

**5:1:** *It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one (of you) hath his father's wife.*

Gromacki (p. 60) provides a superb introduction to this chapter. “False thinking leads to false living. The exaltation of worldly wisdom in Corinth (described in the preceding chapters, BP) naturally fostered a worldly attitude toward sin among its members. Paul recognized that the problems in the church were not just mental or intellectual, but they were also moral and spiritual.” When worldliness begins to creep into a local congregation, God’s people are headed for *big* problems. Before Paul could deal with fornication he had to address the problem of division (something he did in preceding chapters). “Church discipline could not be handled by a disunited church” (CBL, First Corinthians, p. 309).

The KJV has a much better translation of verse one than the ASV. The KJV uses the adverb “commonly” (*holos*), and this word means “generally speaking, actually, everywhere” (Willis, p. 131). *Commonly* described how widely this problem was known. The words “among you” are plural. They tell us the sin of *fornication* existed at Corinth and more than one Christian was sexually immoral. Though Paul only singled out one specific example of sexual sin in these two verses, the fact *you* is plural indicates fornication involved more than one member (and was perhaps widespread) among the Corinthians. Too, this was a well-known sin (it was known among the Christians and perhaps to non-Christians also). Warren Wiersbe (First Corinthians, p. 586) said, “The church at Corinth was not only a divided church, but it was also a disgraced church. There was sin in the assembly and, sad to say, everybody knew about it. But the church was slow to *do* anything about it.”

Because the sexual sin in this congregation was very public (the word *reported* is in the present tense), we find shock in this opening verse. It seems Paul was saying, “*What!?*” He had a hard time believing God’s people would be involved in sexual sin, and that such a sin would be public knowledge. When writing to the Thessalonians Paul plainly said sexual sin should not exist among God’s people (1 Thess. 4:3-7). In spite of the Bible’s clear warnings on this topic, sexual sin has plagued the church in the past, it is a problem now, and it will surely be a problem till the end of time. Even when Moses was on the mountain and receiving the Ten Commandments, God’s people “rose up to play” (Ex. 32:6). Israel’s history contains several examples of fornication (Amos 2:7b says, “*and a man and his father go unto the (same) maiden, to profane my holy name*”). Compare, too, 2 Sam. 11:1-5; Jer. 29:23; Ezek. 22:9-11; Hos. 7:4.

When Christians engage in fornication, the sin often makes its way into the media. Fornication is, perhaps, the most damaging sin to a local congregation. Furthermore, while there are not two standards for people to follow (i.e. the “clergy-laity” system found in the world is wholly opposed to the Bible), sexual sin involving a preacher, an elder, deacon, Bible class teacher, etc. is usually more devastating than if it comes from someone who has a less visible role in the local congregation. Sexual sin deals a severe blow to all, and many who learn of it are absolutely devastated. In some cases a Bible class teacher commits some sexual sin and the students in his or her class are impacted for life. Anyone being tempted by this sin would do well to recall the words of Jesus in Mk. 9:42: “*And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.*” Allen (p. 64) wrote: “Untold thousands have left this life unprepared to meet God because of the hypocrites in the church.”

“*Fornication*” (*porneia*) is the basis for the English word *pornography*. It is a very broad word for sexual sin—so broad it includes *every type* of illicit sexual activity. In the case at Corinth, the *fornication* seems to have been incest. This conclusion is partly based upon 1b (“*this is not even done among the Gentiles*”). *Adultery* (infidelity in marriage) was a sin the Gentiles knew about but still practiced (6:9). Sexual activity on the part of the unmarried was also common. While the Gentiles sanctioned and practiced adultery and unmarried sexual relations, there were other sexual acts they did not sanction. One of these actions was incest. Incest is defined as sexual intercourse or sexual activity between those related to each other to the degree where the law prohibits marriage. Incest may also occur when there is an “imbalance in power” (i.e. a teacher-student relationship). Incest “was an unspeakable crime even among the Gentiles, except a few monsters” (Bengel, 2:189). Allen (p. 64) offers a good quote from Cicero (106-

43 B.C.) about incest and the ancient world: “Oh, incredible wickedness, and—except in this woman’s case—unheard of in all experience.” Since pagans considered incest to be a heinous act, we can well understand Paul’s shock at what was taking place within the Corinthian church. In the KJV there is an additional word (“*named*”); this is a manuscript variation that does not affect the meaning of the thought.

If the case cited by Paul did involve incest, the involved parties were probably a Christian and his stepmother (his father’s wife). This conclusion is based upon the original text. In the language of the New Testament (Koine Greek) there is a word for mother (*meter*). Because this word is not used, and because Paul referred to the Christian’s lover as “*his father’s wife*,” it seems Paul had in mind a stepmother. Furthermore, Paul used the word “*hath*” (*echo*). This word meant “*someone has taken his father’s wife* (as his own wife)” (Ardnt and Gingrich p. 332). A member of the church likely took his stepmother, and since Paul expressed this with the present tense, this relationship was on-going (people can “live in sin,” Col. 3:7). If there had been a marriage between these two, we have an example of a union (marriage) God didn’t sanction. Just because two people are “married” in accordance with the “law of the land,” this has no bearing on whether or not God recognizes (accepts) the marriage. Herod (Mk. 6:17) had “married” a woman, but John the Baptist said (Mk. 6:18) this relationship was “not lawful.” This message angered Herodias (Mk. 6:19) just as people today get angry about this matter. Some relationships are simply not permitted. If the two people at Corinth were unmarried but living together, they were in a relationship inspiration classified as *fornication* (sexual sin).

Many have observed that Paul’s condemnation was limited to the man. Since nothing is said about the stepmother, many believe the woman was not a Christian (compare verse 12). Certainly we have no information at all about the woman being rebuked or the church receiving information about her. If 2 Cor. 7:12 refers to this same situation, the man’s father (who would have been the woman’s true husband) *was still living*. If this is correct, the marriage between the man’s father and his stepmother may have still been intact. It is also possible the man’s father and his stepmother had separated or divorced. If the marriage between the man’s father and stepmother was still intact, the stepmother was guilty of adultery (adultery is illicit sexual activity on the part of someone who is married). In this scenario the son would have been guilty of fornication (the general word for sexual sin). It is also possible that the stepmother left the father for the son. If the man’s father were still alive, this case would have been even more shocking. Whatever the exact circumstances, this was a terrible situation and Paul used strong language to denounce it.

