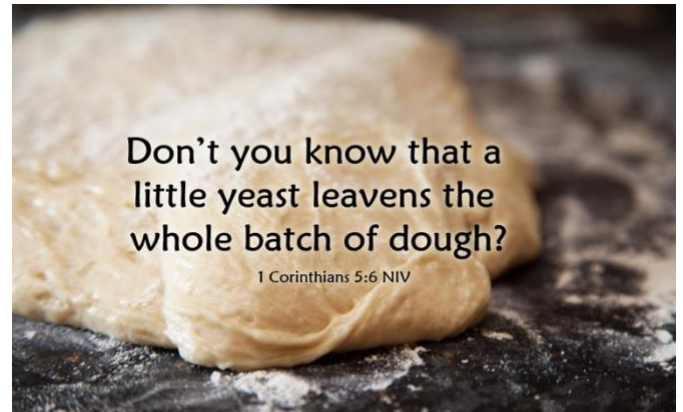


# 1 Corinthians, Chapter 5

Having first sought to unify the Corinthian church (chapters 1-4), St. Paul next turns his attention to problems of immorality (chapters 5-6). He takes up the case of a church member who lived with his father's wife, calling it an instance of morality that even pagan society did not sanction. Disciplinary action was made difficult because others defiantly and arrogantly took the sinner's part. The apostle urges that the evil leaven be purged, lest it permeate the entire congregation. He wants the members to be under the sincere and truthful power of Christ as Paschal Lamb offered for the church's renewal. As for associations with immoral persons in the world, St. Paul concedes that not all such contacts can be avoided. However, fellowship with such people is to be shunned. **Read: 1 Corinthians 5.**



1. The “sexual immorality” the congregation permitted in the life of one of its members – behavior not even acceptable in pagan society – was that a man “has his father’s wife.” Read Leviticus 18:8 and 18:17. These verses refer to the same sin. How does Leviticus characterize incestuous adultery?
2. Note the penalty for this sin prescribed in Leviticus 18:29 and Deuteronomy 27:20. Compare that penalty with the action prescribed by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 5:4-5, 13. Why is this action that St. Paul commands appropriate?
3. What did Jesus teach His disciples in Matthew 18:15-20 about someone whose persistent, unrepentant sin threatens to destroy Christian fellowship? What does this process say to you about the spirit in which it is conducted and the desired outcome? (See: 1 Cor. 5:5)
4. The decision to exclude a persistent, unrepentant sinner is not to be made by individuals but by the congregation as a whole. Refer again to Matthew 18:20 and 1 Cor. 5:4. How would you know that Jesus is present influence a congregation dealing with this type of situation? (Read: John 3:16-17 before you answer.)
5. St. Paul compares the presence of the man persisting in unrepentant sin to old yeast, which must be thrown out so that it does not work its way through an entire batch of dough (1 Cor. 5:6-7). Leaven (or yeast) here is symbolic of sin. This illustration refers to the practice commanded by God in the Old Testament of eating only unleavened (yeast free) bread during the Passover observance. All leavening was removed from the Jewish home in preparation for Passover (Exodus 12:15). How is tolerating sinful behavior within a group work like yeast in a

batch of dough?

6. The highlight of the Old Testament Passover observance came when families ate the Passover lamb together. Why do you think St. Paul called Christ our Passover Lamb in 1 Cor. 5:7?
  
7. Read 1 Cor. 5:8. St. Paul refers to the Passover “festival” to illustrate the cleansing God has brought about in us through Christ. Complete this sentence using the comparison St. Paul is making: *Just as the Jews in the Old Testament removed all yeast and leavened bread from their homes as they prepared to celebrate the Passover, so we Christians ...*
  
8. In 1 Cor. 5:9-11, St. Paul writes about the associations we make with others. While Paul acknowledges that we cannot avoid associating with unbelievers as long as we live in this world, he writes that we are not to associate with those who call themselves Christians but behave in such a way that openly dishonors Christ. What do you think St. Paul is concerned about in commanding this?
  
9. In the last part of chapter 5, St. Paul writes about judging others. Note this distinction he makes in 1 Cor. 5:12-13. He says we are not to be concerned about judging those outside the Church, we are to focus on the behavior of those inside the Church.
  - a. Read Matthew 7:1-5, and state briefly what our spirit and attitude *should not be* and what it *should be* as we judge those inside the Church.
  
  - b. The purpose of judging those inside the Church is not to condemn but to restore them. Read Galatians 6:1-5. What is the attitude you find in that passage?

**Closing Prayer: (from LSB 458 – Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands)**

- 1 Christ Jesus lay in death’s strong bands For our offenses given; But now at God’s right hand He stands  
And brings us life from heaven. Therefore let us joyful be And sing to God right thankfully Loud songs of alleluia! Alleluia!
  
- 5 Here our true Paschal Lamb we see, Whom God so freely gave us; He died on the accursèd tree—  
So strong His love—to save us. See, His blood now marks our door; Faith points to it; death passes o’er,  
And Satan cannot harm us. Alleluia!
  
- 7 Then let us feast this Easter Day On Christ, the bread of heaven; The Word of grace has purged away

The old and evil leaven. Christ alone our souls will feed; He is our meat and drink indeed;  
Faith lives upon no other! Alleluia!

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**Sources:** God's Word for Today: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 1997), LifeLight: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2007), Luther's Works (CPH, Fortress), Concordia Commentary: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2000)