

1 Corinthians 4:14-5:13

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First Corinthians chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 are all dealing with the same problem that Paul was addressing in the opening chapters, that of division. The division surrounded in Corinth the issue of they were actually grouping after different pastors or Bible teachers, “I’m of Paul,” “I’m of Apollos,” “I’m of Peter,” “I’m of Christ.” The first four chapters deal with the division. Then we come to 1 Corinthians 5, and it’s going to deal with defilement. Paul was writing to the church at Corinth to deal with an issue that he had been told about, that there was some sexual immorality in the church that needed to be disciplined and dealt with, so we move from one subject of division to another subject of sexual immorality in the church.

As far as picking it up in 1 Corinthians 4:14, which runs to the end to verse 21, we saw that Paul, in order to correct their view about the ministry, talked about the minister to be faithful in verses 1-6, that a pastor is to be marked by faithfulness as a steward. Secondly, in verses 7-13, that a pastor is to be marked by humbleness—be faithful, be humble—and then he moves to our last point in 1 Corinthians 4:14-21 where he says that a pastor, a minister of the gospel, should do his ministry with tenderness, and the imagery there is that of a father correcting his children.

Let’s start with verses 14-21 where we see Paul saying that he wanted to come to them, but he wanted to deal with them as a father would his children and be tender with them. Paul founded the church, verses 14-15; he was their spiritual father. In verse 14, Paul says, “I write not these things,”—what things is he referring to? The things that I just pointed out that a minister is to be faithful as a steward, and the minister is to be humble. He says, “I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. 15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”

The first thing Paul mentions in this kind of, “I’m your spiritual father,” relationship is that you came to know the Lord through my ministry. Now, God is our Father, don’t get distracted by this idea, but Paul is basically saying that, “I led you to Christ, so you’re my sons and my daughters in the faith.” So, “I’m ministering to you with tenderness as a father would with his own children.” He says, “The things that I speak to you,” I’ll take you back to verses 10-13, where with a little sanctified sarcasm he tried to shame them contrasting his, an apostle’s, humility and brokenness with the way they lived in haughtiness and pride. He says, “. . . but as my beloved sons I warn you.” Listen to the tender love and care that Paul had as a spiritual father for those that were there in the church at Corinth, “. . . as my beloved sons,”—that is, in the faith—“I warn you.”

One of the jobs of a father is to lovingly warn his children. You actually get some insight in the remaining part of this chapter tonight of how a father should treat his children. We should be loving, we should be tender, and we should warn our children of danger, especially spiritual danger. He says, “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ,”—remember, they

were dividing over Paul, Apollos, Peter, and different pastors, so you have all these teachers, all these instructors, but “You only have me, who is your spiritual father, who led you to the Lord.” He says, “. . . yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” Paul preached the gospel, and he emphasized the gospel at the beginning of this book and said, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” He wanted to preach Christ and preach the crucifixion of Christ.

Paul says, “. . . I have begotten you,”—so you’ve been born again, you’ve come to know Jesus, you had a spiritual birth—“through the”—preaching of—“the gospel.” Then, verse 16, Paul was an example to the family. A father should lovingly, tenderly, compassionately warn the children, but he should also be an example to them, and so should a pastor or minister or what we would call an elder. Verse 16, “Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.” Paul says, “I’m living the way you should live.” It’s a wonderful thing when a minister can say, “Follow me. Follow me as I follow Christ.” It’s one thing to preach; it’s another thing to live.

One of the challenges—pray for me—in being a Bible teacher is living what you preach—practicing what you preach. Knowledge brings responsibility, “For unto whomsoever much is given . . . shall be much required.” If you stand and preach every week, then you have to live out what you are preaching. You can’t just say, “Do as I say, but don’t do as I do.” A true minister is able to say, “Follow me.” The word “follow” actually is the word mimic or mimics. He wants them to mimic him or follow his example. As a dad as well, a father, we want to be able to have our children follow us as a godly example by the way we live.