Paul was from a Hebrew background and he knew how God had viewed sexual sin under the Old Testament era. Sexual intercourse among close relatives (Lev. 18:8-18) was strictly condemned. Close relatives included a mother, sister, granddaughter, aunt, a widowed wife of a close relative (and this included stepmothers), etc. The one exception to this law was the Levirate law. A man was to marry the wife of his dead brother to continue the family name (Deut. 25:5-10). Although the Old Testament Law has been removed and replaced by the New Testament (Heb. 7:12; Rom. 7:4), sexual activity outside of a God-approved marriage is still sin and the consequences for those who will not repent is death (Rom. 6:23). An interesting example of how older commentators dealt with various passages is MacKnight (p. 155). His commentary on verse 1 includes this expanded translation: “*It is generally reported that there is whoredom tolerated among you; and such whoredom as not even among the idolatrous heathens is approved, either by law or custom, that hath his father’s wife, more especially in his father’s lifetime.*”

**5:2:** *And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

The words “*puffed up*” are from a perfect participle (*phusioo*). That is, this action took place in the past and the condition still existed when this letter was written. Paul used this same word in 1 Cor. 4:6, 18, 19; 8:1; 13:4; Col. 2:18; this term is “rare in non-Christian texts” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:444). Except in 1 Cor. 4:6 and 8:1, *puffed up* always has a figurative meaning of *make puffed up, conceited, put on airs* (ibid). Turner (p. 346) defined it as “arrogant self-righteousness.” Imagine yourself in a congregation where Christians are not only self righteous, but arrogant! For more information on *puffed up*, see the commentary on 1 Cor. 13:4.

The exact nature of the Corinthians' conceit and pride is not stated. Perhaps they boasted how loving and inclusive they were because they accepted people involved with fornication. Or, their boasting was related to the *wisdom* described in the first chapter. Another possibility is the numerous spiritual gifts possessed by the members of this congregation (these supernatural abilities are discussed in chapters 12-14). Paul's point was: "You should be mourning (grieving) over the fact that this sin exists. Instead of grieving, you are proud and boastful."

The word translated "*mourn*" (*pentheo*) was used to describe the sorrow associated with death (see how this same term is used in Mk. 16:10). Barclay (New Testament Words, p. 225) noted how in the "Septuagint it is the word which is used for Jacob's *mourning* when he thinks that Joseph is dead and gone for ever (Gen. 37:34)." Barclay also noted how there "is no stronger word of mourning in the Greek language" than this term (ibid). A second key fact about *mourn* is that it described "*the mourning which cannot be hidden*" (Barclay, New Testament Words, p. 226). Such a word brings both an ache to the heart and tears to the eyes. "The Christian sorrow for sin must be not only a gentle, vague, sentimental regret that something has gone wrong; it must be a sorrow as acute as sorrow for the dead" (ibid). Habitual sin cannot be treated with toleration and acceptance. Neither can we pretend it does not exist when it is being openly practiced.

If the congregation at Corinth had truly *mourned* over this "*deed*," they would have taken action. They would have done what Paul said in 2b (the guilty party would have been disfellowshipped). Under the Old Testament system a sin such as this would have meant death (Lev. 20:11), and it was grounds for the nation of Israel being evicted from the land (Lev. 18:8, 28). Under the New Testament sin, and especially sexual sin, is still a very serious matter. Bengel (2:190) said this *deed* was "a base act; out of wedlock." While a congregation cannot have a spirit of revenge, spite, or hate, it must withdraw from every member who *walks disorderly* (2 Thess. 3:6) and sexual sin is *walking disorderly*. Because we are concerned for a person's soul, we must lovingly and kindly practice disfellowship if a Christian will not repent.

Warren Wiersbe (First Corinthians, p. 586) noted how "Church discipline is not a group of 'pious policemen' out to catch a criminal. Rather, it is a group of brokenhearted brothers and sisters seeking to restore an erring member of the family." Instead of letting this man do as he wanted (stay or leave the congregation), this verse indicates the church was to take action. A member had chosen sin and would not repent, so God's people were to engage in church discipline to restore him. Today, when such action is necessary, all involved must realize that church discipline is an especially serious and solemn time and everyone involved in the process must treat it in this manner. For a special and detailed study on the subject of church discipline and disfellowship, see the commentary on 2 Thess. 3:6.

**5:3-5:** *For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, 4 in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Paul was not physically present at Corinth ("*absent in body*"), but he was present in "*spirit*." Here *spirit* does not mean "Holy Spirit." We sometimes say, "I am thinking about you; my thoughts are with you." These were the sentiments being expressed by Paul (compare 2 Cor. 11:28). Some commentators believe there is the added meaning found in 2 Kgs. 5:23-26 (Elisha knew what his servant Gehazi was doing, even though the two men were separated from each other). One argument against this additional sense is 1 Cor. 5:1 (Paul referred to reports about this sin). Paul wanted these Christians to realize he would help shoulder the responsibility for the discipline needed in this case. If people complained about the brother being mistreated, or things went badly, the Corinthians could say they had Paul's approval when disciplining the sinning brother.

Paul also said he had *already judged the fornicator* (*judged* in 3b is a perfect tense verb. A decision had been made about this man and his sin and the decision had not changed). Paul knew the facts in this case and he knew God's will. His conclusion was that this man was in sin and needed to be disfellowshipped. Because God's will was clear, Paul invoked the Lord's authority ("*In the name of our*

*Lord Jesus Christ*” and “*with the power of our Lord Jesus*”), verse 4. In verse 4 the KJV text also has “*Christ*” at the beginning and ending of the verse (this is due to a manuscript variation and does not affect the meaning of the text). This is still true today: When church discipline is necessary, we still refer back to Paul’s instructions. Therefore he is still “shouldering” the responsibility. Sticking to the New Testament instructions on church discipline prevents accusations of mistreatment.

