

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church

107 East Austin

Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

A1207 – February 12, 2012 – 1 Corinthians 5:1-5
Deliver Such A One To Satan

Now the Corinthian's we have discovered were in big trouble with Paul. They were very worldly, they strove for worldly accolade, they were arrogant, puffed up people, they thought they were so advanced and so knowledgeable. Paul says they were do-do's. So Paul is coming to them like a father; he really wants them to grow out of do-do hood and grow spiritually so they can reign with him in the kingdom. There is a path to kingship and Paul has been sketching that for us in chapter 4. What is necessary, fundamentally, is humility. Humility is the virtue not of weakness. If you have humility linked with weakness that's not the biblical picture. The biblical picture is of strength because you're identifying with the God of the universe. So biblical humility is actually the most powerful position you can be in because it insulates you against any worldly attack. Paul's trying to get them to realize their arrogance and become humble like him, like Timothy. So he's sent them Timothy to set the example, he's sent them this letter. It wasn't successful so he sent Titus with a severe letter. If you think 1 Cor is rough you haven't seen anything. The letter Paul writes next was apparently very rough treatment. It was an increase in the discipline and so it took a lot to get these believers to detach from the world and determine to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified. But apparently he was successful with the next letter and so they eventually did get back on the path to kingship. But in the meantime we have another problem Paul points out; another evidence is maybe the better way to look at it, another evidence that they were still arrogant.

1 Cor 5:1, **It is actually reported among you.** So it's a report that has come to Paul's ears. It was reported to Paul by the people mentioned back in chapter 1, the people out of Chloe's house. Chapters 1-6 deal with Reported Problems that had reached Paul's ear by way of servants out of Chloe's house. Chapters 7-16 deal with Raised Questions. Remember, Corinth is over here

on this Peloponnesian Peninsula, but Paul was on the other side of the Aegean at Ephesus. So he's getting reports over in Ephesus about what's going on over at Corinth. How is he getting these reports? Well apparently there was a woman in Ephesus named Chloe, a wealthy businesswoman, also a believer and she had servants who would travel to Corinth on business trips. And when they went to Corinth they discovered that the talk of the town was this immorality going on by a member of the local church of Corinth. So when they returned to Ephesus they reported this to Paul along with other problems.

Here the problem reported in verse 1 was **that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.** Now the word translated **immorality** is *porneia* which is a general term for "any kind of unlawful sexual intercourse." In other words, it's very broad term that covers a range of acts and behaviors. For example, it can refer to sleeping with a prostitute; they had a lot of those at Corinth, the Temple of Aphrodite on the Acrocorinth which towered above the city had 1,000 prostitutes. If you took a vacation to Corinth the highlight of the trip was to go have sex with one of these prostitutes. It was so common that throughout the Roman world to have sex with a prostitute was spoken of metaphorically as "to Corinthianize." And if you were a prostitute you were known as "a Corinthian girl." So *porneia* can refer to prostitution. And that would cover any kind of sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Secondly, it can refer to sexual unfaithfulness in a marriage. Anyone who came into the covenant of marriage and broke that covenant had committed *porneia*. And that may be involved in the problem here at the end of verse 1, **that someone has his father's wife.** So here we have a woman married to a man and the man's son is having some kind of sexual relationship with her.

Third, *porneia* can refer to forbidden marriages between close relatives, which may also be involved here; the son may also be married to the same woman the father is married to, a case of polyandry, a woman having more than one husband. So we have three uses of *porneia*; prostitution, unfaithfulness in marriage and forbidden marriages. The word is a very broad term for "any kind of unlawful sexual intercourse."

The trouble is trying to figure out exactly what aspect of *porneia* has been violated by this man in the Corinthian Church. And as an aside only the man who is doing this with his father's wife is condemned. The father and his wife are not condemned and the reason they are not condemned is because they are not believers. And that plays very importantly in the discussion because Paul insists at the end of the chapter that Christians judge those within the church, not those outside of the church. Those outside the church God judges, but those inside the church Christians are to judge. Now someone will say, but you just got done telling us in chapter 4, vv 1-5 that we should not judge within the Church. No, that is not what I said. I said we should not judge in the sense of ranking one believer, say a teacher, as superior to another teacher in carrying out his stewardship. I said that judgment of ranking believers in the kingdom belongs to Christ alone. But chapter 5 is dealing with a very different matter, here we have sin being committed by a member of the Church and in this case it is abundantly clear that we are to judge. Put shortly then, we are not to judge believers in the sense of ranking them in relation to one another, but we are to judge believers when it comes to sin. And further, we can now add that we only judge believer's sin, the man who had his father's wife was the only one of the three Paul says should be judged by the church because he was the only believer. The father and his wife are not subject to judgment by the Church because they were unbelievers and God will judge them, that's His business not ours.