Verse 17, Paul says, “For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus”—or Timothy. We know we have 1 and 2 Timothy in the New Testament, so Timothy was one of Paul’s disciples, one of Paul’s protégées, one of Paul’s sons in the faith, and one of my favorite Bible characters. He was young; he was a pastor. He seemed to have timidity and fear, and Paul had to keep encouraging him, “Let no man despise thy youth,” but he was a faithful man in the Lord, verse 17, “. . . beloved son, and faithful in the Lord.” By the way, the word “Timothy” means one who honors God. It’s a beautiful, beautiful name; and I love that young man, Timothy. I can’t wait to meet him when we get to heaven.

Paul says, “. . . my beloved son,”—Timothy, I’m sending him to you—“who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.” Notice again, Paul says, “When Timothy comes, he’s not going to teach you some strange gospel or some strange doctrine, he’s going to teach you, “. . . my ways which be in Christ” Everything about Paul was Jesus Christ. Everything Paul did was Jesus Christ—he preached Christ, he lived Christ, he exemplified Christ, and he focused on Christ in the church and in the ministry. So, he’s going to send him.

It seems as though some of the Corinthians were actually saying that Paul was sending Timothy because he’s afraid to come himself. There were some who were attacking the apostle who actually said, “I brought you to faith in Jesus Christ, ye have many teachers, but you have only one father.” They, no doubt, were saying, “Well, Paul doesn’t want to come because he’s

afraid. He doesn't want to deal with the problems here, so he sends Timothy." So, the father's instruction, the father's example and warning, and the father's instruction, "I'm going to send Timothy to teach you."

In verses 18-21, we have Paul's discipline in the family. Another thing a father needs to do, a spiritual father or a biological father, is to discipline the children. That doesn't mean that mom can't do discipline, but I think that dad should take the lead in disciplining the children. He says, "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you"—that's that reference I just gave that some of them in Corinth were saying, 'Aw, Paul doesn't want to come. Paul doesn't care about us. Paul's not going to come and deal with the problems,' and some of them were—" . . . puffed up"—the word means blown up like a balloon, so they had a problem with pride—"as though I would not come to you." I love it, Paul says, "But I will come to you shortly,"—but he throws this in in verse 19—"if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power."

Notice that Paul said, "I will come," but he was ready and quick to throw in that phrase, " . . . if the Lord will." We need to learn to incorporate that more in what we say. We say, "Hey! See you Saturday," or "See you Sunday," or "See you tomorrow." We very rarely stop and think, If the Lord will. Do you know that we don't have any guarantee about tomorrow? I thought I'd just encourage you. But it's true. There's not one of us here tonight that can guarantee you'll be able to come to church this Sunday because we don't know what a day may hold, but we know who holds the days. Amen? I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds the future. What we want is the Lord's will, and Paul was always open and receptive to the Lord leading and the Lord guiding and the Lord's will being done in his life.

But he says, " . . . and will know, not the speech"—the big, fancy words, the high-minded words that the Corinthians had. They were so full of the wisdom of Corinth. The problem at Corinth was not that the church was in Corinth, but that Corinth was in the church. It's not a problem for the church to be in the world, it's a problem when the world comes into the church. Paul says, verse 19, " . . . and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power." They were puffed up because they were carnal and they were proud. He's still wrapping up at the end of this fourth chapter the idea of, "I'm of Paul," "I'm of Apollos," "I'm of Peter," and they were divided, carnally fighting over who was the best preacher in the church.

Verse 20, Paul says, "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. 21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" He's basically saying, "How do you want me to come, when I come?" Depending upon how they responded to this first epistle here of instruction and correction would determine the kind of attitude that Paul would come with, whether stern, " . . . with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"

As you move into 1 Corinthians 5, it's interesting he mentions in verse 21, coming to them with a rod. It's almost like in chapter 5 he takes out the rod and has to deal with them very sternly in discipline because a spirit of sexual immorality in the church. Paul moves from the problem of division, 1 Corinthians 4, to a new section and a new problem. The problem was something

that he had been told verbally, that word had come to him, so he moves from the problem of division to the problem of defilement.