Paul appealed to the Lord’s authority and spoke of the times when these Christians came together (“*ye being gathered together*”). Compare Acts 20:7-8. This meant the brother committing fornication was to be disfellowshipped by the entire congregation. According to 1 Cor. 16:1-2, the Corinthians met every Sunday for services (this is the force of the Greek text and it is well expressed in the NASB and NIV). Too, since this congregation was divided (a subject discussed in the opening chapter), Paul wanted everyone to be unified on this issue. Instead of a few Christians refusing to associate with this brother, the entire congregation was to shun him. A divided house cannot stand (Mt. 12:25).

Withdrawing fellowship discouraged others from engaging in a similar sin (compare 1 Tim. 5:20). Too, having the entire congregation withdraw from this man significantly strengthened the force of the punishment. Dealing with this matter in this manner was necessary because it was God’s will. It was not done in Paul’s name or the name of the congregation; it was done in the *Lord’s* name (i.e. by His authority). “Church membership is a serious thing and must not be treated carelessly or lightly” (Warren Wiersbe, First Corinthians, p. 587).

In the case of 1 Cor. 5, heaven wanted the guilty brother to be “*delivered to Satan.*” Commentators understand this expression in different ways. Some believe Satan was allowed to punish the sinning Christian in a physical way or even inflict death upon him. A more realistic explanation is that Satan is the ruler of this world (Col. 1:13-14; Jn. 12:31) and brethren separated from Christ and His church are turned over to Satan’s kingdom. This means putting Christians back into the world and excluding them from the church (i.e. disfellowship).

Paul also said the deliverance to Satan was for the “*destruction of the flesh.*” While there are those who believe this expression proves the man guilty of sin was literally injured by Satan or literally destroyed (i.e. his literal flesh was somehow punished by the devil), the explanation in the previous paragraph seems best. Why would Satan be interested in punishing someone who has been returned to him, especially since such punishment might turn the person back to God? Furthermore, when Paul addressed this same situation in another letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:7-8), he only mentioned forgiving and accepting the penitent Christian. He said nothing about bringing this man back from the dead or healing him from physical suffering.

Support for physical punishment or death being imposed on this man is sometimes based on Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), but this is an incorrect comparison. There is no evidence Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead by Satan. It appears *God* caused their deaths (Acts 5:4-5). When people were punished physically, or killed, it seems God was the one who took responsibility for the action (compare Lev. 10:1-2). In the book of Hebrews we find that it is God, not Satan, who chastens wayward Christians (Heb. 12:6-11). Why would Satan want to kill people guilty of gross hypocrisy? Such people only help his cause.

*Destruction (olethros)* in verse 5 is only found here, 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:9 and 1 Tim. 6:9. A good cross-reference for the *destruction of the flesh* is 1 Tim. 1:20, a text where Paul said Christians were delivered to Satan so they could be taught “*not to blaspheme.*” This passage tells us Hymenaeus and Alexander suffered but did not die. Other key references in understanding the destruction of the flesh are Rom. 1:24-27 and Rom. 6:23. According to Rom. 6:23, sin pays a wage. If a Christian will not heed the warnings of fellow Christians and obey the word of God, he or she will experience the painful consequences of disobedience (we reap what we sow, Gal. 6:7). A rebellious saint will suffer the natural consequences of sin and life in the world just like the unsaved do. Additionally, when Christians are returned to the world they are subject to divine chastisement (Heb. 12:5-11) and forfeit all spiritual privileges, except the right to return to God’s fold (Lk. 15:7). Heaven has designed divine chastisement to bring about change in the person’s life and allow their *spirit* to be “*saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*” In other words, withdrawal of fellowship is designed to correct the wayward child of God so the backsliding

Christian will repent and spend eternity in heaven. In the case of 1 Cor. 5, the process worked (2 Cor. 2:7). For information about the *day of the Lord Jesus*, see the commentary on 1 Cor. 1:8.

**5:6:** *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*

There was no excuse for the Corinthians to tolerate repeated sin, and especially the sin of incest. Sexual sin has especially serious consequences, so the Bible says “flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18). For those who lived under the Old Testament system, one of the Ten Commandments prohibited adultery (Ex. 20:14). Sexual sin has ruined marriages, destroyed careers, brought “unwanted” children into the world, imprinted lasting guilt on people, and left literally thousands of people with a sexually transmitted disease. One would think society and religious people would have learned lessons about sexual sin from history, but people continue to practice it.

As this material is being prepared (2009), there is a continuing and growing emphasis on “homosexual rights,” “gay marriage,” and the religious acceptance of sexually deviant behavior. We should not be too surprised at society failing to embrace God’s standard for sexuality. Seeing people claiming to be Christians perform homosexual marriages and openly sanction fornication and adultery is absolutely deplorable and almost defies explanation. Paul’s condemnation for tolerating sexual sin in the Corinthian church is what needs to be repeated today when religious people approve of sexual sin. More information about the seriousness of sexual sin is found in the commentary on 1 Cor. 7:2.

At Corinth Christians went beyond toleration—they *boasted* (they were proud of their stance). MacKnight (p. 156) suggested, “They had boasted in their false teacher, as one who understood the gospel better than Paul, and who, perhaps, had defended the incestuous marriage, as a matter permitted by the gospel.” Paul said this *boasting* (glorying) was “*not good*.” *Boasting* (*kauchema*) seems to be directed at the “object” of boasting. In other words, Paul condemned the *basis* for it. Throughout this letter we find reasons for the Corinthians’ boasting. It was rooted in the Corinthians’ false sense of *wisdom*, their numerous spiritual gifts, and the reason here (they tolerated sin). There are still those who are so “open-minded” about things they are completely oblivious to sin and God’s will. It has been said that, “Tolerance is the virtue of a man without convictions.”

