

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 Discipline in the church

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

1. Paul is addressing a series of problems in the Corinthian church. What are the several aspects of the particular issue being addressed in chapter 5?
2. In verse 2, what does Paul say should have been done about the problem?
3. In verses 3-5 Paul sets out a process for disciplining the man who is in a sexual relationship with his step-mother. See if you can explain the significance of each of these phrases from verses 4-5:
 - (i) “When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus”
 - (ii) “and I am with you spiritually”
 - (iii) “with the power of the Lord Jesus”
 - (iv) “hand this man over to Satan so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord”

Note: This last phrase is very difficult to know exactly what is meant. However it’s purpose is clear-- and that is the most important aspect of it. Paul refers to the same idea in 1 Tim 1:20 where he hands over to Satan both Hymeneaus and Alexander to be taught not to blaspheme. In this case, the ‘handing over to Satan’ is intended to have a positive effect and ultimately restore the offender to fellowship.
4. In verses 6-8 Paul likens the situation at Corinth to that of leaven (yeast) in the ceremonial bread at the Passover Feast. What exactly does he mean? What should the Corinthians do? (for some background, see Exodus 12:1-20, Matthew 16:5-12)
5. In verses 9-13 Paul sums up his teaching on this matter. What is the general principle of discipline that should be applied in the church?
6. Let’s see if we can apply 1 Corinthians 5 to some scenarios that might take place in a church like ours. What ought to be done in the following situations:
 - (i) There is a Christian alcoholic in your church who, from time to time, gets very drunk, to the point of being a public nuisance. And every time he sobers up, he is stricken with remorse, confesses his sin and earnestly proclaims that he will ‘never touch another drop’. However, experience tell us that he probably will.
 - (ii) A young couple who are in a sexual relationship become Christians at your Christianity Explored course.
 - (iii) An impressive looking man arrives at your church who seems to know his bible very well. After a while he makes lewd comments to some of the young women at church. They complain to their youth leader, who reports this to the minister. The minister talks with the man, who says that he was just being friendly. The man’s behaviour does not change and others report that he has been suggesting ideas and actions that seem contrary to the bible’s teaching.
 - (iv) Two women and their newborn baby arrive at your church and begin attending regularly. They request baptism for their child.

Prayer

What matters for prayer arise for you out of this study? Pray about them as a group.