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A1209 – February 26, 2012 – 1 Corinthians 5:9-13
Do Not Associate With Wicked Believers

If you would turn to 1 Corinthians 5 we will continue our exposition. Paul has laid down a number of warnings to the carnal Corinthians. In chapter 1-3 they were dividing into factions and quarrelling with one another over who was the greatest teacher. This was a sign of immaturity and Paul warned that if they continued to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ with wood, hay and stubble they wouldn't have any rewards in the kingdom. In chapter 4 they were arrogantly passing judgment before the time as to who was the greatest in the kingdom and Paul warned that they were not at all what they thought they were, they were not on the path to kingship at all, though he wished they were. And now Paul says in 5:1, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you...of such a kind as does not even exist among pagans, namely, that someone has his father's wife." And the church wasn't doing anything about it. They were a permissive Church, come one, come all, come as you are, you can fornicate with your stepmother openly in a habitual way because you are free in Christ. They had turned freedom in Christ into freedom to sin as much as you like. Paul says in verse 2, "You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst." Paul thinks the proper course is to expel this brother in Christ from the assembly. In verse 3, Paul himself had already judged the matter, "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." So in vv 4-5 Paul commands them to enact his judgment the next time they assemble. "In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus," this is the Lord Jesus' judgment, the church is not out on its own when it makes this judgment, it has the full authorization of Jesus Christ, verse 5, "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." This, seemingly

harsh judgment, is the most obedient, humble and loving thing a fellow believer could do because first of all, it bends the knee to the word of God, it submits to His standards for purity in the Church and does not continue making up standards. And secondly it is the most loving thing a fellow believer could do because love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, it mourns over unrighteousness, it wants the best for the other person, which is what God says, not what man thinks, and the best thing to do is the controversial phrase of verse 5, “to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh,” but in the context of verse 2 it is clear that this means to remove the man from their midst, to turn them out to the god of this world who is Satan so that he may continue down this treacherous path in order to demonstrate the incapacity of the flesh. The flesh cannot produce enjoyment of life, it can only lead to ruin and destruction, so Paul says there is nothing else to do at this point than turn him over to the world and let his flesh run its course so that he ruins himself. And in that way hopefully, prayerfully he will learn the lesson, be convicted of sin, confess his sin and be restored to fellowship with the assembly. But in either case, Paul says, this will result in “his spirit being saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” That is, this severe discipline is one of God’s ways of keeping this man saved. We speak of the biblical doctrine of eternal security and here is one of the means by which God keeps us secure. He disciplines us so that in the day of the Lord Jesus our spirits are preserved in Christ. So then there are mechanics involved in God keeping us saved.

Now in verse 6 he warns the congregation of the consequences that will inevitably come if they do not deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?” One bit of yeast in dough will corrupt the whole lump. And one man in the assembly fornicating continuously will corrupt the entire congregation at Corinth. So then he must be removed. Verse 6, “Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened,” Paul says positionally you are unleavened, you are not corrupt because “Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.” Our corruption has been paid for in full and removed in full and we have received in exchange the righteousness of Christ to our account. We are pure and undefiled because of what Christ has accomplished for us as our Passover Lamb. And therefore, verse 8, “let us celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” That is,

let us live our lives in continual purity, let us assemble but let us do so in sincerity and truth, let us do so without contamination among us, let us have purity among us.