To impress his point even further, Paul spoke of *leaven* (yeast). He said a “*little leaven*” quickly permeates a whole batch of dough (“*the whole lump*”). *Leaven* (*zume*) “refers to the toleration of ethical misconduct” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 2:105). In the physical realm it sometimes only takes a slight illness to hurt or even kill a body. Such is also true in the church (compare Heb. 12:15). Small things can easily damage or destroy an entire congregation of Christians (imagine a single drop of black ink on a beautiful white shirt). Many believe the *leaven* refers to the man involved with incest (i.e. his sin was very bad, and if it was not dealt with quickly, other Christians would have been affected and the situation would have gotten much worse). This is true, but there seems to be more to Paul’s point.

What is said in 6a is a divine commentary for the information in 6b. The first part of the 6<sup>th</sup> verse describes *glorying* (boasting). Paul then spoke of *a little leaven*. If these two thoughts are considered together, they reveal that an attitude of toleration is like a little leaven. At first toleration does not seem too bad. It is like putting yeast in dough (initially the effect is not seen). After toleration is allowed to affect a majority of people (and this is true in both the church and society), it will often infect all members of the group and the effects become more and more noticeable. An attitude of toleration will usually reach a point where nearly any and all sin is accepted and the end result is ruin. Thus, it seems best to interpret the *little leaven* as an *attitude* instead of a specific sin.

At Corinth, as well as now and in the future, moral matters like sexual sin may seem insignificant (one could argue that the Corinthians’ situation involved only one member of the church). Paul claimed this action would affect the entire *lump* (congregation). Furthermore, “*leaveneth*” is a present tense verb and this tense illustrates how the on-going sin of just one person can have widespread and on-going repercussions. The Corinthians claimed to be wise (3:18; 4:10), but they did not understand and apply the truth about leaven. Paul spoke of this same matter when writing to the Galatians (5:9). In the Galatian

letter Paul spoke of teachers who held to Judaism. Such a doctrine was an evil influence and a threat to the truth of the gospel. Compare, too, 2 Tim. 2:17. It does not take much immorality or religious error to start the leavening process, so we must be very, very careful on an individual and congregational level. In view of verse 7, “Paul’s command might be summarized, ‘You are pure, so start acting like it’” (Holman, 7:76).

**5:7:** *Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, (even) Christ:*

On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan the Jewish people sacrificed the Passover lamb (this act began the Passover Feast). The Passover feast reminded the Hebrews of the Egyptian bondage and their release from it (Ex. 12:27). On the night before the tenth plague (the death of the first-born), the Hebrews killed male lambs that were a year old. Blood from these animals was sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels. Houses that had blood sprinkled in the designated places were “*passed over*” (the first-born children were not killed). The paschal lamb saved the first-born who belonged to the Hebrews.

After the Passover feast the Hebrews celebrated the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (this feast lasted for seven days). Before the Feast of the Unleavened Bread began, every home had to get rid of all leavened bread (Ex. 12:1-18). Jews regarded leaven as such a sign of impurity they worked to even remove it from “mouse holes” (The Church’s Bible, p. 87). Both the Passover feast and the feast of the Unleavened Bread, as well as the Jewish attitude about leaven, are related to the point being made in 1 Cor. 5:7-8.

Paul told the Corinthians to “*purge out the old leaven*” (their toleration of sin). *Purge (ekkathario)* is found only twice in the New Testament (here and 2 Tim. 2:21). Here “it is used to show the need to cleanse out the filth through the analogy of the old yeast” (CBL, GED, 2:331). The Corinthian attitude of toleration had to go, and *purge* is worded as a command. The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (1:410) said the *old leaven* had to be “eliminated.” Paul’s words convey “a decisive, thorough cleansing.” In this immediate context *old leaven (zume)* is sexual sin and an accepting attitude towards it. In the overall context of the book, however, more was involved. It included the leaven of division, pride, envy, etc. All these sins needed to be completely purged from the congregation because “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (verse 6). “The Jews cast out the leaven before eating the Passover; the believer is to cast out leaven, because the Passover sacrifice has already taken place, whereby he is accepted and made new by God (1 Cor. 6:11). This is a classic example of Pauline ethical teaching in which the acts of God in Christ on behalf of the Christian – expressed in the indicative mood – are the grounds for exhortation to Christ-like living – expressed in the imperative mood – both by renouncing evil and pursuing good” (Brown, 2:463). For additional examples of what Brown is describing see Rom. 6:1-6; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Col. 2:20-4:1. Since we have not seen or experienced the Jewish feasts, a different illustration may help us understand the point. Imagine a person who has cancer. Doctors schedule an operation, and for the person’s procedure to be successful, all of the cancerous cells must be removed; none can remain. If some do remain, the condition will be reintroduced.

If the Corinthians stopped tolerating sin, they would become a “*new lump*” (i.e. they would become like “*unleavened bread*”). This new expression further indicates that *purging out the old leaven* involved more than putting an end to the man living with his father’s wife. There were other serious problems, such as the division described in the first chapter. Christians at Corinth needed to change their attitude (especially their toleration of sin) and become a *new lump* (freed from the corruption to which they had succumbed). A change of attitude and behavior would also allow them to “*stand in the grace of God*” (Rom. 5:2) and therefore be unmarred by sin (1 Jn. 1:7, 9).

Since the Old Testament has been replaced by a New Testament (Heb. 8:8, 13; 9:15), animal sacrifices are a thing of the past. At the end of verse 7 Paul said, “*our Passover also hath been sacrificed, (even) Christ.*” Under the Old Testament system given through Moses, houses needed to be free of leaven *before* the lambs were slain (Ex. 12:15). A similar point is true under the New Testament. Christians are to rid themselves of leaven (sin) so they can benefit from the saving blood of *their lamb* (Jesus). The

Expositor’s Greek Testament (2:810) puts the point very plainly: “The Passover Lamb killed, and leaven not yet cast out: what a contradiction!” Notice, also, this point: because Jesus is our *Passover* no one needs to perish in hell. We can be saved from judgment and condemnation by Jesus’ blood (Rom. 5:9).

