

I Corinthians 5:5; Why “hand this man over to Satan?”

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Paul and the Emerging Church

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## CONTEXTUAL OUTLINE OF PASSAGE

### A. 1 Corinthians 4 - Paul Addresses Judgment, Apostleship and Arrogance

1. The Lord only will judge His servants (4:1-5)
2. Instruction on boastfulness and pride (4:6-7)
3. Sarcastic contrast of Apostles and the Corinthians (4:8-13)
4. Fatherly admonishment of the Corinthians (4:14-17)
5. Paul warns the arrogant he intends a personal visit (4:18-21)

### B. 1 Corinthians 5-6:20 - Discipline and the Corinthian Body

1. Discipline obviously needed and arrogantly avoided (5:1-2)
2. **Instructions and authority for discipline - expel the offender (5:3-5)**
  - (a) **Paul pronounces judgment on the offender (5:3)**
  - (b) **Paul establishes authority in the name of the Lord Jesus (5:4)**
  - (c) **Paul commands the offender be expelled (5:5)**
3. The reason for this discipline - by analogy (5:6-8)
4. Do not associate with immoral "insiders," judgment contrasted (5:9-13)
5. Lawsuits should be handled internally (6:1-11)
6. Your body is not yours, do not misuse it. (6:12-20)

## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS OF THE PASSAGE AND CONTEXT

### **What does the context tell me about the purpose of this passage?**

In this section of Corinthians Paul's clear purpose is to address blatant sinful behaviors and attitudes within the body. As Paul writes, grave sexual sin has occurred and might still be occurring within the community. An incestuous relationship has been brought to the apostle's

attention, involving a man, presumably a believer, and his stepmother who most likely is not a part of the community.<sup>1</sup> In addition to dealing with this specific offense, Paul contends with the believers' arrogant attitude which allows this deed to go unpunished. This atmosphere of arrogance bookends the passage, already addressed by Paul in chapter four (4:19) and revisited before the end of this section (5:6).

### **What aspects of the subject is the author addressing?**

While the specific incestuous act introduces the question of discipline within the community, Paul's response addresses several facets of that subject. Paul appears to be concerned with the ultimate well-being of the offender (5:5), but emphasizes the importance of discipline to the purity of the body (5:6-8). Although the offender's sin is mentioned in verse one, the remainder of the passage deals principally with community action in response to that sin. The response called for involves measures which revolve around themes of authority, judgment, and purity. Some contend Paul's primary concern in this passage is the purity of the church and the polluting affect of this specific sin as well as the body's lack of response to it.<sup>2</sup>

### **Does the larger context explain any difficulties the passage presents?**

The principal difficulty this passage presents centers around what Paul intended by "hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." Why would Paul want to deliver someone to the adversary? Is "destruction of the flesh" a death sentence? Does "flesh" in the context of this passage refer to the literal physical

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<sup>1</sup> Most commentators conclude along with Gordon Fee if the woman herself were part of the community she would also be mentioned, particularly since women were more often condemned for sexual sins. As cited in Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987), 200-201.

<sup>2</sup> Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 168.

body or the "sinful nature" of the man? The larger context of first Corinthians provides some clues to this unique command.

It is clear from 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 that Paul regarded the local church to be God's alternative or "option to the fragmentation and brokenness" evident inside the Corinthian community.<sup>3</sup> This passage indicates that "you<sup>4</sup> are God's temple", and that God's Spirit dwells in that holy temple. If this Christian community is to be a holy alternative to the pagan culture surrounding it, it must be distinctive from that culture. The presence of sexual morality "not found even among pagans" (5:1) was very alarming to Paul, necessitating his extreme disciplinary response. The emphasis on the importance of the community, as well as its preservation is apparent throughout 1 Corinthians.

Paul understood salvation "primarily as an eschatological reality" to be experienced in the present but to be realized fully at the Day of the Lord.<sup>5</sup> References to this in the greater context of 1 Corinthians (3:15, 4:5) provide insight as to what Paul intended for the man who is handed over to Satan. While Paul was focusing on the greater good of the community, he nonetheless intended the disciplinary action to be of benefit to the offender. Paul's regular application of the verb "save" in conjunction with eschatological deliverance (1:18, 1:21, 3:15, 7:16, 9:22, 10:33, 15:2) indicates he conceived of the community's discipline as "leading somehow to the repentance and restoration of the sinner."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, *Hard sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 580,582.

<sup>4</sup> Here "you" is plural and indicates the Corinthian believers, not an individual.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 213.

<sup>6</sup> Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, ed. James Luther Mays and Paul J. Achtemeier (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997), 86.