They were arguing in the church saying, “Who’s the best preacher,” and not “Is the church pure?” You know, the focus should not be who’s the best preacher but are we living pure lives. There are some churches that don’t really care about moral purity or holiness or godliness as long as they have a dynamic preacher in the pulpit and the church is growing and flourishing. That’s a mistake. In all the epistles of the New Testament, when it speaks about the qualifications for an elder or a pastor, its emphasis is on character, “. . . apt to teach”—yes, must be able to teach, but the focus is on character, which is an outflow of how they preach which causes them to preach properly. They were focusing on one preacher better than the other, not really of the church that we’re a part of, is it pure?

It’s a problem today in the church, sexual immorality. Look at 1 Corinthians 5:1, “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.” Stop right there. In verses 1-5, let me outline this chapter, we have three reasons for church discipline. This is really a classic chapter on church discipline, which is something you don’t hear a lot about today because of the way we’ve adopted the culture of tolerance and we kind of have a very low view of God and the Scripture, and we don’t want to deal with sin in the church, so we tolerate that. As long as the church is growing, we don’t really care whether or not it’s pure or in sound doctrine.

The three reasons for church discipline are, verses 1-5, the good of the offender. The reason we should practice church discipline is because it’s beneficial and good for the person who needs the discipline. You know, when your parents disciplined you when you were young, you needed it, most likely, and it was good for you, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but . . . afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness,” so it’s beneficial, verses 1-5, or good for the offender.

Go back with me to verse 1. We need to set the stage. “It is reported commonly,”—Paul had heard verbal reports, but when he uses the word ‘commonly,’ he’s indicating that it’s very obvious and very clear to everyone that this is legitimate concern and issue. It wasn’t kind of conspiracy, it wasn’t gossip, it was a fact that everyone knew about that in the city of Corinth, the church there, was actually allowing sexually immorality in their midst. “It is reported commonly that there is”—and here’s the word you’ve got to understand—“fornication . . .” The Greek word translated “fornication,” and this is so common in the New Testament, is the Greek word *porneia*, and we get the word pornographic or pornography from this word. The word literally means in its etymology selling of your body, whether that be male or female prostitution. The word came to be used, and that’s how it’s used in this situation, as a general term for sexual immorality, so you legitimately could translate that little phrase “fornication,” to sexual immorality.

We live in a culture today where basically we've abandoned all standards for sex, and we think that there's no rules and no such thing as immorality. Sex was something that God invented, by the way. It's God's idea, and God designed it to only be experienced in the covenant relationship of marriage. I don't want to get too far off the subject in this text, but it's a great opportunity to say that sexual intimacy is only to be enjoyed and engaged in in the covenant relationship of marriage.

What is marriage? One man and one woman. Jesus said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh." When the Bible says, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," so He put a stamp of approval on the Genesis account that marriage was a man and a woman; and there are only two genders, and marriage is not two men, two women; not three men and four women or whatever combination of ingredients you want, it's a heterosexual, monogamous, lifetime commitment to exclusively one another in the covenant relationship of marriage. We'll be getting to some pretty important instructions on the intimacy of marriage in 1 Corinthians 7, so don't miss it, very important, but here is a different issue. There is someone that is committing sexual immorality.

I don't need to get the whole list out for you of sexually immoral acts. All you need to know is that any sex outside the covenant relationship of marriage is sexual immorality, and it's something that should be avoided, and I'll give you some verses to back that up.

Paul says, "It is reported commonly that there is"—sexual immorality—"among you,"—and today it is still a problem in the church—"and such"—sexual immorality—"as is not so much as named among the Gentiles." What he means by that, he says, "And what's going on in your church is so bad that even the non-Christians don't do that, and even the world of Gentiles don't do that, even the pagans don't do what's going on." You say, "Well, what in the world was going on?" Buckle your seatbelts, ". . . that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."