So verse 1, **It is actually reported that there is immorality among you.** That immorality is of a sexual nature, we might translate it "sexual immorality," **and sexual immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles,** that is, this kind of sexual immorality doesn't even go on among unbelieving pagans. So we have Christians engaging in things that pagans won't even do. Namely, **that someone has his father's wife.** Now the expression **has his father's wife** was routinely used of marital relationships. So it could mean that the father and the son were married to the same woman and this would be a case of polyandry, a woman having more than one husband. And while that may sound strange to you it has been acceptable in certain cultures and certain times. However as Paul indicates it was not accepted in Rome. In fact it was illegal in Rome. Gaius in his *Institutes* writes, "It is illegal to marry...her who has been even my mother-in-law or stepmother." And this was a stepmother. We might wonder why he would even be interested. But if the father had remarried a younger

and more attractive woman than a dangerous situation developed which caused this attraction and broke Roman Law.

However, if they were not married but just having sexual relations this still was unacceptable to the Romans. Cicero said, "Oh, to think of the woman's sin, unbelievable, unheard of...To think that she did not quail [recoil]!" So even from an unbelieving pagan's perspective this was ridiculous. And here's the church of God and they aren't doing a thing about it, they're sitting back twiddling their thumbs, tacitly endorsing the behavior.

So we don't know if they had married or not but in either case it was sinful. In addition, whether they were married or not the woman could have been a Temple prostitute. If you turn to 1 Cor 6:15, Paul may have the same situation in mind when he says, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a *pornes*? A prostitute? Verse 16, "Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." She could have been a prostitute and then the father and son were both united in a one flesh relationship with this woman and so you have three people involved in one flesh and this violates the principle of Genesis of one man and one woman in a one flesh relationship.

Finally you could have a case of cohabitation in view. And if cohabitation is in view, which is rampant in our culture, cohabitation implies sexual relationship. Don't be naïve, you can say, well, we aren't doing anything but nobody believes you for a minute. They may want to believe their little darling isn't doing anything but deep down everyone knows sex is going on. So then cohabitation has always been condemned as sinful in Christian culture because it implies sexual relationship. And even if it is not going on the perception is that it is going on and Christians are to live above reproach. So don't give me the line we're not doing anything, we're just living together, because you're still not obeying the commandment to be above reproach.

So then whatever the relationship was - married, cohabiting, prostitution, whatever it was - not even the pagan Gentiles behaved this wayⁱ and it had become the talk of the town. Hey, do you know what Christians do? Hmm, that's a very interesting cult.

So then verse 2, we come to Paul's analysis. **You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead.** Now this gets to the heart of the issue and that is how the church responded, or didn't respond, to this behavior. Letting this behavior go on was an evidence of arrogance. What they should have been was humble and if they were humble they would have been grieved by this and kicked the guy out of the church. They would have just booted him out of the fellowship. And this may sound strange to you that humility judges and excommunicates while arrogance does not judge. But the reason it sounds strange is because ethics are so upside down in our culture. Most people in our culture, and I'm talking about Christian culture, wouldn't recognize a humble person if they were staring them in the face. Because you see, the humble person does judge. He says, that's sinful and it won't be tolerated. But the argument most Christians make is that well, you shouldn't judge other believers, you're being arrogant. Jesus says don't judge and get the log out of your eye before you judge someone else you hypocrite. That's the typical approach with a little Scripture thrown in to make it sound legitimate. Here's the problem with that argument. It has a little hole in it which shows you they are really the one's that are arrogant and they are just like the Corinthian's here who didn't do a thing about this vile sexual behavior going on. The problem with their argument is that Jesus didn't say don't judge. Jesus never said that. Jesus said, don't judge on the basis of your own standards, but yes, judge on the basis of the revealed standard of the word of God.

