

Discovering God's Wisdom

STUDIES IN FIRST CORINTHIANS

Lesson 5 **1 Corinthians 5**

Searching the Scriptures ***for hidden treasure***

“I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure.” Psalm 119:162

Paul now shifts gears in his letter to the Corinthians to speak to them on some very specific topics. Keep in mind that Paul writes this letter in general to correct and redirect their thinking, particularly and most importantly encouraging them to keep their focus on Christ. In the next few chapters, we'll see him speak directly on the subject of immorality, beginning with the subject of sexual sin.

First Day: Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

The very words Paul begins with give us a sense of his amazement at what is being allowed to go on. He says, *“It is actually reported,”* in other words, commonly reported, or commonly known. Paul had heard about it—it was common knowledge.

1. As a review, begin by reading 1 Corinthians 4:18-21, connecting Paul's thoughts there with the beginning words of chapter 5.
 - How do you think Paul wanted to come to them?
 - How does it seem he needed to come to them?
 - What gave Paul the authority to come to them with “a rod”?
2. What was the “common” report?
 - a. Was this a “common” problem?
 - b. The Jews had very strict laws for this kind of immorality. Look at the following verses for the Old Testament law:

Leviticus 18:8

Deuteronomy 22:30

Deuteronomy 27:20
 - c. What was the bottom line in the law for this kind of sin? Leviticus 20:11
3. What seemed to be the reaction of the Corinthian church to this sin going on in their midst?

4. Although Paul wasn't there with them, what does verse 3 tell us he had already done?
 - a. What were they to do? v. 4-5
 - b. See if you can explain Paul's intention for the one in sin. What do you think it means to:
 - ✓ *Deliver him to Satan?*
 - ✓ *For the destruction of the flesh?*
 - ✓ *That his spirit would be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus?*

Making It Personal...

5. Paul says, "You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead..." **James 4:7-10** gives us the ingredients for humility—both in church, over sin in the body, and for you individually when you realize you have allowed sin in your life. From these verses in James, complete the following thoughts:

Submit _____
Resist _____
Draw near _____
Cleanse _____
Purify _____
Lament _____
Let your _____
Humble _____

- a. Draw a simple conclusion for repentant behavior, from these verses.

Digging Deeper

- ❖ Matthew 18 gives us the blueprint for church discipline. From these verses, share the 3 point plan for confronting sin in the body:

verse 15

verse 16

verse 17

- ❖ Do your best to summarize today's passage in a couple of sentences.

Pearl of Great Price

“Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom.” James 4:9 NASB This is your memory verse—begin memorizing it today!

Second Day: Read 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Alan Redpath says, *“We come to grips now with the root of the trouble in the church at Corinth, the sin that ruined its testimony and made their pride in worldly wisdom and human philosophy so blatantly out of place.”*

Paul says, *“Your boasting is not good.”*

1. Explain how Paul’s “little leaven” illustrates the potential of harm to this church because of the sin of this man.
2. How would removing this man from church fellowship have the same effect as *purging out the old leaven*?
3. Paul speaks of them as being in truth *“unleavened”* (verse 7).
 - a. Why were they unleavened according to this verse?
 - b. What do you think this means?
 - c. What is the significance of Christ’s death in relationship to their state of being unleavened? See 2 Corinthians 5:17
4. Although most believers don’t celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we do celebrate our “unleavened” state as Christians. How does Paul say we should celebrate our feast? v. 8

Not with _____

Nor with _____

But with _____

- a. Explain how the leaven of sincerity and truth would have the same effect as the old leaven, but with a positive result.

Making It Personal...

5. How “little” of a sin do you think might be considered a “little leaven”?

Exodus 13:7 NASB says, “*And nothing leavened shall be seen among you.*” In other words, every bit was to be thrown out.

- a. Can you afford to leave a “little leaven” in your life? Share.
- b. Have you ever really considered the effect your sin has on the rest of the body of Christ? Share your thoughts.

Digging Deeper

Paul speaks in verse 7 of “*Christ our Passover.*” Exodus 12:1-36 tells the story of the original Passover as actually experienced by the Jews, which pointed toward the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins.

- ❖ Read these verses and make note of the important elements of the original Passover instructions and procedures.
- ❖ Where do you see Christ in this story?
- ❖ Where do you see yourself in this story?
- ❖ There is a saying, *you should be what you are.* What are you now that “*Christ our Passover has been sacrificed*”?
- ❖ Do your best to summarize today’s passage in a couple of sentences.

Third Day: Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

Paul speaks of a letter written before—the letter he refers to is the *real* 1 Corinthians, the letter we call 1 Corinthians is actually the second letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians! The letter Paul refers to here is often called the “lost letter” because it wasn’t preserved.

1. How did Paul differentiate between those the church were to judge and those they were not to judge?
 - a. Whose job is it to judge non-believers?

- b. Whose job is it to judge those inside the church?
 - c. See if you can explain this concept.
3. In chapter 4, Paul spoke of *not passing judgment before the time*, saying that *the Lord* would disclose the motives of men's hearts. In chapter 5, he speaks of our responsibility to *judge those inside the church*.
- What kind of *judgment* is Paul talking about in chapter 4?
 - What kind of *judgment* is he talking about in chapter 5?
 - What is the difference?
4. Paul not only speaks of sexual immorality here, but in verse 11 he gives a list of other sins. Do your best to define the other sins mentioned by Paul:

covetousness—
idolatry—
revelry—
drunkenness—
extortion—

- a. How complete is the separation to be from the one who continues in unrepentant sin? v. 11b

Making It Personal...