Brown (1:632-633) offers some helpful information about the Passover in the first century. It “was the chief festival of the year, for which thousands of pilgrims from the whole Jewish world streamed to Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 2:41; Jn. 11:55). The actual feast, the Passover meal, used to take place in the houses, and, because of the great number of those taking part (more than 100,000; cf. J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 1966, 42), partly on the roofs and in the courtyards. It was held in small groups of at least 10 persons, and began in the evening at or after sunset (15<sup>th</sup> Nisan). The killing of the lambs in the inner forecourt of the temple, which was carried out by representatives of the individual groups (the only duty of the priests was the sprinkling of the blood of the lambs on the altar of burnt offering), and the preparation of the Passover meal took place on the previous afternoon (14<sup>th</sup> Nisan). The meal itself was eaten reclining.”

In addition to Paul using leaven for comparison purposes, there are several similarities and dissimilarities between the Jewish Passover festival and Lord’s Supper (some of these are offered in the following charts).

### Similarities:

<b>Passover</b>	<b>Lord’s Supper</b>
A sinless victim	Jesus
Saved from the “destroyer”	Saved from eternal wrath
A lamb was used	Jesus is our lamb
The lamb was food for the Hebrews	Jesus is our food, Jn. 6:53
All had to participate	All must be “in Christ” (2 Tim. 2:10)
It was a means of fellowship	The Lord’s Supper unites God’s people

## Dissimilarities:

Passover	Lord's Supper
A temporary and earthly redemption	The redemption is eternal and heavenly
The victim was a sheep	The victim was the Son of God
The blood offered limited benefits	Christ's blood is all powerful

**5:8:** *wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

Although these Christians surely knew what God's will was, they still had "leaven" in their houses. That is, their lives (individually and congregationally) were filled with sin. Because sin was so common Paul said, "Let us keep the feast." This entire expression comes from a single present tense verb (*heortazo*) that is found only here in the New Testament. This word was used in Classical Greek as well as the Septuagint, and this background is important. Festivals were part of life in the ancient world. During the time of Classical Greek, writers used this term to describe the keeping of a festival or holiday (i.e. it was used to describe the observance or celebration of a festival). Here the sense is practice celebrating "the true Christian feast of the Passover by replacing malice and wickedness with sincerity and truth" (CBL, GED, 2:488). It was time to "get rid of the leaven" (just as leaven was removed from houses before the Passover feast, sin had to be removed from the lives of the Corinthians. For more information on this point see the previous comments on verse 7). Removing the leaven (getting rid of sin) was to be done quickly because 7b says, "our passover also hath been sacrificed." For those who have become Christians, getting rid of the old leaven means repentance (Acts 8:22) and confession (1 Jn. 1:7, 9). A good summary is found in The Church's Bible (p. 86): "On feast days no one puts on filthy garments. Therefore, we should not do so either. For a marriage feast has taken place, a spiritual one. *The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to give a marriage feast for his son* (Matt. 22:2)."

A preacher could present a sermon series on *getting rid of the old leaven*. If such were to be done, one can only wonder if those listening would allow him to finish the series. "Sin sermons" are acceptable sometimes, but a lot of preaching on sin is usually not what many Christians want to hear. According to Paul, preachers do need to speak about *getting rid of the old leaven*. At Corinth two of the sinful practices needing removal were "malice" and "wickedness." *Malice (kakia)* described the opposite of "sincerity and truth." Gingrich and Danker (p. 397) said in this passage it means "be a child as far as wickedness is concerned i.e., have as little wickedness as a child." Compare 1 Cor. 14:20. *Wickedness (poneria)* described opposition to God (see how this word is used in Mt. 22:18). The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (3:134) said *wickedness* not only describes the opposite of sincerity, it includes "utterly objectionable ethical attitudes." Gromacki (p. 68) said *malice* describes someone who "does wrong" and *wickedness* refers to the one who "does wrong with great pleasure." Here we find the Christian life is somewhat similar to the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. We continually try to get rid of *leaven* and grow in "sincerity and truth" (8b). This process, unlike the seven-day feast period for the Hebrews, lasts a lifetime.

It is also at the end of verse 8 where we find a contrast. Instead of practicing malice and wickedness, Christians are to pursue *the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*. *Sincerity (eilikrineia)* is found only here, 2 Cor. 1:12; 2:17, and it is an interesting word. It is composed of two terms ("sun" and "test") and "thus means *tested in the sun* (seen in the light of day); *absolutely pure, unmixed, honest*" (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 1:391). Since *sincerity* described any object the sun could shine through and not reveal a flaw or crack, it describes the kind of godly sincerity that cannot "be attacked by outsiders; in fact, it testifies to them" (CBL, GED, 2:251). "'Sincerity' contains the purity of motive and



‘truth’ the purity of action” (Gromacki, p. 68). We cannot be sincere and true while personally being engaged with sin or continually fellowshiping Christians who are involved with habitual sin and will not repent.

It has been suggested that Paul used a background of Old Testament feasts because the Passover feast was beginning or about to start. In view of 1 Cor. 16:8, this may be correct. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, the Feast of Pentecost was in the foreseeable future. Since the Feast of Pentecost occurred fifty days *after* the Passover, the Passover feast may have been ongoing when this letter was penned.

**5:9:** *I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators;*

There may have been some previous contact between Paul and the Corinthians. For more information on this subject see commentary below just prior to verse 10. Paul had previously spoken about sexual sin and this is still the subject here (the word “*fornicators*” is defined in the commentary on verse 10). Sexual immorality was a significant problem at Corinth, and it was not limited to the man having sexual relations with his father’s wife (5:1). In first century times sexual sin was common so it is not surprising to find many references to it in the Bible as well as information on how Christians are to deal with it.

In this verse Paul used the word “*company*” (*sunanamignumi*), a present tense verb found here, verse 11, and 2 Thess. 3:14. In each of these places *company* describes Christians “who have fallen away from faith in Christ, which is warned against” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:297). Although this word is used infrequently in the New Testament, it tells believers to not get “mixed up with” sinning church members. Kittel (6:593) said *company* meant “break off all fellowship with those who have licentious lives.” In the Septuagint (Ezek. 20:18 and Hos. 7:8) *company* was used to warn the Israelites against “intermingling with people or practices that would destroy the purity and devotion of God’s people” (CBL, GED, 6:180). When Paul used this term in 2 Thess. 3:14, he showed that the “exclusion aims at ‘conversion’” of the wayward Christian (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:297).

