



Living Hope Ministries

Bible Studies

1 Corinthians 5

Paul continues to address issues that are brought to his attention by concerned believers in Corinth. It would appear that, despite some very good things happening in the church, there are things which are being overlooked and to leave them unchallenged would be very detrimental to the body of Christ.

The Problem

Paul has heard about sexual immorality in the church and will address that later in his letter but, at this point, he addresses a particular matter. He points out that, although pagans can often be immoral, even they would draw a line at a man sleeping with his father's mother, probably his stepmother. Paul accuses them of pride in this behaviour, which seems unbelievable, but we can be sure that Paul has good reason to accuse them of this.

Lack of Discipline

Paul states that the man responsible for this sin should have been put out of the fellowship. Someone behaving in this way needs to learn how serious the matter is and should not be allowed to influence others or spoil the atmosphere of worship to our Lord Jesus. Putting someone out of the church is never an easy thing to do but, if someone is sinning, our primary concern must be for the spiritual well-being and reputation of the wider Body of Christ.

Handing Someone over to Satan

This is a very dramatic and powerful comment. Satan is the one who first sinned, when pride led him to resist God and his consequent, futile attempts to take over from God. He is determined to spoil all of the good things that God has made. Sexuality, expressed exclusively in marriage is good, but fornication, adultery and incest are not. So, the offender is handed over to the one who is the originator of sin, with the desire that there should be repentance and a turning back to Christ for deliverance from sin.

Failing to Deal with Sin in the Body of Christ

Paul says that sin which is not confronted and dealt with, has the effect of influencing and spreading in the Body, to others. Christ, our Passover Lamb, calls us to give ourselves to him. We are to be pure and undivided in our allegiance to Christ. We all stumble and fail as we struggle with our worldly imperfections and scripture exhorts us to teach and encourage one another. However, we appreciate the enormity of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf and we must not tolerate those who openly sin.

Fellowship in the Body of Christ

Paul's strong warnings come to the Body of Christ, regarding close and intimate relationships with those doing sinful things. He is aware that some unbelievers still have good moral standards but he is especially concerned with those who give an impression of being believers but whose lifestyle totally contradicts a genuine faith in

Christ. We seek to be salt and light in this dark world and certainly do our best to present Christ and kingdom values but, in the Church, we have an awesome responsibility to bring correction and discipline lovingly, always remembering that we too are sinners saved by grace!

Points to Consider:

1. Are there issues with sin in our own lives, which we are failing to address?
2. How concerned are we about the health of the Body of Christ?
3. Are we willing to confront and challenge sinful behaviour in the Body of Christ?
4. Do we take seriously, our responsibility to challenge and discipline others?
5. How can we guard against a lack of compassion and being insensitive in handling discipline issues?

God bless you!

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