What do you mean, ". . . that one should have his father's wife." Most all scholars that you read or study this text, and it makes sense to me, believe that the way that it's phrased it's referring to a stepmother. There's a lot we still don't know—was the father still alive? Was the father dead? Were they divorced? What was the situation? We don't know, but it was a stepmother, so it was a stepson-stepmother, and the Scriptures are very clear. It says, verse 1, ". . . that one should have his father's wife." "Should have" actually means he's cohabiting with her. It wasn't just a one night thing, it was something that they were ongoingly doing, and they were coming to church on Wednesday night, they were coming to church on Sunday, they were part of a small group fellowship. They were involved in being a part of the church, and the Corinthians just thought, This is wonderful. It's acceptable. It's not a problem. We're okay; you're okay. They became tolerant and accepting of sexual immorality.

We live in a culture today of tolerance is basically that you've got to accept everybody's view as

being equally valid or right—no one's wrong, no one's really wrong, no one's really right. We've thrown out all standards for morality because we've rejected God and His Word. But God has clearly laid out in His Word what is right, what is wrong, what is acceptable, and what is not. Paul says, "Even the Gentiles don't do this kind of sexual perversion, " . . . that one should have his father's wife."

In 1 Thessalonians 4:3, write it down, Paul says, "For this is the will of God"—for you, if you want to know God's will, here it is—"even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication"—or sexual immorality or porneía. That's God's will for you. It's very clear in the Scriptures. But the problem lie is that they were proud, they were " . . . puffed up, and have not rather mourned,"—they should've been mourning and weeping, instead they were gloating on their liberality and their love and how accepting they were—"that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you." There was no disciplining. They were letting it go on in the church.

This is what happens in a lot of churches today. They've lowered their standards, they've rejected God's Word, they're letting sexual immorality in the church, and they think it's okay, that it's acceptable. The truth is that it's something that is an abomination to God and a violation of His Word. Leaders in the church should take action to bring discipline to those who are practicing this kind of sin.

Paul actually says, verse 2, " . . . that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you." That is church discipline through excommunication, and we're going to break it down how it all works. Verse 3, "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together"—so as they gathered publicly. Now, if the sin was public and the sin was known publicly, then it should be dealt with publicly and should be confessed and repented of publicly. The circle of your confession should be the circle of your sin.

Paul says, verse 4, " . . . when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,"—and this is it, verse 5—"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh,"—he gives us the reason behind it—"that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This is radical even to Christians today. We've got this concept that we should never tell somebody, "You can't come to church," and kick someone out of the church or discipline them in the church. If a church is not healthy and strong enough to discipline sinning members, then the church is going to die. The church is going to be weakened. It is a healthy church that can purge from its body, its system, the poisons that will destroy that fellowship or that congregation.

Paul is basically saying, "Look, as though I'm present with you, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, deliver him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." What does that mean? It means very simply that you disfellowship them, you excommunicate them. The leadership of the church actually meets with them,

they're unrepentant, they won't repent, they won't abandon their sin; again, we're going to see, they're professing to be believers, and it's possible they were. They're not acting like believers, but they're professing to be believers. That's what qualifies them to come under discipline, and he actually says that you should set them over, apart " . . . unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh."

What does that mean? It means that they might go get out to the world and get battered and beaten and buffeted by the world and hopefully come to the end of themselves, begin to see the vanity and the emptiness of their lifestyle and their decisions, and that they thus repent and turn back to God. The goal in church discipline is always repentance and restoration. It's always to be done in love with the idea in mind that you want to win the offending brother or sister back to the Lord.