Why do you think the Lord gave a Law of Moses if he didn't expect them to judge on the basis of it? You mean to say that the Lord gave 613 Laws and yet didn't expect the judges among the people to do any judging? Yet this is the kind of argument Christians make all the time. It's foolish. The problem Jesus was referring to when he said pull the log out of your own eye first was just that, be living up to the standards you're promoting. And the people He was talking to weren't. But the greater problem was that the scribes and Pharisees weren't even judging on the basis of the Law of Moses that God gave but upon the oral tradition they had built up around the Law of Moses. And what Jesus says is that your tradition nullifies the Law of Moses, it invalidates the word of God. So then the problem is not the Law of Moses; the Law of Moses was a holy, perfect standard revealed by God as the basis for judging. But they had replaced the holy, perfect standard of God with their

own traditions. In other words, they had projected a system of ethics based on their own finite minds. And on that basis Jesus says, you do not judge on that basis. The only basis of judging anything is the word of God. So then it was arrogant to exalt their own standard.

As an example in our modern day, we'll go back to the argument we used before of a Christian that says, well, you shouldn't judge others, that's wrong, that's arrogant. Isn't that itself a judgment? Didn't they just judge you? Yes, they did. Well, where is their standard for judging coming from? From themselves. They invented that ethic. God doesn't say we shouldn't judge, God says we should judge fellow believers on the basis of the word of God. Now then who's arrogant? The person who told you you shouldn't judge. Why? Because he arrogantly made himself out to be the one who determines the standards. And that's why I say the Christian who says we ought not judge another Christian is arrogant. You say, well you're judging them. Yes I am, and in verse 2 Paul makes the same judgment, **You have become arrogant**. So it doesn't bother me. I'm not being arrogant, they are, they're judging on some other basis than the word of God and that is the height of arrogance because it betrays that they have erected another set of standards and applied them to you. And no one is in a position to decide what is right and wrong, what is true and false. Those decisions are made by God alone who knows all things. So then humility, which is a powerful position, is judging on the basis of the word of God alone.

Continuing verse 2, **You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead**, you should have grieved over this, you should have sorrowed. If you had any respect for the word of God as the source of standards you would have mourned over this and taken action, you would have judged this person by kicking them out of the assembly. That's humility. Why is that humility? Because humility is putting yourself under the authority of Scripture, putting yourself under the word of God as servant of the word of God, not inventing your own standards and making yourself out to be the authority.

Now the only thing they should have done, if they really loved this fellow believer and had true humility was to boot him out of the assembly, just excommunicate him. That doesn't sound too loving to many Christians but I'll tell you why it doesn't. Because they don't know what true love is. They have the culturally defined idea of love that love is accepting a person for who they

are. You know, accept the homosexual, that's just who they are; accept the transvestite, that's just the way they like to dress. Well, I'm not sorry to say I'm not going to follow your relative ethics. Now if you tell me I should accept the homosexual because that's just the way he or she is, then I have to say, be consistent to that logic and accept the liar because that's just how they are. Or accept the murderer because he's just doing what he was made to do. Just be willing to be consistent to your ethic but I don't think you can. *True love is not accepting a person for who they are.* I repeat that, *true love is not accepting a person for who they are.* True love is wanting the best thing for a person, which is what God says, because He made humans and knows what they need, and acts upon it. I repeat, true love is wanting the best thing for a person, which is what God says, and don't forget the last part, acting upon it, actually doing something.

In this case we have a man who is a Christian sleeping with his father's wife. I mean, golly, most Christians would just write him off as a non-Christian, but that's not what Paul does. Paul doesn't even question his salvation. What does Paul do? He says, number one, if we're humble, first of all mourn or grieve over this. Here's a brother in Christ who is living in sin, by the way, this is a habitual sin, it's not like he did this one time with his stepmother, it was an ongoing sexual relationship. So here you have a brother in Christ living in sin. Now you ought to be upset about that because the brother is out of fellowship with God. Sin breaks fellowship with God, that's the vertical dimension of fellowship, being out of fellowship with God and any and all sin breaks fellowship with God. So he's not walking in the light, he's walking in the darkness, he's not walking in the truth, he's walking in the deception. Secondly he's broken fellowship with fellow believers, that's the horizontal dimension of fellowship, being out of fellowship with other believers. That should bother you because you're all part of the same body of Christ and every part is necessary to proper function of the body. So you have a part of the body malfunctioning and that means everyone suffers. So you want this person to be restored to fellowship with God so they can be restored to proper function in the body.