5. As Christians, are we to be detectives or, in other words, sin-sniffers? Share your thoughts.
- a. If it comes to you that a brother or sister is in sin, from all we have studied this week, what is to be your response?
 - b. Have you ever had to go so far as to *not even eat with such a person*? What was the end result?

Digging Deeper

- ❖ Do your best to summarize today's passage in a couple of sentences.

Fourth Day:

Deeper Discoveries

This portion of the lesson will take a closer look at some of the words in the chapter. You will need to have your tools—or resources at hand: more than one Bible translation, a dictionary or Bible dictionary, concordance, atlas, and encyclopedia. (If you don't have all of these, simply use what you do have to enrich your learning.)

Using the tools you have at hand, do some digging into the following terms. Start with your dictionary (or Bible dictionary), and then look up the references to add to your understanding. If you have additional resources, you may want to keep digging (making notes in the margins). After you've completed the investigative process, write a definition in your own words. Your investigation in today's lesson will lay the groundwork for tomorrow's study, so be as thorough as you can in your research.

Fornication (Sexual immorality) (5:1)

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? Matthew 15:19-20; 1 Corinthians 6:13, 18; Galatians 5:19, 21; Ephesians 5:3, 5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4 _____

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Leaven (Yeast) (5:6-8)

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? Exodus 12:14-15; 16:6-12; 1 Corinthians 5:5-7; Galatians 5:9 _____

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Purge (5:7)

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 6:7; Malachi 3:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:20-21; Hebrews 9:14 _____

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Brother (5:11)

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? Romans 8:29; Matthew 23:8-9; Luke 8:21; John 20:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14 _____

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Fifth Day:

Heartsearch

Are you walking worthy of your high calling? Are you applying the wisdom of God to your daily life? Get ready for some self-discovery! This portion of the lesson will give you the opportunity to examine your heart, express your mind, and experience your lesson, by applying what you are learning to everyday circumstances.

Church Discipline

“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’”

1 Corinthians 15:33

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 for review.

The prideful condition at the root of the Corinthian church had so blinded the believers that they were willing to look the other way and allow flagrant sexual immorality to take place among them. Paul had been patient with them, and would have preferred to come to them in a spirit of gentleness and deal with their sin, but their attitude made this impossible. They were puffed up and even proud of their disobedience. The sin mentioned was a form of incest: a believer in good standing with the church was living in sin with his stepmother. Paul does not pass judgment on the woman, so we can assume she was not a Christian. Paul rebuked these believers sharply for allowing this sin to go unchallenged and for their unwillingness to deal with it. He states that even the pagans would shudder at this, but the church members were trying to ignore it. He makes it clear that the action taken should involve removing the man from their midst and delivering him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. The destruction (olethros) referred to here is a strong word, and may refer even to death.

It seems that Paul intended for this man to be excluded from the fellowship of the congregation, thrusting him back into the world and on his own, apart from God’s protection and the believers’ fellowship, which he formerly enjoyed. He had forfeited his right to participate in the church, which needed to be kept pure at all costs. It was a painful reminder for everyone of the demand for holiness in God’s temple.

1. How do the following references in Paul’s letter affirm the action that was ordered by Paul?

1 Corinthians 3:17

1 Corinthians 6:19

The term *destruction of the flesh* is used frequently in connection with the judgment of God upon sin; remembering, however, that Satan has no power over the *spirit* of the believer. God allowed Satan to attack Job, but only physically; he could destroy his possessions and afflict his body, but he could not destroy his soul. So while an unrepentant sinner may be handed over to suffer greatly at the hands of Satan, the inner soul belongs entirely to Christ.

We must point out that it is possible this man did repent of his sin. He may be the one spoken of by Paul in his second letter to this church.

2. Read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 and consider the following:
 - a. What does he caution them about in verses 5-6?
 - b. According to verse 7, what does he say they should do and why?
 - c. What does Paul say they should do for the repentant sinner? verse 8

3. A disciplined brother remains a brother no matter what! Galatians 6:1-2 gives us additional insight into the restoration process.
 - a. Who should intervene and what should their attitude be?
 - b. What word of caution does Paul give here?
 - c. What is the higher motive for reaching out to the one in sin?

4. Summarize the heart of James 2:8 in your own words.

As believers, we should grieve over the sins of others for the sake of the church and the spiritual health of the sinner who is moving toward destruction. We should also be careful to guard against any corrupting influences and be willing to administer discipline whenever necessary, always with the hope that the sinner will repent and be restored to fellowship in the body of Christ.

Heartsearch: Briefly look back over your *entire lesson* before filling in the following.

❖ *Examine your heart*

What has God put His finger on through your study and brought to light in a new way? (What did you learn about yourself?)

❖ *Express your mind*

What change has this week's study brought about in your thought process? What difference will this make in how you view your current circumstances?

❖ *Experience your lesson*

What nugget of wisdom from your lesson do you plan to apply to your life?

Sixth Day:

Laying Up Treasure

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:19-21*

The highest calling of the believer, and the most important way to lay up treasure in heaven, is through intercessory prayer. You will want to give thoughtful consideration to what you record on this page, as it will be the basis for your prayer during group time. The format for this day of your lesson is based upon the ACTS method of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. In addition to these four, there is space provided for you to keep track of answered prayers, people and things you want to pray for in the coming week, and also a place to write out this week’s Scripture verse from memory.

Using the lesson as your focal point, write out your prayer for each of the following:

I praise God for (an aspect of His marvelous character) _____

I confess to God that I _____

I thank God for _____

I am asking God _____

Praise for answered prayer: _____

People/things I want to pray for this coming week: _____

Pearl of Great Price: _____

Notes