The great concern of 1 Cor 5 is the importance of purity in the local church. Church discipline, the primary reason for it, is not for brothers or sisters in Christ to be restored. That is where everyone puts their attention, but that is secondary to the first thing which is purity in the Church. This is what the Lord Jesus is interested in, purity in the assembly, so that if he came in here what would he find? Would he be pleased if He did an inspection report? Church discipline then is for the purpose of purity in the assembly. That is what Jesus Christ wants to see, a pure and spotless bride. Open corruption is detestable to Jesus Christ, it must be removed. However, let's say it comes to your attention that someone at our church is stuck in a sin pattern or someone comes to our church and you discover they have a big sin problem, some area that is a very serious problem and now it's known to you. What are you going to do? Kick them out on the street? No, the proper response is to go through Matt 18 procedures. You would say, alright brother - are you willing to admit you have a sin problem here? If so, I am willing to help you get out of it. I'm willing to help you solve this problem. You don't just immediately go to kicking the person out of church. And the reason is because this is a private matter, this is not something well known, it is known to you and maybe a few others, but it is basically a private matter and should be solved privately. Turn to James 5:19. James is a book about trials and how to overcome trials. The book ends on the note of what about a brother who fails in his trials and gets stuck in a sin pattern and can't get out? James 5:19 says, "My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." That is, he will save him from premature physical death and along the way a whole multitude of sins." So then it is a very noble thing to help a brother get out of a sin pattern. This shows how important it is to deal with such a matter in a private way. However, turn to Gal 6:1 because not all believers are cut out to help a brother in this way. Because in helping a brother get out of sin you yourself may be caught in the sin and so only mature believers should engage in this procedure. "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass," that means they got tripped up and now they are in a real pickle. In that case, "you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one

looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.” So then this is only to be done by someone who is a spiritual man, that is a mature man, not someone that’s just in fellowship, a brand new believer may be in fellowship but obviously he’s not qualified, this is a mature believer. So there are sin patterns that can come to your attention in someone else’s life and that’s a divine appointment to help this person out or get them some help.

Now, so far as these habitual sin patterns are concerned and how a person gets out of them, understand you may be very disgusted by the sin pattern this person is involved in but that’s not the issue. The issue is are you mature enough to help them? And if not you better turn it over to someone who is lest you fall. A second thing to understand is that these people are trapped, they feel often like there is no way out, so they can be very depressed and they have probably tried to get out umpteen million times before you ever came into the picture and they have failed and failed and failed, over and over and over and every time they tried to get out they slipped back in. So understand this person is not too optimistic that you can really help them get out of it. So the third thing is you have to give these people hope; hope based not on your empty idea, well, I had a brother in law that went to this psychologist, I take a drug and that solves my problem, no, no, no, if you do that you are not helping them, unless of course they have some kind of chemical problem, but we’re not talking about chemical problems, we’re talking about sin problems. And sin problems require spiritual solutions, so you give them hope based on the only thing that has 100% guaranteed results, the word of God. Is God big enough to solve your problem? He created the entire universe by merely speaking. Do you think He can help your little problem? So you have to work with this person from the greater to the lesser, the greater things God has done to the lesser things, their problem. And fourth, the number one thing you are going to do is expose them to the word of God, maximum exposure, over and over and over. They better be here every time the doors are open, they better be in the word listening to audio CD’s of strong Bible teaching. If you’re targeting this kind of thing I would suggest the minor prophets personally, they are all dealing with intense sin patterns and discipline and how to get out; maximum exposure to the word of God, confession of sin, daily. They will fall but they have to confess and get back up and then they’ll fall again and they have to confess and get back up and it’s this up, down, up down for awhile and then they’ll start to come out of it. But there is no other way. There are no quick

solutions, there are no miracle drugs, it takes constant exposure to the word of God and continual confession and prayer and keeping at it until you get out of it. That's how you deal with a person on a private level who's stuck in a sin pattern and it's not well-known, it's just you and them and a few other people.

But if this thing has grown to public proportions and everyone knows it, then you have a 1 Cor 5 situation and the only solution is church discipline by booting them out of the assembly, turning them out to the world where Satan rules so they can reap the consequences of sin; whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. So go ahead, sin, sin, sin and see where that gets you. It's going to get you in trouble. Everywhere you turn you'll have trouble; you'll have legal trouble, you'll have financial trouble, you'll have drug trouble, you'll have sexual trouble, you'll have trouble everywhere. But if that's what you want, have at it.

