside it is a place of demonstrating Christlikeness to a watching world — how well does your own life reflect this two-directional calling?
8. The sermon lists a wide range of widespread corruptions in the modern church, from distorting the gospel of grace to redefining sin and repentance — which of these do you find most subtle or most dangerous, and why?

9. When someone who has been removed from the church community shows signs of repentance, the sermon calls us to welcome them back while potentially placing hedges around them for protection — what does genuinely forgiving as Christ forgives us look like in that practical moment?
10. Pastor Jim reminds us that Biblical doctrine is not primarily about what we do but about who we are — how does anchoring your identity in Christ rather than in your actions or behaviors change the way you approach obedience and spiritual growth?

Dinner Conversation Starters

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

On God's Terms

1. Living on God's Terms

What does it mean for our family to follow Jesus "on God's terms" instead of trying to fit Him into what we already want?

2. Grace That Transforms

The sermon said Jesus welcomes sinners but does not affirm sin. How can we show grace to one another while still encouraging each other to grow in obedience?

3. Being Different in the World

Paul reminds believers that we are still called to engage the world, not escape it. What are some ways we can represent Jesus well at school, work, or in our neighborhood?

4. Loving Accountability

Why is it sometimes hard to lovingly confront sin or receive correction from someone else? How can our family make accountability feel more like love than criticism?

5. Giving Instead of Getting

The sermon mentioned that the authentic Christian goes into the world to give, not to get. What is one practical way our family can give Christlike love to someone this week?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

On God's Terms

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Be Kind Without Copying Wrong Choices**: Kids this age are learning that they can love people and still not join in behavior that disobeys God. If a friend is being mean, lying, or disobeying, they can be kind without copying.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What could you say if a friend wants you to be unkind?
 - b. How can you show Jesus' love to someone who is being left out?
 - c. Is it loving to copy a wrong choice just so someone likes us?
2. **Tell the Truth Even When It Feels Scary**: God's truth helps us grow. Families can teach young kids that correction is not rejection. When parents correct them, it is because they are loved.

Discussion Questions:

- a. Why is it hard to tell the truth sometimes?
 - b. What should we remember about God when we make a wrong choice?
 - c. How can our family help each other obey God?
3. **Use Screens in Ways That Please Jesus**: Even young kids are learning digital habits. They need help understanding that what they watch, play, and repeat should honor God.

Discussion Questions:

- a. Would Jesus want us to laugh at someone being hurt or disobeying?
- b. What should you do if you see something on a screen that feels wrong?
- c. How can we choose shows or games that help our hearts?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Choose Friends Wisely Without Acting Better Than Others**: Kids in this stage are navigating friend groups and belonging. They can learn the difference between being friendly to everyone and letting close friends pull them away from God.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What is the difference between being kind to someone and being influenced by them?
- b. How can you know if a friendship is helping you follow Jesus or pulling you away?
- c. What could you say if your friends pressure you to do something wrong?

2. **Practice Loving Accountability at Home**: The church is called to help believers grow in holiness. Families can practice this by correcting each other with humility, not harshness.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How can we speak up about wrong behavior without sounding mean or proud?
- b. Why is it loving to help someone turn away from sin?
- c. How should we respond when someone corrects us?

3. **Don't Let Online Spaces Shape Your Heart**: Online content often normalizes sin, pride, greed, cruelty, or disrespect. Kids need discernment to recognize when entertainment is training them to think differently than God's Word.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What messages are this video, game, or channel teaching us?
- b. Does this content make sin seem funny, normal, or harmless?
- c. How can we decide when to stop watching something?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Know the Difference Between Acceptance and Approval**: Preteens and teens often feel pressure to affirm everything their peers believe or do. This sermon's principle helps them understand they can show dignity, compassion, and friendship without approving sin.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What is the difference between loving someone and agreeing with everything they do?
- b. How can you respond in a way that is both truthful and compassionate?
- c. When might silence be wise, and when might speaking up be necessary?

2. **Let Christian Friends Help You Follow Jesus**: Inside the family of faith, believers are called to help one another grow. Teens need friendships where correction, encouragement, confession, and prayer are normal.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What would loving accountability look like in this situation?
- b. When should you talk to your friend directly, and when should you involve a trusted adult?
- c. Why is ignoring someone's sin not actually loving?

3. **Be Careful Who Disciples You Online**: Digital spaces constantly teach values. Influencers, algorithms, music, shows, and group chats can shape beliefs about identity, sexuality, money, success, and truth.

Discussion Questions:

- a. Who or what is shaping the way you think most right now?
- b. Does your online world make obedience to Jesus easier or harder?

c. Are there accounts, apps, chats, or habits you need to unfollow or limit?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

On God's Terms

1. Love People Without Letting Them Disciple You

Bible Reference:

- 1 Corinthians 5:9–10
- 1 Corinthians 15:33
- John 17:15–18

Application: Jesus does not call you to hide from the world, but He also does not call you to be shaped by it. Gen Z Christians are called to build relationships with unbelievers, show compassion, listen well, and share Christ—without adopting the values, language, habits, and priorities of people who reject God.

Scenario: Your friend group regularly parties, jokes about sexual sin, mocks Christianity, and pressures you to “stop being so serious.” You care about them and want to be a good witness, but you notice your convictions getting weaker the more time you spend with them.

Discussion: How can you stay present in relationships with nonbelievers while making sure Jesus—not your friend group—is shaping your beliefs and behavior?

