



# UNITY AND DISCIPLINE

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## OPENING COMMENT

Paul has spent the last 4 chapters discussing the priority of unity in the church. He now turns to a specific place in which the desired unity is obviously absent. In fact, the church is unified in precisely the wrong direction. Instead of decrying the sin that even the world would find repulsive they embrace it with pride! They do so even after Paul had previously warned them about the pitfalls of sexual immorality. In harshly addressing the Corinthian church on this issue Paul outlines why he is so adamant and what the purpose of his discipline is.

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## READ THE TEXT: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. <sup>2</sup> And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

<sup>3</sup> For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. <sup>4</sup> When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, <sup>5</sup> you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup> Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup> Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.



<sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— <sup>10</sup> not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup> But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup> For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? <sup>13</sup> God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

## UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. What are the two problems Paul addresses in this passage? (vs. 1, 2, 6)
2. According to Paul, what is the appropriate response to sin within the church? (vs. 2)
3. What does Paul mean by “deliver this man over to Satan”? (see vs. 2 and 2 Corinthians 4:4)
4. What are the reasons for removing this man from the church body? (vs. 5, 6-8)
5. Paul previously wrote to the Corinthians and instructed them not to associate with the sexually immoral. Who does he specifically mean? (vs.10, 11)
6. Paul’s rhetorical questions provide a clear understanding of who has responsibility to judge in a particular realm. How does he divide the responsibility?
7. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 17:7 at the end of the chapter(read Deut. 17:1-7 for context). How does this bring support to Paul’s assertion that those inside the church should judge those inside the church?

## APPLYING THE TEXT

1. Casting an unrepentant person out of the fellowship of the church seems like a harsh, but ultimately unavoidable step of discipline. How might we follow through with the discipline directives of scripture in a manner that seeks the persons ultimate restoration and forgiveness?
2. One of Pauls concerns is the contaminating effect sin has on the rest of the body of Christ (vs 6-8). How have you seen this unfold in your own life? How might we begin to foster a community that takes the destructive effects of sin seriously?
3. Pauls exhortation implies an “in” group (ie. the body of Christ) and an “out” group (the world). Paul clarifies how the church should interact with each group and the sin found there. What is the disposition toward sin in each group? Have we distorted this reality in the church today? If so, how?



4. Paul asks a rhetorical question on judging those inside the church (vs. 12). How does this sit with you? How do you think this judgment should be carried out? Are the examples of the church doing this well? badly?
5. How might the church's disposition toward sin within the church act as an apologetic to those outside the church? Vice-versa, how would the churches disposition toward sinners outside the church act as an apologetic towards them?

## **BIBLICAL THREAD**

1. Deuteronomy 16:18-20 - God installs judges to judge the people and ensure they follow His laws.
2. Matthew 7:1-6 - Jesus speaks of the disposition we should have toward judgment.
3. Matthew 18:15-20 - Jesus outlines how we should approach biblical discipline when someone has sinned against us.
4. 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 - A particular instance in which the church is exhorted to judge wrongdoing instead of bring it to the courts
5. 2 Timothy 5:19-22 - Paul directs timothy how to deal with sin found in the church.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our goal is to see people restored to unity in Christ. Tolerating unrepentant sin is destructive for the person entangled in it and a deadly threat to the rest of the body. There are circumstances in which the discipline outlined by Jesus will result in people being removed from the church. This is not intended to be a condemning action, but one aimed at their ultimate repentance and restoration. Our heart should reflect the heart of Jesus, never shying from the truth, but always seeking to draw those in sin towards Himself.

## **SHARE & PRAY**

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## **LIFE GROUP VISION:**

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