### **How does this passage fit into the flow of the larger section the book?**

Most scholars see the beginning of chapter five as a major division point in the Corinthian letter. Prior to this point, Paul has been dealing principally with issues of unity, wisdom, and of his apostleship. Paul appears to change topics abruptly<sup>7</sup> almost in an “unmeditated”<sup>8</sup> manner to issues of church discipline. The external grounds for this shift in emphasis are oral reports from unnamed Corinthians relaying the incestuous relationship and the lack of concern on the part of the believers.<sup>9</sup> Despite this sudden redirection, some sequence can be noted between the end of chapter four and the introduction of chapter five. Problems with arrogance and the assertion of apostolic authority are themes which bridge these sections together.<sup>10</sup>

### **How is your passage extending the author's concerns and purposes for this book?**

In the first portion of this Corinthian letter, Paul deals with numerous problems and questions, many of which are unrelated to each other. These various questions and problems can be collected under the theme of "the profound difference between the standards of the world and the standards revealed in Jesus Christ."<sup>11</sup> With this broad theme in mind, Paul now addresses moral laxity which is not only below the standards revealed in Jesus Christ, but is actually substandard to "pagan" morals. Paul's vision of the Christian community will not allow this

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<sup>7</sup> Gordon Fee notes that the sudden shift in topic without preparation is one of the reasons why some scholars see the 1 Corinthians is a compilation of letters rather than an individual unit. As cited in Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 194.

<sup>8</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians : a commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible, ed. George W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 95.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 195.

<sup>11</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green & Marianne Meye Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament : its Literature and Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001), 336-337.

substandard behavior to continue. Woven inside this letter to the Corinthians is a pastoral thread, sometimes appearing as encouragement, other times admonishment, but ever present. Paul's concern for the church is evident inside this passage, this time extended in discipline, but ultimately motivated by love of the Christian community.

### HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Christian community which Paul addresses in this letter is a “fledgling mission church” located in the Mediterranean city of Corinth.<sup>12</sup> Founded by Dorian Greeks in the 10th century B.C., and reaching a population nearing 100,000, the city was sacked by the Romans in 146 B.C. and left in ruins for the next 100 years.<sup>13</sup> Julius Caesar refounded the city as a Roman colony in 44 B.C., naming it Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis, and populating it with former slaves from Italy.<sup>14</sup> This newly founded city grew rich with commerce because of its close proximity to both the Aegean and Adriatic seas, and the Diolkos Road.<sup>15</sup> With the proximity to ports, came sailors introducing commerce of a different sort, namely prostitution, to the extent that “the name Corinth became the base for words coined to refer to various forms of sexual behavior.”<sup>16</sup> It was to house churches in this new cosmopolitan vibrant city that Paul addressed this letter.

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<sup>12</sup> Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Charles H. Miller, “Corinth,” in *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, ed. Achtemeier, Paul J (Downers Grove, Illinois: Harper & Row, 1985), 183.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green & Marianne Meye Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament*, 327-329.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Charles H. Miller notes that Corinth was probably no more or less virtuous than any other cosmopolitan port or city in the Mediterranean during that time. Sacred prostitution was a Middle Eastern custom, not a Greek one at all. Athenian references to the unbridled sex orgies were snobbish disparagements of the pre-146 B.C. city. See Charles H. Miller, “Corinth,” in *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, 183.

In spite of the lax moral standards evident in the cosmopolitan Corinthian city, Paul states in 1 Corinthians 5:1 that the immorality present in the body of believers was "of a kind that is not found even among pagans". Parent-child incest is one of the few crimes that most all cultures agree is abhorrent. This type of incest was categorically disdained in the Roman Empire, with legal punishment resulting in banishment to an island.<sup>17</sup> The incestuous act was also forbidden by the Jewish community as demonstrated in Leviticus 18:8; 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20. The penalty for such behavior was death by stoning. Exceptions to this rule might involve a proselyte because of the Jewish notion that converts were "dead" to their previous lives before conversion. During the first two centuries of the Christian church, it has been noted that "some Jewish rabbis condemned the marriage of a proselyte son and his pagan stepmother while others tolerated it."<sup>18</sup> Irrespective of whether a proselyte is involved in this case, Paul condemns it on all grounds.

