

1 CORINTHIANS: LESSON 15

Fornication Among You (1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

29 September 2017

Fornication: 1. The incontinence (lack of self-control) or lewdness (filthiness, indulgence of lust) of unmarried persons, male or female; also, the criminal conversation (immoral behavior) of a married man with an unmarried woman.

Verse 1 It was common knowledge that certain church members were fornicating. A man was fornicating with his father's wife. The moment he caught himself looking upon her to lust after her (Matt. 5:28), he should have repented, sought the Lord, and prayed that he might not sin against Him (Ps. 110:11).

Paul's rebuke here is to the church who turned a blind eye to sinners in the church. The leaders of the church should have been regularly warning the people of the dangers of fornication so that they'd avoid it with all their heart and strength and mind.

Verse 2 When you see a brother or sister who has surrendered to sin, it ought to hurt you to tears. Mourning goes with death. What dies when a person sins? Their testimony, their reputation, and their name. When that sin is tolerated by the church, the reputation of the church dies.

Vss 3-10 Notice again that believers are supposed to judge (vs 3). One sinner in the church can infect the whole congregation (leaven the whole lump, vs 6). You can't let it remain; you've got to purge it out (vs 7). Either the sinner must repent or they must leave. Christians are not to keep company with fornicators (vs 9). You can't avoid sinners altogether, but you don't have to choose to spend time with them. Your testimony and your church's testimony is in danger if you do.

Vss 11-13 Most specifically, Christians are commanded not to keep company with other Christians who are known to be sinning. Believers must live up to a higher standard. The sinner must be "**taken away**" (vs. 2), delivered "**unto Satan**" (vs. 5), purged out (vs. 7), and be "**put away**" (vs 13). The unsaved man is expected to sin. God will take care of that.

Why are there so many warnings in the Bible about sexual immorality? Because it's something the flesh naturally desires, so we need a constant reminder to abstain from that sin, deny the flesh, and flee from youthful lusts.

Fornication destroys trust. If you were willing to fornicate before you were married, you will be suspected of committing adultery after you're married. Your spouse will never fully trust you. Your reputation was established when you were single.

Honorable relations: God ordained that the physical relationship between a man and a woman would be confined to the couple who have committed their lives to one another in the bonds of matrimony. (Gen. 1:28, 2:21-25, Heb. 13:4, 1 Cor. 7:5).

God chose the marriage relationship to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the believer (Eph. 5:25).

Maintaining or restoring the church's testimony: when a church takes proper action to remove the sinner from the fellowship, the world will see that we don't tolerate sin and that there is a great difference between the standards of the church and the ways of the world.

Christ our Passover (vs. 7) (See Exodus 12:1-15). As soon as a person is redeemed by the blood of the lamb, he/she is to put away leaven out of their house. You are to be pure and clean. If you're living in a sinful relationship when you get saved, you can't continue that relationship. You need to either get married (on a shaky foundation) or separate immediately.

Why must we put the sinner out of the church?

Because sin is contagious (Numbers 5:1-4). The disease of leprosy illustrates how quickly sin can spread until everybody is infected.

Because you care about your brethren and want to protect them (2 Cor. 7:12).

The Devil promotes seasonal pleasure and instant gratification. Moses refused "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:24-26). The Devil offers you momentary pleasures that will ultimately ruin your life. God asks you to deny yourself for now so that you can receive a lifetime of blessings and eternal rewards (Mark 8:34-35).