2. Don't Confuse Grace With Approval

Bible Reference:

- Ephesians 5:25–27
- Romans 6:1–2
- Titus 2:11–14

Application: God's grace welcomes sinners, but it also transforms sinners. Grace is not God saying, “Your sin does not matter.” Grace is God saying, “Come to Me, be forgiven, and be changed.” A Christian should never use God's love as an excuse to remain in sin.

Scenario: Someone says, “God loves me no matter what, so it doesn't really matter how I live.” They claim to follow Jesus but openly defend choices that Scripture calls sin.

Discussion: What is the difference between someone struggling with sin and someone celebrating or defending sin?

3. Practice Loving Accountability With Other Christians

Bible Reference:

- 1 Corinthians 5:11–13
- Galatians 6:1–2
- Hebrews 3:13

Application: Within the family of God, Christians are responsible to help one another follow Jesus. Loving accountability is not being judgmental or superior. It is caring enough about someone's soul to speak truth with humility, patience, and love.

Scenario: A Christian friend is cheating in school, lying to parents, sending inappropriate pictures, gossiping online, or secretly watching pornography. They tell you, "Don't judge me. It's my life."

Discussion: How could you lovingly confront a Christian friend without acting prideful or harsh?

4. Be Careful Who You Call "Brother" or "Sister"

Bible Reference:

- 1 Corinthians 5:11
- Matthew 7:16–20
- 2 Timothy 2:19

Application: Paul makes a distinction between unbelievers and people who claim to follow Jesus while openly rejecting His authority. Christians should be patient with people who are growing, but they should not pretend that open rebellion against God is spiritually healthy.

Scenario: Someone in your church group, campus ministry, or Christian friend circle says they love Jesus, but they openly promote drunkenness, sexual immorality, greed, gossip, or hatred. They expect everyone to affirm them because "Christians should be loving."

Discussion: Why is it spiritually dangerous to treat open rebellion against God as if it is normal Christian maturity?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.

18 COMMON CORRUPTIONS OF SCRIPTURE

CORRUPTION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
1. Taking Scripture out of context	Using isolated verses to support conclusions the passage does not teach. 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:16
2. Subordinating Scripture to culture	Reinterpreting biblical truth to satisfy prevailing cultural values or ideologies. Rom. 12:2; Gal. 1:10
3. Distorting the gospel of grace	Adding human merit to salvation—or using grace to excuse unrepentant sin. Eph. 2:8–10; Gal. 1:6–9; Rom 6:1-2; Jud 4
4. Preaching a prosperity gospel	Promising guaranteed health, wealth, or success as the reward of sufficient faith or giving. 1 Tim. 6:5–10; Phil. 4:11–13
5. Elevating experience over Scripture	Allowing feelings, dreams, or impressions to override the written Word. Isa. 8:20; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1
6. Misrepresenting the Holy Spirit	Treating sensational experiences as proof of the Spirit's work while neglecting Christlike fruit and biblical order. John 16:13–14; 1 Cor. 14:40; Gal. 5:22–23
7. Turning prayer into a formula	Treating words, declarations, or faith techniques as ways to compel God to grant our wishes. Matt. 6:7–10; 26:39; 1 John 5:14
8. Exaggerating believers' authority over demons	Claiming powers or techniques beyond Scripture instead of emphasizing submission to God and biblical spiritual warfare. Eph. 6:10–18; James 4:7; Jude 8–10
9. Adding extra-biblical revelation	Giving modern prophecies or alleged divine directives practical authority alongside Scripture. 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 1 Thess. 5:19–21; Jude 3
10. Restoring unbiblical apostolic authority	Claiming contemporary apostles hold a governing office comparable to the foundational apostles, with authority over churches or networks. Acts 1:21–26; Eph. 2:19–22; 1 Pet. 5:1–3
11. Elevating contemporary prophets	Treating modern prophetic claims as authoritative direction from God rather than testing them by Scripture. Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 14:29; 1 John 4:1
12. Making Christ's return depend on a dominion mandate	Teaching that the Church must take control of cultural institutions or establish dominion as a prerequisite to Christ's return. Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:6–8; Titus 2:11–13

13. Turning spiritual warfare into a dominion strategy	Claiming believers must defeat territorial spirits or exercise extra-biblical authority to transform society and advance the kingdom. Eph. 6:10–18; 2 Cor. 10:3–5; James 4:7
14. Redefining sin and repentance so as to be unrecognizable to God	Relabeling what God calls sin as preference, identity, or lifestyle, or denying that we are sinners who need to repent. Isa. 5:20; 1 John 1:8-10; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 13:3
15. Confusing the covenants or shielding leaders	Applying covenant promises without context, or using spiritual authority to demand unquestioning loyalty and silence correction. Gal. 3:23–25; Heb. 8:6–13; 1 Pet. 5:2–3; Gal 2:11-14
16. Undermining the Biblical account of Creation and the Fall	Recasting God as Creator, humanity as made in his image, and the historical Fall to fit human theories, which weakens the need for Christ as the second Adam. Gen. 1:26-27; Ex. 20:11; Matt. 19:4-6; Rom. 5:12-19
17. Neglecting the whole counsel of God	Teaching Scripture selectively and avoiding difficult or unpopular truths such as sin, judgment, and the cost of discipleship. Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; Matt. 28:20; Jer 6:14
18. Teaching God’s love as affirming rather than transforming	Presenting God’s love as acceptance of people just as they are, with no expectation that they change. Scripture teaches that God loves sinners before they repent and then transforms those who receive him, disciplining and sanctifying them. Rom. 5:8; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 12:5-11; 2 Cor. 3:18

Some of the content in this table was adapted from ChatGPT and Claude.AI in response to the following prompt: “give me a list of the top 15 common corruptions of Scripture (from an evangelical viewpoint) in the church today?”