Now how do you do that? How do you help them get restored? Well, you don't just sit there and do nothing about it, that's not going to accomplish a thing. You can't just sit there and mourn and have a big cry session; you have to act on it by doing this most loving thing, having this person removed from the

congregation. Yes, this is excommunication. You have to excommunicate them immediately from the assembly. If you love them you will do this. If you are arrogant you will not do this. Why? Because arrogant people only care about themselves, they don't care about others. They're looking out for self. Humble, loving people are looking out for others, they have their best interest in mind, which is what God says, and so they do what God says, they boot them out of the church.

Now the goal of this, of course, is for them to be restored. If they are shunned from the Christian community and put out of Christian fellowship then the pressure is on to repent of the behavior and get restored to fellowship with God and the congregation. This is why I do think that churches should work together on these issues. If some stranger comes in here and they've left another church I think we need to find out if they left the other church because they were asked to leave. Because if they were we need to know about that so we can assess the situation and see if this person is still living in the sin or if they've repented. Because it doesn't do any good to let them jump from church to church living in sin, and destroying each church along the way. Verse 6 says that sinful behavior rubs off on churches, a little leaven leavens the whole lump. So you can't allow someone to just waltz in here and start with a clean slate, we have to make sure the slate is actually clean. But to know that you have to inquire and assess and be willing to say until you get right with God and you stop doing this behavior you are not welcome here. And if every church would get together on this kind of thing then we'd have a lot more godliness develop in the churches. But we're not going to because most churches are Corinthian churches. They are arrogant, dark, rotten places that have no care for godliness, no interest in truth, no love for light; they just want to stay in the darkness. And if you attend one of these churches I would never darken those doors again.

So verse 3, here's Paul's solution, **For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.** In other words, that's my judgment, verse 2 is my judgment, boot him out. And therefore vv 4-5 next time you assemble, go ahead and enact my judgment. **In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, mark out, *I have decided*, just put a line through it, it's not in the original, it just says, **deliver such a one to Satan****

for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord, Jesus is not original, mark it out. It just says, **in the day of the Lord.** Now then we want to deal with the debated expression about **delivering** someone over **to Satan for the destruction of his flesh**; this is a very loving thing to do. But what does it mean? As you can imagine there are many views and this is argued by some as the most difficult NT text. Let's look at a few views and see if we can solve it, there are all kinds of issues here. What does it mean to turn someone over to Satan? What is the flesh? Is it the physical flesh or the sin nature? What is Paul saying?

One view, and the most popular, is that the flesh here refers to the physical body and therefore this means to give him a death sentence knowing that it is for his own good and he will be ultimately be saved. So a premature physical death would be in view. This might go along well with passages that describe a sin unto death. For example 1 John 5:16, "There is a sin unto death." And Acts 5 where Ananias and Sapphira lie to the Holy Spirit and they fall over dead. Or 1 Cor 11:30 in the context of the Lord's Supper where Paul says there are some who sleep, a metaphor for death, because they took the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner. So there are passages that support a sin unto death but the question is do those passages correspond to turning someone over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh? Is that what it refers to?

A second view is that the destruction of his flesh refers to becoming sick or ill which could possibly lead to physical death but is designed to bring the man to repentance and restoration and lead to his final salvation. Surely 1 Cor 11:30 again, where Paul mentions some who were weak and sick as a result of partaking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner could be used to support this interpretation.

Now both of those positions have scriptural support but neither one, I think, does justice to the expression **deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh.** There is one other passage which uses this expression so let's turn to it, 1 Tim 1:20 and this will be a case study on two individuals who Paul handed over to Satan. Notice verse 18, "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, 19keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. 20Among these are Hymenaeus and

Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.” So here are a couple of believers Paul says suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. These guys went way off course and Paul says, the solution to that problem is to hand them over to Satan (*paredoka to satana*)...which uses the same verb Paul used in 1 Cor 5:5 (*paradounai...to satana*). So we have the same action involved with these two guys. And he tells us the purpose of handing them over to Satan is “so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.” Which basically is the idea of slandering. But these were believers that had gone way off track and this is what Paul did to correct these two men, to get them back on track.

