

1st Corinthians Chapter 5.

The first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

Bill Holdstock

Moral Standards.

Without the reading of the Bible on a daily basis and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, man can quickly be lead astray and tempted into sin. Make no mistake, no tape, no CD, no film, or Christian Television programme can take the place of the Bible for our spiritual growth. The lack of positive teaching from strong Bible believing leaders produces weak Christians. We have noted that in Paul's short absence from the Corinthian church they fell into all kinds of impurities, perversion and immorality resulting in spiteful gossip, backsliding, and sin. We have also noted that the church at Corinth chose different leaders and Pastors all with different ministries that pandered to the whims of the people with no consistency or responsibility to build them up in God's most holy faith. The result was the Corinthian church was a weak church if ever there was one.

The first verse of chapter 5 says *'It is reported commonly among you'*. So gossip was widespread with horrendous stories of fornication, incest and wickedness that had not been heard of before. Paul says that although he is absent, his spirit is grieved as if he were still in their midst. This shows the heart of a true apostolic leader. God still prompts the hearts of such men when the people or churches they oversee go astray.

This is a reflection of God's great desire to ensure that His followers steadfastly live a lifestyle honouring to Him.

Sometimes God will grieve your leader's spirit so that your leader can redirect and set you back on the correct path.

Verse 6

Know you not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Of course they knew, all the women used leaven in their baking of bread, Paul was reminding them what happened when leaven was let loose. He likened leaven to this man who was bringing trouble in the church. He was saying if they let this incestuous person continue without correction the whole church would be ruined by immorality. So the Church needs to take action and remove the person from fellowship.

Verse 5

I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one who shall be able to judge between his brethren.

Remove the leaven and turn the man over to Satan for physical discipline, until he comes to his senses and repents.

By placing such a person out of fellowship we are subjecting them to the ways of the world in the hope that they will get to a place where they have had enough of their sin and its physical and emotional consequences and will turn once more to Jesus asking for reconciliation and forgiveness. Some will respond this way and return to a joyful and sincere walk with the Lord. Others will harden their heart and will be lost for eternity.

Sin is represented as leaven in Old Covenant terminology and is carried over in the hearts and lives of New Testament Believers. Sometimes the heart of man can be full of leaven.

Our reading of 1 Corinthians 5: 6 expects us to know that *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*. Eventually the whole church was contaminated by that small amount that was hidden. All false teaching, religious programs, unfaithfulness and wickedness found in the Corinthian church

contaminated the whole Body bringing it down and the people with it. Because a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump and sin spreads and in the end, unless stopped takes over completely.

Verse 7 says

Purge out therefore the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened.

Before each Passover it was the custom of every Jew to sweep her house thoroughly, in every corner; the house had to be spotless just in case she had dropped a little leaven on the floor or left some in a cupboard that had been overlooked. This was done from the time of the killing of the lamb before the Passover (Deut. 16:3). Every particle of old leaven was thrown out. Representing sin, people were to search their hearts and bring sin, known and unknown to the Lord and ask forgiveness. Christians today must continually search and purify their hearts. (Psalms 139: 23/24). They were to keep the Passover with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Paul was telling the Church that this incestuous person was leaven and if be permitted to remain among them the floodgates of impurity would be opened on the Church and may even spread to the whole area. They were, like the old leaven to throw this man out of the Church. I have seen this done to great advantage and also seen leniency given to the detriment of all.

Verse 9

I wrote to you in an epistle not to company with fornicators 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortionist or with idolaters: for then must you needs go out of the world.

It is understood that a born again Christian has to mingle with and transact worldly business affairs with people, and in doing so associate with men who may well be fornicators and who make no profession of Christ at all. Paul warns us very clearly not to closely befriend fornicators, idolaters, drunkards, or extortionists who profess a form of religion. Because we are told not to entertain any of these sins and to keep ourselves holy before God, we should know and recognise these sins when we see them in others and be careful to walk circumspectly, and watch our conversation and our behaviour so as not to bring shame on our Saviour or the Cross. This walk of faith takes a lot of strength and character but as we stated in verse one the continued reading of God's Word and prayer will help us to be overcomers. Paul is suggesting we choose our friends and those we spend time with very carefully indeed, the power of sin is very strong and we may be led into paths that are not pleasing to the Lord.

A Church has a right to excommunicate sinners. Mathew 18:15-18.

Verse 12

For what have I to do to judge them also who are without?

The idea is that we have no right to use these standards to judge non-believers who do not profess Christ as Saviour. Our leaders do have the right to pass disciplinary judgement and correction to those under their care. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells that all scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, correcting and training in righteousness. That is what the Word of God is it is the standard we should live by. It is the yardstick by which we know what is right in the sight of the Lord and what is not right. And if we are unaware of what God's Word says about a particular area of life...then let's be thankful to our pastors who go out on a limb to speak the truth to us in love, so that we have the opportunity of completing our walk with Jesus in an upright and Godly manner.

Do not you judge them who are within?

As believers we have enough to concern ourselves with in keeping ourselves and our congregations in order ready for Christ's return. *Those that are without* (those who do not profess Jesus Christ as Lord) God judges so let us leave the unredeemed to Him.

Verse 13

Therefore put away from among you that wicked person.

It is clear Paul is speaking about a believer in the Church at Corinth and advice is sort via Chloe who has given Paul all relevant details, and according to Mathew 18: 15 Paul tells the Church, because this person is a piece of leaven and before that leaven takes over completely they are to remove him from the Church. In today's church there is much leniency towards those who walk unwisely but the consequences can and often are devastating because to do what the scripture says is beyond most leadership.

It is regrettable that rather too many leaders fear man more than God and therefore shrink back from applying the sound advice given by Paul in this chapter. Perhaps they fear losing people from their congregation; perhaps they fear it will be detrimental to their perceived success as a pastor. But let us thank God for the true Shepherds who follow the advice given in

Colossians 1:28.

Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,

I am grateful to my friend Graham Towse for his valuable support and contribution.

Be blessed

Bill@Holdstock.com

More studies on Google, www.wordlightmypath.com