In view of verse 9, it seems Paul’s instruction was either not understood or improperly applied. It is also possible that his words were twisted to mean something he did not intend. Christians were in fellowship with a member of the church who practiced sexual sin, while apparently segregating themselves from the world (they had things backwards). Because of the communication problem Paul made his point again and stressed that he had in mind a certain classification of people. Paul did not mean the Corinthians had to avoid all fornicators. Only *Christians* who were involved with sin were to be avoided.

Some have wondered about the correspondence (9a) we do not seem to have. It is possible there is a “missing letter,” but this is not the only explanation of the text. “The Greek verb translated ‘wrote’ (*egrapsa*) can be interpreted to mean that Paul looked at his present discussion of fornication from the viewpoint of the Corinthian readers. At the time they would read Paul’s admonition, his writing of it would be in the past. This is why he used a past verbal tense (‘wrote’) rather than the present (‘write’)” (Gromacki, p. xvi). “There is absolutely no record from early church history of a third Corinthian letter of Paul. The reference in 2 Corinthians 10:10 that, ‘his letters are weighty’ may mean no more than that ‘what he writes is weighty.’ And the ‘now’ of 1 Corinthians 5:11 need not indicate a later letter. It can be translated ‘rather’ (RSV) or ‘actually’ (NASB)” (Correcting the Cults, p. 225).

If these explanations are not correct, a “lost letter” is not damaging to our faith or the truth of the gospel. Peter said we have “all things pertaining to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). Thus, the information in the “lost books,” based upon what Peter said, is found in the Bible books we do have. Christians should readily admit they do not have all the documents ever written by first century inspired authors (Acts 15:30; 23-27). We do not need every letter written to a local congregation, and the Bible never claims we have every inspired letter. In fact, we are clearly told that some Old Testament information has been lost (Jer. 36:21-23). The Biblical point of view is that we have all the letters (information) *God wanted preserved*. God has preserved the information necessary to make us “complete” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

**5:10:** *not at all (meaning) with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or*

*with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world:*

When Christians deal with the unsaved they often find people involved with some or all the sins described in this verse. God's people are not to cut off contact with non-Christians because heaven does not believe in monasticism. Christians are in the world (Jn. 17:14-15) and they must have contact with the unsaved, just as Jesus did when He was in the world. We are to be separate from the world, but we are not to be isolated from the world. Jesus followed this way of life when He was on the earth. He was *separated* from sinners (Heb. 7:26) in that He did not participate in their sin, but He did not *isolate* Himself from people. Christians will be around unsaved people in their neighborhoods, places of employment, the vacations they take, the education they pursue, etc. Contact with the unsaved should be welcomed as it offers an opportunity to carry out the Great Commission and evangelize the lost (Mk. 16:15-16).

Paul did not offer an exhaustive list of sins in this passage. He could have added other evils such as theft, lying, and murder. He only provided a few examples to illustrate sin, and these examples show that Christians are not prohibited from mixing with the unsaved. However, we should be mindful of the principle in 1 Cor. 15:33.

The listed sins are easy to define, and it is also possible to classify them into three groups. The first group ("*fornicators*") sins against themselves. The second group ("*covetous*" and "*extortioners*") sins against others. A third group, involved with idolatry, sins against God.

**Fornication** ( *pornos*) is a general word covering any type of sexual sin (i.e. a person violates at least one of God's rules concerning human sexuality), and it is used again in verse 11. The word in its various forms in the New Testament "denotes any kind of illegitimate sexual intercourse" (Brown, 1:500). Two examples of this sin (though there are many more) would be incest and homosexuality. The other places in the New Testament where *fornicator* is used are verse 10, 11; 6:9; Eph. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 12:16; 13:4; Rev. 21:8; 22:15. Sexual sin in its multiple forms is one of the devil's best weapons. When fornication is practiced, it is "as if a religious and demonic power is let loose" (ibid). Such a spirit and power is "incompatible and irreconcilable with Christ" (Brown, 1:501). It is, therefore, not surprising to see Paul speak about this sin in this chapter, the next two chapters, the Galatian letter (5:19), the Ephesian letter (5:3), the Colossian letter (3:5), and the Thessalonian letter (1 Thess. 4:3).

A **covetous** person (*pleonektes*) is someone who longs for more, and often the longing is for what someone else possesses. This sin causes someone to constantly want more power, more possessions, or more of something else. Such a person never finds satisfaction. His god is the accumulation of things. This is why Paul referred to this sin as *idolatry* in Col. 3:5. Paul was the only writer who used this word in the New Testament (it is found only here, verse 11; 1 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 5:5). Paul "linked the idea of greediness with sexual sins as well as the sins of immoderation, including gluttony and drunkenness. His admonition in 1 Corinthians 5:10 is strong: Christians are to completely avoid those who are *pleonektes*" (CBL, GED, 5:206). In the New Testament, as well as ancient literature, there is "often a common discussion of filthiness in both sex and business life" (Kittel, 6:271).

The **extortioner** (*harpax*) is someone who takes another person's property. Gingrich and Danker (p. 109) defined this word as a "*swindler* or *rogue*" (the emphasis is on swindling instead of outright theft). This term is found only here, verse 11; 1 Cor. 6:10; Mt. 7:15 ("*ravening*") and Lk. 18:11. In the present text many define it as a *robber*, though it seems to be especially related to somehow deceiving and defrauding another person. In some way an extortioner cheats someone out of what he or she possesses. It is interesting that there is actually a "phobia" based on this word (*harpaxophobia*). This is an anxiety disorder (people fear being robbed).

An **idolater** (*eidololatres*) serves or worships idols (in the first century this was a very common sin). This term is also used in verse 11. Idols and pagan temples were just about everywhere in the first century. At Corinth, idolatry was closely associated with "sensual sin" (Expositor's Greek Testament, 2:812). The word Paul used does not appear prior to the writing of the Greek New Testament. This may indicate that no one perceived or at least admitted, prior to Christianity, that idolatry is wrong. "Idolatry and covetousness were two notorious sins, at all events, in the Gentile world" (Turner, p. 229). It may seem an idol worshipper is worse than someone who is covetous, "but idolaters do at least worship the

handiwork of God” (ibid). More information about this sin is available in the commentary on 6:9-10.