Paul's association with the Jewish community could shed some light on this passage. Paul began his missionary work in the local Synagogue, as an outreach to the Jewish community before expanding to the Gentile "God fearers." Synagogues were the social center of the Jewish community, from which the local community disciplined its members. Discipline could take various forms including physical beatings (corporal punishment), and more predominant in earlier times, stoning (capital punishment). During New Testament times, Judaism seems to have used "excommunication, or official exclusion from the community, to replace the Old Testament death penalty."<sup>19</sup> Expulsion was intended to be the spiritual equivalent to the death sentence, reversible

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<sup>17</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 1 Cor 5:1-5.

<sup>18</sup> Simon J. Kistemaker, "Deliver This Man to Satan (1 Cor 5:5): A Case Study In Church Discipline," *Master's Seminary Journal* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 35.

<sup>19</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* , 1 Cor 5:1-5.

if the offender repented. This spiritual banishment and exclusion from the Jewish community "was regarded as the ultimate punishment."<sup>20</sup> It is possible that Paul adapted and applied this discipline by exclusion to the early Christian community.

### LITERARY CLUES IN THE PASSAGE

First Corinthians is an epistle, of an occasional nature dealing with specific problems within the Corinthian community. The figures of speech and language contained in the passage were intended for the original first century reader, who would be accustomed to their use. Exemplary in this text is the expression "day of the Lord" (5:5). This phrase was typically used by Old Testament prophets to denote a future time when God would intervene in history with judgment.<sup>21</sup> The New Testament use of this term was almost exclusively associated with the end of time, the expected second coming of Christ. Many times the idiom points forward in time to "final events relating to Christian believers, who will not experience the wrath of God."<sup>22</sup> Within the context of this passage, the phrase has a positive and personal note, indicating the circumstance in which the offender's "spirit may be saved." Paul's use of this phrase again reflects his eschatological view of salvation. Affirming this positive perspective, Gordon Fee notes grammatically that the preposition *eis* (5:5, "for the destruction of the flesh") expresses both purpose and anticipated result.<sup>23</sup> From his grammatical analysis, Fee concludes "the 'destruction of the flesh' is the anticipated result of the man's being put back out into Satan's domain, while the express purpose of the action is his redemption."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Walter A. Ellwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, "Day of the Lord," in *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library. (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 209.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Another grammatical issue arises in verse four; where should the phrase “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (5:4) be located in the sentence structure? The New Revised Standard Version positions this phrase “... I have already pronounced in judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who is done such a thing” but adds in a footnote the possible translation “on the man who was done such a thing in the name of the Lord Jesus.”<sup>25</sup> In addition to these, several other interpretations exist including “When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus” (NIV).<sup>26</sup> Richard Hays agrees with the NRSV footnote translation, concluding the use of the name of Jesus is a boast of the man’s freedom, consistent with the Corinthians misinterpretation of freedom.<sup>27</sup> Gordon Fee contends for the standard translation in the NRSV, highlighting the authority issues evident within the context of the letter.<sup>28</sup> Utilizing the name of Jesus invokes His authority on behalf of Paul. Given Paul’s notation in verse three of being absent in body, the authority of the name of Jesus, would allow him to pronounce judgment “as if present.” Although reputable scholars and translators have differences of opinion on placement of this phrase within the verse, given the greater context of the passage the standard translation of the NRSV seems most appropriate.

#### THEOLOGICAL IDEAS OR THEMES IN THE PASSAGE

The major theological issues involved in this passage are contained in the key verse “you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (5:5). Contained in this verse are questions of the use of

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<sup>25</sup> emphasis added

<sup>26</sup> emphasis added

<sup>27</sup> Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 84.

<sup>28</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 207-208.

excommunication, as well as the contextual meaning of the words “flesh” and “destruction.” Most scholars are in consent that “hand him over to Satan” is intended to mean the exclusion of the offender from the fellowship of the church. Gordon Fee remarks that except for 1 Timothy 1:20, this particular phrase is not used elsewhere to indicate expulsion from the religious community.<sup>29</sup> This similar usage indicates to Fee a “quasitechnical language,” not to be taken literally but to indicate the expulsion of the man back into Satan’s area of influence.<sup>30</sup> Richard Hays explains the phrase in context of the Passover metaphor alluded to immediately following the verse.<sup>31</sup> Exclusion of the incestuous man from the community of faith relegates him to a position “outside the sphere of God’s redemptive protection.”<sup>32</sup> Central to his notion is the symbolism of the Passover lamb, whose blood on the door posts afforded protection from destruction.<sup>33</sup> Hans Conzelmann interprets this passage as something more than mere exclusion, but in fact a curse or ban imposed in a ceremonial setting.<sup>34</sup> Hays contests this, not expecting a community ceremony, but seeing the phrase has “a vivid metaphor for the effect of expulsion from the church.”<sup>35</sup> All scholars agree that one purpose of this excommunication is the preservation of the Corinthian body. The more perplexing questions revolve around the effect of the excommunication on the incestuous man himself. What was Paul’s intent when he spoke of “the destruction of the flesh?” How could this bring about the condition where “his spirit may be saved?”