This doesn't mean that we come to church and go around sin sniffing, flesh finding, gospel gestapos looking for people that are sinning. When I go to the back door to greet people on Sunday, I don't shake your hand and say, "Are you sinning? Are you sinning? Are you sinning?" If God is speaking to you tonight through this message, repent. Get right with God. Don't profess to be a Christian and then live like the world—in this case, living worse than the world. If you're going to profess to be a follower of Jesus Christ, then you better bring your life into a light. The goal of the Christian life is to bring your practice up to your position. In Christ you're forgiven; in Christ you're complete. In Christ you're righteous. But sanctification is the process of bringing our living up to our position that we are in Christ. It's not enough just to say, "I'm forgiven. I'm going to heaven. Don't judge me. I won't judge you," or "You have no right to judge me." We do have a right to judge those who claim to be believers and are living contrary to His Word based on the Scripture and the truth of this Word.

It's interesting in 1 Timothy 1:20 there were two false teachers, Hymenaeus and Alexander. They were teaching false doctrine. This is another situation where a strong, healthy church with strong leadership needs to deal with the issue, "You can't preach that in our church," and sometimes you have to excommunicate somebody from trying to spread false teaching that's divisive or heretical. Paul says, "To deliver . . . unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved" Notice that even though they turn them over to Satan to buffet them, that it's for the purpose, " . . . that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The goal and the purpose is always restoration.

Galatians 6 is a verse that you should all be familiar with. The Bible says, "Brethren, if a man"—or sister—"be overtaken in a fault,"—which is a sin—"ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness"—seek to restore them back to God—"considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." You should say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." You shouldn't look down your nose at them. You shouldn't be puffed up with pride, "Well, I don't do that. How horrible that is," and "How can you call yourself a Christian and do such a horrible thing." We should go with tears in our eyes and a heart that is broken in love and beseech them, "Please, come back to the Lord. Walk in obedience to God. We're here to help you. We're here to pray for you." You go in the spirit of meekness. I love that Galatians 6 passage, by the way,

because when it says, restore them, it's a medical term, and it was literally used for the mending of a broken bone, setting a broken bone. You do it gently and lovingly to try to restore them back to the Lord. It's so very, very important.

In verses 6-8, we see that church discipline is not only for the good of the offender, but it's for the good of the church. It's important for the offender to seek restoration, but it's important for the church to be pure and healthy and holy. Verse 6, "Your glorying is not good." You have churches that wave a gay flag, they have rainbow-colored flags out in front of the church, flaunting it, celebrating it, promoting it. Instead of being mourning and weeping, they're puffed up with pride of how accepting they are. "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" He exhorts them, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity"—which is the opposite of hypocrisy or duplicity, it means integrity—"and truth.

Go back with me to verse 6. As I said, verses 6-8, is that it's important for the purity of the church. The church is not perfect, but we need to be living in true godliness and true holiness. "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven,"—what's this about leaven? He's actually drawing from the image of the Old Testament book of Exodus at the Passover where when they were going out of Egypt, they were to eat unleavened bread. Basically, it was the symbol of sin—leaven was—and it was to be purged from their bread. Annually, they celebrate Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, and on the second day, for seven days, they are to eat unleavened bread. In the Bible, leaven is used as a type or a symbol or a picture of sin or evil.

You say, "What is leaven?" For sure in the Bible days leaven was a little piece of fermented bread or dough that they would actually set apart and it would become fermented. Then, they would inject it into the bread when they bake it, and it would cause the bread to rise. It starts small, and it permeates the whole bread. It's like sin, it starts small and it spreads. Have you ever heard the expression, "One rotten apple spoils the whole barrel," the whole bunch. A little bit of leaven permeates or influences the whole. If we let a little evil, a little leaven, come into the church, it will begin to spread like leaven, so we're to purge out the old leaven. Jesus is our Passover Lamb. He died on the cross to wash us from sin, and then now we're to go on to walk in holiness and true godliness.

Purging that leaven is important, verse 7, " . . . that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." How do we purge that leaven? Well, by discipline. How do you purge it in your own life? By confession and repentance, 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It's just that simple. It's just a turning and confessing, agreeing with God that you've sinned, and He will " . . . cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Look at verse 8 once again, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with

the leaven of malice”—he names these other sins—“and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Remember Acts 5, how God wanted to keep the purity of the church and Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead in a church service and drug out. Can you imagine having God strike people dead in a church service and the ushers dragging bodies out of the church on Sunday morning? That’ll get the church’s attention. These people were slain in the Spirit, but they didn’t get back up. They made as though they were giving everything to the Lord. It was phony, hypocrisy, and God saw their heart. Peter actually said, “Why do you lie to the Holy Spirit? You have not lied unto men, but unto God,” and how the Lord struck Ananias dead.