Warren Wiersbe (First Corinthians, p. 590) said, “in all fairness, we must note that there are other sins besides sexual sins. For some reason, the church has often majored on condemning the sins of the prodigal son and has forgotten the sins of the elder brother (see Luke 15:11-32). There are sins of the spirit as well as sins of the flesh—Paul names some of them in 1 Corinthians 6:10. Covetousness can send a man to hell just as easily as can adultery.”

Paul realized that if Christians avoided everyone who commits the sins he listed, they would have to “*leave the world.*” Most regard these words as a type of scathing rebuke (a form of ridicule). Unless one has died and gone into the presence of the Lord, he or she cannot be separated from wicked people. Christianity is a system whereby the world is to be evangelized, not fled from (“sinners” are part of the church’s mission field). This line of thought is continued throughout the rest of the chapter.

**5:11:** *but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat.*

Paul may have in mind a previous letter sent to the Corinthians (see the commentary just prior to verse 10). Whether he was thinking of a previous letter or about what he had just written, he wanted to be very clear on a certain point. Withdrawal of fellowship is only for backsliding members the church (“*if any man that is named a brother*”). If a fellow Christian is guilty of habitual sin and he will not repent, fellowship must be severed. Christians are “*not to keep company*” (i.e. not have continued fellowship) with a church member who engages in sexual sin, drunkenness, extortion, idolatry, revelry or some other sin. For information on the word translated *not keep company* (*sunanamignumi*), see the commentary on verse 9. Here this word is a *present tense verb*.

It seems Paul was comparing men and their sins and wanted the Corinthians to see that immorality on the part of members of the church is *worse* than when practiced by people in the world. When a non Christians sins, he “does not *destroy God’s temple* (1 Cor. 3:17), does not *take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute* (1 Cor. 6:15), does not *leaven the whole lump* (1 Cor. 5:16)” (The Church’s Bible, p. 88). When Christians become involved in sin and will not repent, they are living as Christians in name only. Peter (2 Pet. 2:22) says they are like a dog that returns to its own vomit. Some of the sins that can bring down a Christian are in this chapter: fornication, coveting, and idolatry (all three of these words are defined in the commentary on verse 10).

One sin listed here but not in verse 10 is “*reviler*” (in the KJV it is rendered “*railer*”). The original term (*loidoros*) is found only here and 6:10, and it described someone who used abusive speech. New Testament writers also used this word as a verb (*loidoreo*) in Jn. 9:28; Acts 23:4; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:23. Another variation of the word (*loidoria*) is found in 1 Tim. 5:14 and 1 Pet. 3:9. In Classical Greek *reviler* was a common term in the political and social life of Greeks. It was associated with “slander, insult and disparagement of an opponent” (Brown, 3:346). Here, as well as in 1 Cor. 6:10, *reviler* describes “conduct not becoming to the Christian” (Brown, 3:347). Such a person is a “foul-mouthed abuser of others” (Expositor’s Greek Testament, 2:812). It may seem surprising that such a sin is placed between an *idolater* and *drunkard*, but we must remember “the entire Bible similarly denounces sins of speech and that ‘most people enjoy listening to insults’” (Spicq, 2:408). “People insulted each other for the most trifling reasons. There were even insult duels” (ibid). It is interesting to compare this term to Paul’s description for love in 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

The second to the last sin is translated “*drunkard*” (*methusos*), a term found only here and 1 Cor. 6:10 (other forms of the word are, however, found in the New Testament). The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (2:401) said *drunkard* meant “drinker, drunkard.” Drunkenness “is seen as an element in the old way of life now abandoned, and as incompatible with Christian living” (Brown, 1:513). Liquor is a problem for many people and Christians must address and overcome it. Typical of Paul’s attitude towards this sin is the information in 1 Thess. 5 (he considered drunkenness a sin instead of a disease or sickness to be excused).

In 1 Thess. 5:6-7 Paul issued “a strong warning against the perils of drunkenness. The argument is based on the conviction that Christians now live in the light of Christ’s new day. Since drunkenness is a night-time experience it is incompatible with authentic Christianity. A similar attitude is present in one of the parables (Matt. 24:49; Lk. 12:45), where drunkenness is shown to be inconsistent with the alertness of the faithful servant” (Brown, 1:513). “The excessive drinking of intoxicants was a common vice among the ancient Jews and other early peoples. But since intoxicants were so expensive, it was particularly a practice of the rich (Amos 6:6; 4:1; 2:8)” (Baker’s Dictionary of New Testament Theology, p. 174). For additional information about Christianity and alcohol, see the commentary on Tit. 2:3, Jn. 2:9-10 (section 8 of the gospels commentary), and 1 Tim. 3:3. For information on the word “*extortioner*,” see verse 10 where this same word is used. Many more sins could be listed, but Paul simply said “*with such*” (*toioutos*), the same word he used in Gal. 5. Both here and in Gal. 5 Paul said there are other sins (though they are not listed) that make one worthy of disfellowship if Christians persist in them.

When God’s will is *not* being followed by a Christian (there is persistent practice of some sin), the church (members of the congregation) cannot excuse or justify the situation. In cases such as this Paul said, “*with such a one no, not to eat*” The word *eat* (*sunesthio*) occurs five times in the New Testament (Lk. 15:2; Acts 10:41; 11:3; here; Gal. 2:12). Luke used it to say Jesus *ate* with sinners (Lk. 15:2). Luke also used it to describe an experience the disciples had after the resurrection (Acts 10:41). Authorities define it as having “the implications of friendship or acceptance in the Eastern concept of table fellowship or ‘eating together’” (CBL, GED, 6:196). *Not to eat* means “refuse table fellowship” and is “to be understood in the broadest sense” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:305). “The prohibition evidently includes the church’s common meal as well as private entertainment” (Rienecker and Rogers, citing Barrett, p. 401). Since this term describes fellowship and is here a *present tense verb* (on-going action), it means we cannot sustain or have a relationship with unfaithful Christians. Bengel (2:192) said, “Not only not *with such a man* as host, but not even *with him*, at another’s house.” When we *eat* with someone we are implying we either have a relationship with the person or there is no barrier to being in his presence.