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<sup>29</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 208.

<sup>30</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 208-209.

<sup>31</sup> Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 85.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 83.

<sup>34</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 97.

<sup>35</sup> Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 85.

Any attempt to answer these questions must involve discussion of the contextual meanings of “flesh” and “destruction” as well as their relationship to each other within the passage. Commentators differ whether “flesh” indicates the physical body of this man or his sinful nature. Their respective interpretations “flesh” yield different interpretations of “destruction.” Conzelmann with his perspective on the ceremonial curse, construes “flesh” to mean the physical body, stating “the destruction of the flesh can hardly mean anything else but death.”<sup>36</sup> Joining him in the physical view, Simon Kistemaker asserts “flesh” signifies the entire material person, not a portion of the human body.<sup>37</sup> Kistemaker reads the destruction of the flesh as a process of gradual weakening of the physical body, a slow physical decline allowing the sinner opportunity to repent.<sup>38</sup> David Lowery regards “flesh” to mean “body,” basing his opinion on contextual evidence of the word “destroyed” in the I Corinthians.<sup>39</sup> The strength of the word “destroyed” in other portions of the letter (10:10), which indicates destruction resulting in death, leads Lowery to deduce the end result of destruction in this passage is also physical death. He also refers to Paul’s description of a discipline which leads to death (11:30) as further support for his interpretation within this passage.<sup>40</sup>

Opposite the physical interpretation of “flesh” are those scholars who construe the word to mean the “sinful nature” of the incestuous man. Gordon Fee appreciates the physical

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<sup>36</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 97.

<sup>37</sup> Kistemaker credits Adela Yarbro Collins and Eduard Schweizer for their understanding of “flesh” as “the whole person from the material point of view.” See Simon J. Kistemaker, “Deliver This Man to Satan” *Master’s Seminary Journal*, 42

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Lowery, David K, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : an Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary faculty*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Downers Grove, IL.: Victor Books, 1985), 1 Cor 5:5.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

perspective, but takes “flesh” to mean “the whole person as orientated away from God.”<sup>41</sup> Within the context of I Corinthians as well as other Pauline letters, Fee argues Paul typically used “flesh” and “spirit” as descriptions of the entire individual’s orientation towards God. Destruction would then indicate extinguishing “carnal” elements within the individual, intending him to be “saved” escatologically.<sup>42</sup> Richard Hays concurs, describing the “flesh” as “the rebellious human nature opposed to God,” and referring to the verb “save” with escatological significance for human deliverance.<sup>43</sup> For Hays, it is evident that “destruction of the flesh” should be understood similar to “crucifying the flesh” in Galatians 5:24, that is, the death of “fleshly passions and desires.”<sup>44</sup> Walter Kaiser sees “flesh” as the totality of the man in opposition to God, also surmising that destruction was aimed at “the offenders ‘way of life’.”<sup>45</sup>

#### OLD TESTAMENT OR OTHER LITERATURE IN THE PASSAGE

There are no direct quotations of the Old Testament within this passage; however there is allusion to the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:15-20; 13:1-10) at the close of the passage (5:6-8). As yeast was removed from the house during this festival, Paul infers sin was to be removed from the body of believers. This section of the passage references the effect of “a little yeast leavening the whole batch of dough.” Paul is clearly focusing on the effects of the incestuous man remaining in the Corinthian body. Dale Martin equates Christ’s body with the lump of dough and the offender’s body with the leaven, noting Paul’s anxiety regarding “the

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<sup>41</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 212.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 86.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, *Hard sayings of the Bible*, 584.

permeability and susceptibility of the Corinthian body to infection from without.”<sup>46</sup> Leaven was seen as causing decay and a symbol of evil in rabbinical literature, this concept is also reflected in Jesus’ teachings about the leaven of the Pharisees (Mark 18:15).<sup>47</sup> Richard Hays finds this portion of the passage essential to understanding Christ’s redemptive action and deliverance.<sup>48</sup> For Hays, this Passover imagery signifies God’s selection of a distinct people, as well as “the necessity of community discipline and purity.”<sup>49</sup>

Paul utilizes the metaphor of yeast and its effect on the whole batch of dough to demonstrate to the Corinthian believers his reasoning for expelling the immoral member. His analogy allows readers, both first century and current, to conceptualize the effect of unrepentant sin on the community of Christ. He links Christ as our Passover lamb to the state of being unleavened (5:7), imploring readers to remain pure or “unleavened,” and inferring removal of the incestuous offender through this allegory.