Then, his wife Sapphira came in. She was privy to the same deceit, and she was struck dead and drug out of church. The Bible says, therefore a lot of people dare not join themselves to that church, “Don’t go to that church, they’re getting killed over there. They’re serious over there. God’s taking them out.” A healthy church needs to purge itself from the sin which will cause them to go astray.

The third and last reason in our text, verses 9-13, as to why we should practice church discipline, and you can also read Matthew 18 in dealing with sin in the church and how we need to confront one another. If someone’s sinning, you go to them. You talk to them. Don’t come to me with sinning members of our church, if you haven’t gone first to them. When someone comes to me and wants to tell me about somebody, I say, “Have you talked to them?” “No.” “Well, then don’t talk to me.” I’m not a dumping station. Go to them first. Then, if they don’t repent, then you get the elders, then you get the pastor. Then, we go to them. If they don’t repent, then we deal with it. But we must follow the proper channels. It’s important that we know that it’s good for the world because if we’re living like the world, we cannot win the world. If people come from the world into the church, and they see that the church is no different than the world, why do I need the church?

Follow with me, verse 9, “I wrote unto you in an epistle,”—not sure what epistle Paul is referring to, perhaps one that we don’t have or one that was written before 1 Corinthians. And what did he write? “. . . not to company with fornicators,”—not to hang out with people who are sexually immoral. Now, he clarifies, “Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man”—here is the real important key —“that is called a brother”—so, they’re professing to be a Christian and they are practicing sexual immorality, porneia—“or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?”—that means non-Christians—“do not ye judge them that are within?”—that is, in the church we judge Christians—“But them that are without God judgeth”—and here’s his final exhortation and command, imperative—“Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

Now, it’s not too hard to understand what Paul is saying here, and let me make it as simple and as clear as I can. He said, “I wrote a letter to you, and I told you not to hang out with people

who are practicing sexual immorality.” Then, you say, “Well, I can’t go to work tomorrow morning. I can’t talk to my neighbor, he’s a fornicator.” I mean, you go by, “Hey,” “No, I can’t talk to you, neighbor, you’re a fornicator.” “I can’t talk to anybody at my job or at school.” That’s not what he’s saying here. He says, verse 10, “Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world,” so he’s not talking about the fact that we as Christians can’t talk to or even hang out with... remember Zacchaeus, on Sunday morning, in the gospel of Luke was a wicked, sinful man and Jesus went to his house to have a meal and even spent the night at the home of a man who was a sinner? So, it’s okay to go to them, but if it’s in the church, and they’re professing to be a Christian, that’s not okay. You don’t hang out with them. He’s talking about those who are in the world, those that are unbelievers. He says, “If I was talking about the world,” at the end of verse 10, “for then must ye needs go out of the world.”

Sadly, that’s what the church has done over the years, they try to live in isolation and move into monasteries and they practice insulation and isolation. They don’t want to interact with unbelievers. After church is over on Sunday, you go to a restaurant. You ask, “Can we have a sanctified waitress? Can we sit in the sanctified section? We don’t want to get cooties.” We don’t want to work or be around people that are heathens. Maybe God placed you on the job in that situation because you’re the only light that they’ll ever see, and you need to shine bright in that dark place. I know it’s hard. I know it’s difficult. You don’t want to be partakers of their sin, but you certainly want to shine the light of Jesus, be like a “ . . . city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”

He says, verse 11, “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother,”—this is the key, are they a professing Christian? Do they profess to be a believer in Jesus, yet they’re practicing sexual immorality, “ . . . or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat”—do not even eat with them. Stay away from them. Shun them.

