

# THE BEAUTY OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

## STUDIES IN 1st and 2nd CORINTHIANS

1st Corinthians 5:1-13

### “ORDER IN THE CHURCH: ‘YOU CANNOT DO THAT HERE!’ ”

**INTRODUCTION:** We are told to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. (Psalm 29:2; 96:9) The problem for many is that holiness is misunderstood and thought to be a life that has no joy; that only sinners get to have real fun! God is viewed as a divine police officer waiting to arrest and condemn you for breaking His laws!

**BACKGROUND:** Corinth was a wealthy city because of its strategic location on a thin strip of land (isthmus) four miles wide that connected the northern part of Greece with the Peloponnesian Peninsula, giving it control of land and sea trade routes. It was famous for attracting men to the Temple of Aphrodite, which featured 1000 “sacred temple priestesses” who were also female prostitutes. The city name was synonymous with sexual deviance and immorality. Corinth was the background for Paul’s writing and list of sins found in Romans 1:18-32

#### **I. REGARDLESS OF THE CULTURE AROUND IT, THE LORD DEMANDS HIS CHURCH TO PRACTICE SEXUAL PURITY. THE CHURCH IN CORINTH WAS GUILTY OF TOLERATING IMMORALITY. (1ST CORINTHIANS 5:1)**

- A. A member of the Corinthian church had an ongoing sexual relationship with his stepmother; a sinful lifestyle that not even the pagan world would accept. The church cannot look the other way when sin is “in the camp.” Old Testament law mandated the death penalty for many sins that are commonly practiced today. Tolerating the sinful culture of our age will provide churches with free publicity we don’t want!
- B. The Jewish people would have been familiar with God’s prohibitions against sexual sins, and the severe consequences he imposed for violating His commands. Paul had to “detox” the gentile Corinthian believers from previously acceptable lifestyles. The pagans in Corinth did not have those laws, so the church had to teach new believers about why God demands sexual purity in relationships. (Leviticus 18:8) (Leviticus 20) (Deuteronomy 22:13-30)
- C. In our sinful world that laughs at waiting to be married before becoming sexually active, we must remind ourselves of why God says “wait” . Sexual intimacy was designed to help us freely give ourselves to one partner for life, and (perhaps) to participate with God in creating a life that will exist forever. The “climax” of being together is a foretaste of what heaven will be like all the time!

#### **II. GOD USES SATAN TO DISCIPLINE BELIEVERS AND DESTROY THE LIVES OF UNBELIEVERS. LIFE IS BETTER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS “TEACHING” YOU RATHER THAN WHEN SATAN IS “SCHOOLING” YOU! (1st Corinthians 5:2-5)**

- A. Instead of celebrating sin, we should grieve as though we had lost a loved one. The sins we enjoy are destroying us while we practice them. (1st Corinthians 5:2)
- B. In spite of commonly accepted misunderstandings about judging others, believers are **commanded** to judge sins. *We are not to pass judgment on motives* that only God knows. Paul passed judgment on this man’s sins from over 200 miles away! He declared him “GUILTY!”
1. “Krino” is a Greek word that refers to judging with the idea of already condemning with final trial and sentencing determined! (Acts 13:27; John 12:48; John 3:18)
  2. “Anakrino” means to evaluate or to examine. (1st Corinthians 4:4)

The judgment referred to in Matthew 7:1-2 (Luke 6:37) is not evaluation, but condemnation based solely on appearance. Jesus said to not judge according to appearance, but to “judge righteous judgment.” (John 7:24)

C. Satan is not allowed to bypass God's boundaries in a believers life. Scripture teaches us how God uses Satan to take believers through difficulties to make them stronger. (Job 1-2) (Peter, in Luke 22:31-34) (Paul, in 2nd Corinthians 12:7-10) Scripture also shows us how God allows Satan to hurt believers in such a way that leads them to repentance. (1st Timothy 1:20) (1st Corinthians 5:4)

D. Church discipline is always intended to be redemptive and not ultimately destructive. The "flesh" (sinful human nature) needs to be destroyed. The human soul and spirit are already regenerated and can exist without a body until our bodies are glorified. (Phil. 3:20-21) The fellowship of the Body of Christ is designed to be a safe place of love and security. *Ideally, the loss of access to a loving environment will lead to a change of heart and a welcome back into the fellowship.* (Matthew 18:13-30) (Luke 15:11-32) (2nd Corinthians 2:3-11)

### **III. TRUE BELIEVERS WILL DESIRE A SANCTIFIED LIFESTYLE. BEWARE OF THE "LEAVEN" IN YOUR LIFE THAT COULD CORRUPT THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH. (1st Corinthians 5:6-8)**

A. "Leaven" symbolically represents "influence", and in nearly all biblical illustrations it stands for an evil influence. Just as yeast causes dough to rise, leaven must be removed so the biblical standards of holiness can be met. (1st Corinthians 5:6)

B. God commanded the Israelites to observe Passover with unleavened bread to remind them of how quickly they had to leave Egypt and slavery. Leaven was dough that was left over and had fermented (like yeast today). It would be used with the new baking dough, and the gas bubbles caused the bread to rise. That rising, however, took time.

C. Before the Passover, a diligent search was made to make sure no leaven was in the home (Spring Cleaning!) during Passover. *Christ is our Passover*, and we are made new in Him. We need to get rid of our old lifestyles (malice and wickedness) and enjoy the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth free of pretense, deceit, and hypocrisy. (Christ and Scripture) **HOW OFTEN DO YOU EXAMINE YOUR HEART AND THE HABITS OF YOUR WAYS THAT HINDER YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST?**

### **IV. CAREFULLY JUDGE YOUR "HANG OUT" PARTNERS. (1st Corinthians 5:9-13)**

A. The Corinthians misunderstood Paul's previous instruction about spending time with immoral people. As long as we live in this world, we cannot avoid them. However, if they claim to be Christians and refuse to live and love like Jesus, we choose to distance ourselves from them.

B. The Communion Table is for those who take the Gospel seriously. We also take notice that Paul did not limit immoral persons to the sexually sinful. Coveting, idolatry, revelry, drunkenness, and extortion are also immoral actions that should never characterize believers.

C. God is the ultimate and perfect judge of those who refuse to join His church. *Believers are to pass judgment on those who claim to be part of the local church.* We may need to practice tough love with someone close to us. ("Sorry, I'm not coming to your wedding, party, home, etc. if you are violating Scripture intentionally") Perhaps we are the one in need of tough love!

**CHRIST CLEANSSES AND PURIFIES HIS BRIDE, THE CHURCH, WASHING AND SANCTIFYING US WITH HIS WORD, SO HE CAN PRESENT HER (US!) TO HIMSELF AS A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH. (EPHESIANS 5: 26-27)**

**SPOTS ARE CAUSED BY SOMETHING GETTING ON US FROM THE OUTSIDE. BLEMISHES ARE THE OUTWARD SIGN OF SOMETHING WRONG ON THE INSIDE. WHEN CHRIST FINISHES HIS WORK, WE ARE CLEAN BEFORE OUR LORD!!!**

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