Now the goal of this, though not explicitly stated in this text, but in others is that one day the person will come to the end of their rope, everything will be chaos and they'll come back to the Lord and they'll repent and be restored to the Church and then they start the long road to full recovery but you're going to be by their side, you're going to help them, you're going to encourage them in the word, you're going to remind them to confess their sin and stay in fellowship, you're going to teach them how to live the Christian life and they're going to learn to walk by the Spirit. And if you think this is impossible, with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Now we come to 1 Cor 5:9 the main idea, the purity of the Church. **I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people;** look, I already wrote this to you says Paul. So by permitting this guy in the congregation they were dismissing Paul's earlier letter. In all Paul is going to write at least four letters to the Church at Corinth. He may have written more but we know of four for sure. The letter he refers to here is the first letter he wrote to them, we don't have this letter captured in the canon of Scripture because the Holy Spirit didn't intend it to be captured for the whole church. The second letter is the letter we're studying, 1 Corinthians. The third letter is called the severe letter that caused sorrow and we don't have it, but it's mentioned in 2 Corinthians. The fourth letter is the letter we know as 2 Corinthians. So there was a lot of correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians. It took a

lot of ink spilt on paper and a lot of good men, Timothy and Titus, to get the carnal Corinthians straightened out. And I suggest the reason is because Corinth was a very corrupt culture and the rule of thumb in a very corrupt culture is that the churches in that culture really struggle with purity. They don't want to judge anything so they let everything go.

But Paul says, **I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people** which shows you Paul already knew they had these problems. We're not told how he knew but he had lived there, he knew the culture and he may have gotten reports of specific cases where they were permitting close fellowship with fornicators. But in any case he knew. The Greek text translated **immoral people** is *pornos* again, as in 5:1. So we're still talking about fornication of a sexual nature, this is not just immoral people, this is people involved in sexual sins. Fornication is a very broad term in Scripture. It can refer to "any illegal sexual intercourse" such as forbidden marriages, marrying your sister or your cousin or your stepmother, those were illegal because they were too closely related. It could also refer to sexual unfaithfulness in a marriage, breaking the marriage contract, defiling the marriage bed. It could also refer to any sexual relationship outside of marriage. So young people out there wrecking their lives. *Pornos* covers a broad range of illegal sex including cohabitation, where it is implied, bestiality, prostitution, child sex and homosexuality. Paul already wrote to them not to associate with these fornicators.

However, verse 10, **I did not at all mean with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is a fornicator.** Now we want to get into these individual words because they shed additional light on the cultural background at Corinth. But before we do I want to point out how they had distorted what Paul said in the earlier letter. Paul wrote not to associate with fornicators but they took it that Paul meant believers were not to associate with unbelieving fornicators but that we could associate with believing fornicators. Now why would they do that? Because they were sinning and what sin does to language is it distorts it to justify its present sinful course. This is how churches that permit gay clergy and all the rest of it justify what they're doing. They distort the meaning of language. For example, instead of saying the problem at Sodom and Gomorrah was

homosexuality they say the problem was homosexual rape not homosexual love and then they justify homosexual love and condemn homosexual rape. That's the kind of word games they play and they were playing the same kind of word games with Paul's letters. Oh, Paul means we shouldn't associate with fornicators of this world when what Paul meant was they shouldn't associate with fornicators in the church. This has always been a problem and it's a sin problem, sin distorts the intended meaning of language. Language itself isn't the problem, language is a tremendous tool that God has given to man to communicate with Him and with our fellow man, but sin distorts language, the problem is us. The next time you get in an argument with your husband or wife just listen to yourself because I guarantee you'll start playing games with language. She'll say something like, well, you *always* do that and you know what she means, but suddenly you lose the ability to recognize that as a figure of speech and so you say, I don't always do that and then you start defending yourself on such and such occasion. And the reason we do that is because we're in sin and sin pressures us to violate the rules of grammar just to justify ourselves and to condemn the other person. And that's what they were doing with Paul's words, twisting them to justify their permissiveness.

