

1 Corinthians

5:1-13

Introduce

Did you ever hang around the wrong crowd in school or hang out with that kid who was a trouble-maker? What was the situation? What generally ended up happening to you when you hung around those kids? Just as hanging around trouble-makers can influence our behavior, allowing sin to go unchecked in the body of Christ can contaminate the entire body.

Investigate

Background

Paul has just finished a major discussion on the Corinthian's need for unity in light of their misguided loyalties to various teachers. He ended the discussion telling them their need to return to the ways of Christ and admonishing them for their arrogance toward him. Now he begins a series of discussions of major issues in which they need to stop being arrogant and return to the ways of Christ.

Explore the Passage

[Read each section before answering the questions.]

5:1-5

- What is the situation that Paul addresses here?
- What was their response to the situation? How were they arrogant? *(Look at the end of chapter 4. Likely they were still arrogant toward Paul in spite of this going on within the body. They were arrogant in spite of this, not because of it.)*
- Why might they have allowed this to go on?
- What does Paul call them to do?
- Why are they to deliver this man to Satan? *(Probably not literally delivered to Satan but to his realm. Keep in mind the context of the passage. Think about the other phrases Paul uses to describe what they are to do to this man and how they might illumine what Paul means here.)* How can someone's flesh be destroyed and spirit saved? What does this mean? *(Lots of debate as to what Paul means here. In light of the discussion of carnality/fleshliness in chapter 3 Paul could mean "destruction of the old man/flesh for the purpose of salvation". Some think Paul means for this man to die. This is certainly a possible interpretation [similar to Ananias and Saphira], but I tend to support the interpretation that Paul means for his flesh to be done away with so he can walk with Christ.)*
- How might this affect the kind of discipline we carry out in our movement?
- Can you think of examples of sin that you have seen tolerated in a body of believers? What was the ultimate result of that sin being tolerated?

5:6-8

- What is Paul's point in the leaven illustration? What is the danger in not confronting blatant sin in people within the church?
- What is his point in talking about the sacrifice of Christ, our Passover lamb? *(Our sins have been dealt with by Christ and we have been purified through that sacrifice. Therefore, we should live according to the holiness of God.)*

- What festival is Paul talking about? (*Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover*) What is Paul's point?

5:9-13

In v. 9 we have a reference to a previous letter written by Paul to the Corinthians—a letter that is lost.

- Who are they not to associate with? What does it mean to not associate with these kinds of people? When does a person's sin rise to the level that we are not to associate with them?
- What reasons does Paul give for exempting unbelievers from the same actions?
- Why might it be difficult for us to disassociate ourselves from believers who are living in blatant sin?
- Can you think of examples of when there continued to be association between a body of believers and someone living in blatant sin?

Discover the Big Idea

- What was the most distressing thing to Paul about this situation? How might their misguided allegiances have led to such disregard of blatant sin?

Summary: Their loyalty to various teachers had led the Corinthians to lose sight of blatant sin within the body and thus to lose sight of the holy character and reputation of Christ. Paul wants them to deal with sin in the church, even going as far as disassociating themselves from people who claim to be believers but continue to live in blatant sin.

Respond

- Why is it difficult for you to confront sin in others?
- Why would it be difficult to disassociate yourself from someone who claims to be a believer but is living in blatant sin?
- Why might a proper perspective of Christ as your spotless Passover lamb help give you the motivation to deal with sin in the body of Christ?
- [*Have them consider to themselves*] Are there people, who claim to be believers but are living in blatant sin that I need to disassociate myself from? Pray that a proper view of the holiness of God would give you the strength to confront this sin.