Verse 12, “For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?”—in other words, that ‘without’ is a reference to non-Christians. We’re not here to judge non-Christians. “ . . . do not ye judge them that are within?” Let me say this. Matthew 7, Jesus said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” So, how do we reconcile the two? Anytime you confront somebody about their sin, they say, “Well, don’t judge me, man. Don’t judge me.” And many times I say, “Well, you’re judging me that I’m judging you.” “Well, you’re judging me that I’m judging you, but you’re judging me that I’m judging you.” “Well, don’t judge, man. Don’t judge.” Especially in the hippie days, people say, “Don’t judge, man. Don’t judge.” We still have hippiedom in our world today, hippie philosophies, “Don’t judge.”

What Jesus was talking about was a critical, judgmental, censorious, fault-finding attitude of others. That’s why He said, “How can you take the speck or sliver out of your brother’s eye when there’s a beam, a log, hanging out of your own eye?” What a picture. This guy’s got a 2x4 hanging out of his eyeball, and he wants to come up to you, “You’ve got a sliver in your eye,” BAM! he knocks the person over. He’s got a 4x4 hanging out of your eyeball, how can you see clearly to cast out “ . . . the mote that is in thy brother’s eye?”

There are cases where we need to judge. You say you're a Christian. You say you're a follower of Christ. You're living this kind of sinful lifestyle—you're living with somebody out of wedlock, you're sexually involved with them—that's not acceptable. That's out of God's will. That's not something God wants you to do. We have a right to deal with that. We have a right to confront them. We have the right to discipline somebody who falls into that situation.

Charles Erdman said concerning the church at Corinth, "They should've understood that the true glory of the Christian church consists not in the eloquence and gifts of the great teachers but in the moral purity and the exemplary lives of its members." I love that—not the great oratory skills of the preacher, but in the moral purity and godly holiness in the lives of its members. That's how you're going to impact the culture around us. If we're living like the world, we cannot win the world. So, we judge those rightfully who are within the church, professing to be believers.

Verse 13, "But them that are without God judgeth,"—and God does judge them. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Now, what should the church do? Let me point this out. In verse 2, look at it with me in your Bible, " . . . take away from among you." Notice verse 5, "To deliver such an one unto Satan" Notice verse 7, "Purge out therefore the old leaven" Notice verse 13, " . . . put away from among yourselves that wicked person." The church must do these things: take them away, deliver them to Satan, purge out the old leaven, put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Based on 2 Corinthians 2, it's believed, and I think rightfully so, that the church obeyed Paul's admonition. They did remove the sinning brother. They straightened out their way, and that brother did repent and come back to the Lord. In 2 Corinthians 2, he actually had to encourage the Corinthians to be kind and accepting and forgive him and to let him come back. They were being actually hardcore in not wanting that guy to come back to the church even after he had repented, so Paul exhorts them in 2 Corinthians 2 to allow him to come back into the church. They swung from one extreme to the other, and they had to be gracious and forgiving and let that brother come back in the fellowship.

Remember in John 8, when they were trying to trap Jesus and they brought to Him a woman who was taken in the act of adultery, sexual immorality? They threw her down on the ground and said, "Master, Moses in the law commands that she should be stoned. What do You say?" And you know the story. It's one of my favorites in the Bible, and some people feel like it shouldn't even be in the Bible, that it doesn't belong there. Jesus, with His finger, began to write in the sand. When we get to heaven we can ask Jesus what He was writing. The Pharisees and the Scribes were accusing this poor woman. She was just a pawn—she was guilty, no fella there, though. The law commands the man as well, and what happened to him? They let him go? She was probably set up. They all began, from the eldest to the least, to slither away until Jesus was standing all alone with this woman. He said to her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And

Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” I love that.

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. Amen? Jesus came to forgive and to cleanse us from sin. No sin too great but God will forgive you, but He says to you, “ . . . go, and sin no more.” You can’t come to Christ to be forgiven and then continue to live the same sinful lifestyle you did in the world. Let’s pray.