

1 Corinthians 5:1-8 Immorality In The Church

In 1 Corinthians 1:10-2:21 Paul dealt with the problem of authority in the church. The Corinthians were arrogant and viewed their fellowship as believers from a worldly perspective. This carnal attitude produced three more problems that Paul deals with in chapters five and six: incest, litigation, and prostitution.

In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul addresses the problem of immorality, specifically incest, in the church. In verses 1-8 he exhorts them to take a different view of immorality and in verses 9-13 he instructs them on how to relate to the immoral both within and outside the church.

Verse 1

Immorality among you - The word translated 'immorality' is the Greek word *porneia* which means fornication or sexual relations with a forbidden mate. In the Greek world of Corinth the word was a synonym for 'prostitution' or simply sexual pleasure. In Judaism *porneia* was used to cover all extramarital sexual sins including homosexuality (See Leviticus 18 where all types of sexual sins are addressed in the Law).

Someone has his father's wife – Evidently this was his step-mother. Since *porneia* is used and not the word for adultery it is probable that either the father was dead or they were divorced. The verb for *has* implies a continuing relationship. This man and woman were living together. Since Paul only speaks to the man it seems that the woman was not in the church. Incest between mother and son or step-mother and son was specifically forbidden in Leviticus 18:7-8.

Verse 2

You have become arrogant – Their attitude about sin was worse than the sin itself. Perhaps they viewed sexual morality as unimportant because of their liberty in Christ. It may also be a result of their 'worldly wisdom' and culture (the temple of Aphrodite was said to have over 1,000 temple prostitutes).

Removed from you midst – Refers to church discipline which Paul will address in the next few verses.

Verse 3

I...have already judged – Paul had already determined what the Corinthians should do even though he was not present.

Verses 4-5

In the name of our Lord Jesus – Paul wanted to be sure the Corinthians knew his ruling was the will of the Lord. This phrase most likely modifies "*I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh...*"

To Satan – Most likely this means to the 'world system' which Satan controls (Ephesians 2:2-3).

Destruction of his flesh – This most likely refers to sickness or physical death (note 1 Corinthians 11:28-30).

Spirit may be saved – Not eternally as he is already a believer. The reference to *the day of the Lord Jesus* probably connects this salvation to the judgment seat. Church discipline is always for the purpose of restoring a believer so that they will not be ashamed at the judgment seat of Christ.

The analogy of the Passover – Verses 6-8

Verses 6-7

Your boasting is not good – Their pride over their permissiveness was actually allowing sin to spread in the church.

A little leaven... - Sin will spread like a cancer (Note Galatians 5:9, Mark 8:15).

Clean out the old leaven – Exodus 12:15 and 13:6-7 give the guidelines for the week of the Passover celebration. All leaven (yeast) was removed from the house.

You are unleavened – They were saints by calling (1:2, 9).

Christ our Passover also has been sanctified – Their position in Christ was secure. They now needed to act in conformity with their position.

Verse 8

Let us therefore celebrate the feast – We need to live and enjoy our life in Christ free from the leaven of sin. Life for Paul was a theological issue! Our PURPOSE is the glory of God. Our PATTERN is Christ. Our PRINCIPLE is love. Our POWER is the Holy Spirit.