

**“CONFRONTING IMMORALITY WITHIN
THE CHURCH”**

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

INTRODUCTION

In the battle between the wisdom of Corinth versus the wisdom of God, Paul was the spiritual father to the Corinthians. There were many issues to be discussed, but in this chapter Paul addresses sex and sexuality. He spoke about a specific sin and a specific individual committing this sin, fornication. We deal with this same issue today! The world is forcing sexuality on us and on our kids! *What is the right response to this issue? How do we disciple our children in this area?*

THE ISSUE

The word “fornication” (v.1) in the Greek is “pornea”. In Corinth this act was committed by a particular believer with his step-mother. Paul indicated that this act would shock even the unbelievers of Corinth! In the Roman world, many sexual acts were accepted, such as homosexuality, promiscuity and rape. Since the worldly Corinthians worshipped Aphrodite, the goddess of sex, her temple in Corinth was a hub of sexual tourism. Paul’s concern in the matter is with the believer’s sin, not the participating step-mother! Apparently, this was an ongoing sin by the man in question.

A WITNESS

Paul’s concern is about the witness of the church. While some think that the Christian view is old fashioned, it is actually the progressive way. For over 500 years, the culture of Rome accepted immoral acts as normal. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul was trying to correct what had gone on before. ***What should Christians do?*** 1) Flee fornication, (as if it is coming after us!), **I Corinthians 6:18**; 2) Kill sexual immorality in yourself, (as if it is alive in us), **Colossians 3:5**; and 3) Abstain from fornication – **1 Thess. 4:1-5**.

THE BIGGER ISSUE OF LEADERSHIP

The bigger problem with the sin of this Corinthian believer is that the church leadership tolerated it and was proud of it! They gloried in being open-minded, but tolerance of willful sin is not the same as grace! They did not mourn or grieve over this sin. Church leadership needs to draw the line and take a stand against deliberate, ongoing, willful sin within the church. We need tough love! We can’t allow certain areas of our lives to be free from God’s influence. We must walk in the light! **1 John 1:6**. Allowing sin destroys us, **James 1:15, Eph. 2:1**.

PAUL’S INSTRUCTIONS TO LEADERS

Some may wonder, how far do we go to deal with sin? We don’t need to look for sin, but if it is brought to our attention, we have to act according to the scriptures. In this situation the sin was “reported commonly”, so many knew it. Leadership does need to prove all things and give opportunity for those guilty to repent. If no repentance, then the guilty man is to be removed from the church. ***Why?*** 1) the reputation of Jesus, **Rom. 2:24**; 2) for the good of the individual. Tell him what he needs to hear, and allow the devil to chew him up and spit him out! In other cases in scripture, God allowed his people to be affected by the enemy for disciplinary reasons, such as in **Romans 1**. Another reason, 3) for the good of the church. Leaven, a symbol of sin, spreads if it is allowed to. Holiness and the standards of Jesus have to be maintained for a church to stay healthy. *The church needs to be a place that reflects Heaven, not the world!*

CONSIDER

And now, a message to the flock: There are situations in the church where our loyalty will be tested. The unsaved don’t have the power to live a godly life. They are not obligated to be a witness for Jesus. Someone who claims to be a Christian, however, *does* have this obligation! In **verses 9-11**, we are instructed to not fellowship with Christians who are living a deliberate, sinful lifestyle. Paul considered such a person “wicked” or “evil”. Let the Lord deal with that person. Don’t try to undo what God is doing. Later, this man in Corinth did repent! (**2 Corinthians 2**). After repentance, forgiveness was there, and he was restored to fellowship. Let’s trust the scripture and do things God’s way, even if you are criticized as being unloving or a legalist. **Remember, the aim is a healthy church!**

PRAY

- that we would put away any sexual sin in our lives!
- that we would be willing to have tough love in addressing sins of the flesh with believers.
- that our area churches would take stands against sexual sin!
- for a good response to our church outreach in Canandaigua in August.