Now let's turn to 2 Tim 2:17 to see more of this story. Now the problem we just saw in 1 Timothy occurred in AD62; now we're turning to 2 Timothy which was written in AD67, so this is five years later. Paul's writing to Timothy again and of all people look who still is a problem. Verse 16, “But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place.” So these were the preterists of the day, said the resurrection already happened and if you missed it you missed it, no resurrection, a denial. The point I wanted to show you is that Hymenaeus was handed over to Satan five years earlier so he would learn not to say blasphemous things and now he's also denying the resurrectoin. So one observation is this, does turning them over to Satan mean a sentence of death? Physical death? No, because Hymenaeus was alive five years later.

Now let's go over to 2 Tim 4:14, that was Hymenaeus five years later, what about Alexander? Paul says of him, verse 14, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.” So he didn't fare any better than Hymenaeus. He's going to have to face the Lord at the judgment seat of Christ because notice, this is a judgment according to his works or deeds. So the man is a believer but Paul had turned him over to Satan five years before and he still hadn't learned. So you can see that a person can be handed over to Satan and get caught up in the world and not learn the lessons they're supposed to learn. But one thing is for certain again, it does not mean sin unto death.

So then what did Paul do when he turned them over to Satan? My suggestion as we turn back to 1 Cor 5 is this; to turn them out to the world which is ruled by Satan for the purpose of teaching them a lesson. That means that to **deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh** is the semantic equivalent of verse 2, **remove him from your midst**. Paul is merely telling them to enact the judgment that he himself had already made; to excommunicate them. It's just two ways of stating the same thing. To remove him from your midst is to no longer let him join in the assembly. When he walks up the steps to enter the assembly the deacons stop him. He's not allowed to enter and worship. And to deliver such a one to Satan means to turn him out to the world of Satan. You can't come in here to worship; you have to stay out there in the world system.

So we have the Church at Corinth commanded to separate from this believer, this is a physical barrier but what this communicates is that there is a spiritual barrier. Now a lot of people have a problem with this because they say, well, you're shutting the door on this person, you're not loving. That's exactly the opposite of what Paul is saying. This is the humble, loving thing to do as I'll show. It's not that believers that separate from unruly believers are trying to be mean; it's that they're trying to communicate to the out of fellowship believer that you are way out there buddy, Christians do not live like the world and we don't put up with Christians living like the world, we are different from the world. And the visible way to tell them this is to turn them out to the world because they are living like the world and therefore if they like it they can go have their fill of it.

Now this is the way the Lord dealt with Israel in the OT, by way of parallel. God loved Israel, Israel was His chosen people and God made promises to them - promises to ultimately bless them. But He also promised to discipline them if they rebelled against Him. And boy did they ever disobey and so God disciplined them, quite severely; they went through five degrees of cursing. The final cursing was to go into Exile among all the nations and God booted them out to teach them a lesson, that was the pagan world and they would be oppressed and ruled over by pagans, they would be subject to idols. The whole system of paganism was and is discipline upon the nation Israel. But this was to teach them a lesson, there are lessons to learn out there and if you love it so much God says, go have your fill of it and we'll see how much you love it.

So the fifth degree of Exile that came on the OT nation Israel is the equivalent of this being delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh for the NT Church. So it is clearly a disciplinary measure. Let's review some of the principles of divine discipline. Turn to Hebrews 12:5. This is arguably the greatest chapter on divine discipline in the NT Scriptures. The problem is that we have a group of Jewish Christians that didn't want to act like Christians for awhile because they were being persecuted by Jewish non-Christians. And so their strategy was, well, we just won't meet in the name of Christ for awhile until the persecution lifts, then we'll act like Christians again. ⁵and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons," and he quotes the OT, so the principles of discipline for the NT Church are parallel with the principles for discipline of Israel in the OT. He says, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; ⁶FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." So let's make a point here; discipline is a function of love. Go try spouting this doctrine in the sociology class down at the local university today. The sociologists today can't fathom the idea that you might spank a little brat because you love him so much you don't want him to be a brat. Yet it says our heavenly Father who is a perfect Father scourges every son, not some sons, every son. If you are a believer your heavenly Father will discipline you, every believer is disciplined at some time or another. Verse 7, "It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline?" It was just an unheard of thing in the ancient world, not spanking your son? Well, what kind of father are you? Some kind of lame-o. Verse 8, "But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons." See, if you're not disciplined then you're not even a believer. That's the only proof of salvation I can see in Scripture. It has nothing to do with how many good works you do or whether you committed some boo-boo; good works are not a sign you're a believer and committing a big sin is not a sign you're an unbeliever, what is a sign is if you can sin, sin, sin and get away with it. And God doesn't spank your little hiney. Verse 9, "Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them;" See what comes out of discipline; R-E-S-P-E-C-T, that's what comes out, respect. "earthly fathers disciplined us, and we respected them, shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as

seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us for our good*,” that goes for all the time, now the purpose clause, why does God discipline us? “so that we may share His holiness.” Discipline develops character. Verse 11, “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful;” that’s reflecting on the father by the way, it’s not joyful for the father or the mother to spank Johnny’s behind, but look what it yields, “yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” See, that’s the whole point of discipline, is that you are training them in an excellent direction, you are training them to walk within the guidelines, and you are training them to walk in righteousness. So another principle of discipline we see here is that it’s not easy for the parent, but it is necessary for training and down the line, far down the line it’s going to pay dividends, you may not see it today, but you just trust the word of God and stay with it because in the end it will pay dividends, it’s for their own good.

Alright then, turn back to 1 Cor 5 and see what Paul is saying. Here is a man who is way out of line, sleeping with his own stepmother, the congregation knows about it, it’s the talk of the whole town, and the church isn’t doing a thing about it, just turning a blind eye, exactly what goes on all the time in church after church after church, they don’t address these things, it’s not politically correct. Paul says, verse 2, remove him from your midst, that’s my judgment. And he says, verse 5, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that is, excommunicate him, turn him out to the world, if he loves the world so much and wants to continue to live like the world, let him have his fill of it. Deny fellowship with him and this will work out for the destruction of his flesh, that is, the destruction of that which he is depending upon, the flesh. I take the flesh here as the sinful nature and the idea is that turning him over to Satan who is the ruler of this world will nullify his dependence on the flesh. It will teach him what Christ said, “...the Spirit gives life, the flesh profits nothing.” So then the whole goal of the discipline is to destroy this man’s dependence on the flesh and to restore him to dependence on the Spirit so he can really enjoy life. Living by the flesh is living in sin and sin is bondage, only dependence on the Spirit sets us free from sin so we can really live life to the full as God intended us to live.

So then Paul concludes with the final purpose, **so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord**. That is, this is necessary to preserve his salvation. In other words, we talk of once saved always saved vs. loss of

salvation. The loss of salvation crowd says if you do this sin or do that sin then you can lose your salvation. What the Scriptures teach is that *God disciplines those who are saved*. But it goes farther than that, it teaches that *God disciplines us in order to keep us saved*. And it implies that He could just let us go, in which case we would lose our salvation, but we can't lose our salvation because God pursues us in discipline and pursues us. He never grows tired of chasing us down and disciplining us. And the reason is because of His great love for us. He will not let us ruin our lives. He says you are going to get straightened out, I am going to straighten you out, I am not going to let you destroy yourself. I am going to get you in shape and so then, what you're reading here so far as the purpose of the passage is to teach us that God disciplines us *in order to keep us saved*. It's part of the mechanics of eternal security that is not often taught.

In summary, these were serious issues at the Church of Corinth. They failed to handle a vile problem that was so outrageous the pagan Romans didn't even entertain it. This betrayed an arrogance that is entirely unacceptable from a Christian point of view. Any Christian who is truly humble will not only be grieved by such things but will act on them by having the church leadership remove such a person from the assembly. This is necessary for the person to be taught that the flesh profiteth nothing with the end goal that the person is kept saved.

ⁱ Of course the Jews condemned it, as Lev 18:8 shows and which penalty was death as Lev 18:29 shows (also cf Lev 18:6; 20:11 where it is placed among forbidden marriages and see Deut 27:20 where it is placed among the 12 curses). Further, the Misnah, 7:4 states, "A These are [the felons] who are put to death by stoning: B He who has sexual relations with (1) his mother, (2) with the wife of his father, (3) with his daughter-in-law, (4) with a male, and (5) with a cow."

[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2012