### EVALUATE YOUR TEXT BY ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WHICH APPLY TO YOUR TEXT:

#### **What human dilemma does the passage address?**

Allowing for the interpretation of “flesh” as the sinful nature, one purpose of expelling this sinner from the community was to bring about his eventual repentance and return to the fellowship. Inside of this perspective is the certainty that the man’s life would be unsatisfactory

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<sup>46</sup> Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 169.

<sup>47</sup> Joshua R. Porter, "Leaven," in *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, ed. Achtemeier, Paul J (Downers Grove, Illinois: Harper & Row, 1985), 552.

<sup>48</sup> Also see previous discussions of Hays emphasis regarding these verses on page 10. As cited in Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 86.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

outside of the community of faith, resulting in “destruction” of his immoral wishes, leading to a desire to return to the community. Inherent in this view is the importance of community in the life of the individual. To the individual, expulsion is inconsequential if the community is not relevant to his or her life.

The importance of community identity and individual connectivity to community is highlighted in this passage. Paul assumes that expulsion will benefit both the community, by protecting the purity of its distinctive identity, and the individual, by stimulating repentance in absence of the communal benefits. All people desire to be a part of a community.<sup>50</sup> When “flesh” is understood as “sinful nature”, any positive effect for the individual in this passage (repentance) necessitates a desire for that person to return to the community. Community, in this passage, is a core element of importance to the individual.

### **What is the author's intent in presenting the text you are analyzing?**

The paramount concern of Paul in this passage is the spiritual condition of the Corinthian community. Very little textual real estate is devoted to the man himself. While he addresses the fate of the individual sinner in verse 5, the majority of the passage deals with the correction of the Corinthian body. The mass of instruction and argumentation concerns community activity and spiritual health. Clearly the principle reason behind the expulsion of the individual from the community is the preservation of that community and its distinctive moral purity.

### **How does the text help you to understand God, others, yourself?**

Whether inside the community of faith, or on a personal level, one motivation for pure behavior should be to provide distinction from the surrounding culture. Being God’s unique and

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<sup>50</sup> “All” meaning psychologically well adjusted people.

distinctive people, we are called to a level of behavior which should supersede the moral context of the culture surrounding us. Christ's sacrifice, as our paschal lamb (5:7) enables us to be a "new batch," Christians "really are unleavened." The price of purity, Christ's sacrifice, attributes an incalculable value to it. Christians must be conscious of this cost, not marginalizing the call to moral purity, appreciative of the importance of a morally distinctive community and lifestyle within the culture.

### **Does this text inform church life or Christian ministry? How?**

As previously discussed, Paul's principle intent in this passage is the preservation of purity within the Christian community. The distinctiveness and purity of the Corinthian body is contrasted with behavior "not found even among pagans" (5:1). The importance of this contrast, the body of Christ to that of the surrounding culture, remains imperative to the church today. Discipline within the church is still essential to the mission of being a unique community. Contemporary requirements for "tolerance" as well as cultural demands to be nonjudgmental have introduced reluctance on the part of the Christian community to implement church discipline. Excommunication is almost nonexistent, its effectiveness diminished by the proliferation of church bodies, providing offenders with many other opportunities for community.<sup>51</sup>

The ineffectiveness of excommunication and or other forms of church discipline on the individual believer does not preclude the church from the responsibility of exercising that discipline. Should the individual believer not choose to repent, the purity of the body of Christ is still vital. The price of purity, Christ's sacrifice, remains the same. It has been said "Revival is not

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<sup>51</sup> In the Corinthian church there were many "house" congregations, but expulsion from one would most likely mean expulsion from all. Particularly if that expulsion was made with apostolic authority.

always adding people.”<sup>52</sup> Local church bodies are called to exercise discipline within their congregations irrespective of the impact on its attendance.

Sinful behavior as grave as noted in this passage is an obvious candidate for church discipline. The task of delineating those behaviors in need of discipline versus those requiring simple instruction is problematic for the local church. The importance of community to the individual demands that leadership in the church exercise discipline judiciously. Improper or erroneous discipline, not implemented with love and concern for the individual, can be as sinful as the behavior adjudicated. Proper church discipline must bear the distinctive marks of being the body of Christ, including purity of intent.

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<sup>52</sup> This statement was made in a sermon by Randal Spence in Hamilton Ohio in the late nineteen seventies. Whether this quote is original to Pastor Spence is unknown.

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