Many have wondered how broad the command to *not eat* with an unfaithful Christian is. Although the information in the preceding paragraph does a pretty good job of answering this question, the Expositor’s Greek Testament (2:812) adds: “Eating together is a sign of friendliness; business transactions are not.” The withdrawal of fellowship goes beyond worship, and that this is “an exhortation to be understood in the broadest sense” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (3:305). For a special study on disfellowship, see the commentary on 2 Thess. 3:6. Paul leaves no doubt in 11b about our avoiding everything that condones (or suggests we are condoning) the actions of an unfaithful Christian. An erring Christian must never forget that he or she has created a problem because of sin and this problem is a barrier to fellowship. We have no right to be bitter or malicious towards unfaithful Christians, but we must also not *eat* (interact) with them.

If an unfaithful Christian wants to worship with a congregation that has withdrawn from him, that should be allowed. It should be permitted because a person might be interested in repenting (2 Pet. 3:9). It should be permitted because the wayward Christian will be further exposed to the gospel, God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16). It is to be permitted because even Christians from whom we have withdrawn are like brothers and sisters instead of enemies (2 Thess. 3:15).

If Christians from whom we have withdrawn do come to assemblies, we have no right to treat them in a rude or impolite way (Mt. 7:12; Gal. 6:10). We cannot encourage or condone their choice of sin (2 Jn. 10-11), but we can use their attendance at worship as a time to admonish them (2 Thess. 3:14-15) and do this in a loving way (Eph. 4:15; 1 Cor. 13:4-8). If withdrawn Christians come to worship, as stated in the previous paragraph, they should not have any doubt about our refusal to be in fellowship with them and we *refuse to eat* with them. We can let them know we miss their fellowship and we are praying that our relationship with them will soon be corrected.

Sometimes a congregation that has withdrawn from a wayward member tries to warn other congregations about a member they “no longer have company with” (1 Cor. 5:11). There are also instances when a withdrawn from Christian goes across town to another congregation, pretending as if he

left his former congregation in good standing. Both of these situations can be addressed in the same way: There is no example of congregations sending out letters to other congregations and notifying them of Christians who have been disfellowshipped (1 Cor. 5:11). Because the New Testament teaches congregational autonomy (Acts 14:23), there is no basis for one congregation telling another congregation who should or should not be fellowshipped. God's plan for congregational purity and fellowship decisions rests with a congregation's local elders. This information, however, does not mean Christians can go across town and start worshipping at a new congregation with a clean record.

The elders of the new congregation, since they are charged with caring for the local "church of God" (1 Tim. 3:5), should make a sufficient inquiry as to why Christians left their former congregation. In 1 Pet. 5:2 an inspired apostle said, "*Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight.*" In cases where people leave one local congregation and start attending another, the elders *in the new congregation* should learn about any special or negative circumstances surrounding the new arrivals. Rather than blindly accept people into the flock which they oversee, elders should ask a sufficient number of questions. Elders must believe the best about people (1 Cor. 13:7), but they must also remember they are *shepherds of the flock* and they must also be as *wise as serpents* (Mt. 10:10).

A final observation involves the word translated "named" (*onomazo*). This is a present tense verb that is rendered "called" in the KJV. By using this word Paul revealed there is a proper *designation* for Christians. This designation is a way of saying something about a person's character and person (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 2:522). "They are what they are called" (*ibid*). Just as we realize the importance of describing secular things with the right words, such is also true in the spiritual realm (compare 1 Cor. 2:13). Many of the designations men use to describe their religious group and their religious practices have no Bible basis. Why designate ourselves by a name that honors a practice such as baptism or something in nature, such as fire, instead of wearing a designation that honors God and Him only? From the place where we worship, to the way we refer to ourselves and the Christian life, we should seek to describe Bible things in Bible ways. For more information on this point see the commentary on Rom. 16:14-16.

**5:12-13:** *For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.*

Paul had nothing to do with judging those who are “without” (*exo*). *Without* describes the unsaved. This same word and this same meaning is found in Mk. 4:11; Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12, and there is nothing derogatory about this term. When Paul spoke about not condemning those outside the church, he used the present tense (compare Jn. 5:22). People in the world are already in a state of condemnation (13a and Jn. 3:18), so we have nothing to add to this fact.

God’s condemnation of the unsaved (13a) does not mean we stay silent about people’s sins and the moral corruption in the world. We must attempt to teach the lost about their unsaved state. If we do not communicate this point, who will? God is concerned about what the unsaved are doing because heaven’s judgment on the lost is expressed with a present tense verb (this suggests God knows every single wrong and sin of the unsaved). God is not pleased when unsaved people sin because people are “literally storing up wrath and revelation” for themselves on the day of judgment (Rom. 2:5).

As Christians we also have another task: It is our job to “judge” (*krino*), a present tense verb, fellow members of the church. If a Christian is a fornicator, drunkard, idolater, etc. we are entitled and obligated to render a negative judgment about that person’s way of life. When we find Christians who habitually live as unsaved people, we must “put them away” (13b) “from among ourselves.” The word translated *put away* (*exairo*) is only found in 1 Cor. 5:2, 13 (it occurs twice in verse 13). This verb literally meant “Lift out of” or “Take up out of” (Gromacki, p. 72). It meant the Corinthians “were to take decisive action; there was to be no delay in the administration of the charge. They were to be like surgeons, removing the cancer by operation, not medication” (ibid). Perhaps Paul was thinking about Deut. 17:7 or Deut. 24:7. The reference to *within* and *without* “denoted in Synagogue usage members and non-members of the sacred community” (Expositor’s Greek Testament, 2:813). Another interesting point is the word “wicked” (*poneros*). Jesus used this term in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 6:13) when giving a model prayer (“deliver us from evil”). How ironic that some would want to receive the blessing mentioned in Jesus’ model prayer but *tolerate wickedness* in the congregation where they worship!