So Paul says, hey look, I didn't mean that, but I'll spell it out for you anyway. And he does so by logic. So let's follow Paul's logic in v 10. The logic is quite simple, **I did not at all mean with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.** Literally, if that's what I meant then you would have had to have started making your exit from the world a long time ago. The verb **you would have** is the imperfect tense which refers to an ongoing action in past time. The imperfect can have one of three emphases, it can simply be descriptive, describing some ongoing action in the past, it can be repetitive, emphasizing some act repeated over and over in the past, or it can be inceptive, emphasizing the beginning of some ongoing action in the past. What we have here is the inceptive imperfect. Paul is saying if I meant you shouldn't associate with fornicators of the world you should have, when you first became believers, begun your exit strategy from the world. In other words, you should have started building a monastery out in the desert or something because how else are you going to get away from all the **fornicators of this world?** You can't do it staying in Corinth. And you can't do it moving to Athens. And so the point is you would have had to go buy

some property out in Timbuktu somewhere and isolate yourself from the world.

So here we get a glimpse into Paul's view of the Christian and the surrounding culture. What is the Christian's relationship to the surrounding culture? This is a question all Christians struggle with. There are three basic answers that have been given. First, accommodation, and this is the approach that we want to get along with the world so whatever the world says, we go along with that and to justify this approach they re-interpret the Bible to fit what the world says. This is most Christians in the West. They don't want to be a disruption, it might interfere with their social status, it might cause problems at work, so it's easier just to go along with the world and be a Christian in name only. Then you have the separation approach, we're going to physically separate from the world. That's the one Paul seems to be denouncing here. Here's a quote to this effect. Charles Clough says, "Groups such as the Amish select the culture of a previous era when Christian values predominated more than at present. This selected culture is then "frozen" as their "norm." Monasticism is another variation of the separatist approach." Go build a monastery in a cliff somewhere and hide away from the world. This is the separatist approach. The third approach is the counter-attack strategy and that's the in the world but not of the world approach, you are in the world but you operate distinctly from the world, you produce a distinctively Christian culture.

It seems that Paul is accusing them of accommodating to the world's immorality and permissiveness on one hand and on the other hand being separatist by isolating themselves from associating with the world socially. Paul's answer is counter-attack, to be in the world but not of the world; on one hand to counter the world's immorality and permissiveness with purity and discipline and on the other hand to isolate erring believers but still associate with unbelievers socially.

Now to confirm this we want to look at other Scripture. Turn with me to 2 Thess 3:6. There was a much smaller problem at Thessalonica, the church overall was a fantastic church but there was a small group causing problems and in this section he's warning the fantastic believers to steer clear of the troublemakers. Notice verse 6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads

an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.” Notice that nothing is said about keeping away from unbelievers, but keeping away from *believers* who have a disorderly lifestyle, believers who don’t live inside the parameters of the word of God, have nothing to do with them. These disorderly people weren’t working, they were lazy bums, mooching off of everybody else. Verse 14, “if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him,” do not associate, same exact Greek word used in 1 Cor 5, “do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” So the rule of thumb is that you are keeping this brother at arm’s length; he’s not to join the assembly and if you see him in the streets, admonish him.

But what about associating with unbelieving fornicators, idolaters, swindlers, those kind of people. What does the word of God have to say about that? Turn to 1 Cor 10:7. Here Paul is comparing the NT Church to OT Israel and he’s saying, they were an example for us, we can learn lessons from the nation Israel’s failures, don’t be like them and he gives a whole series of examples. He says in verse 14 as a grand conclusion, “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” See they had the problem at Corinth of meat sacrificed to idols up at the local temple. And some of that meat was then sold down at the market to support the local cult. And typically this was the best meat, prime stuff. In our day the market is HEB and so it would be like walking into HEB and on the shelf is all this meat and some of it was sacrificed to demons down at the local cult. Well, can I eat this meat? Or if I eat this meat am I worshipping the idol? Here’s Paul’s approach in verse 25, “Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience’ sake;” See, you had weak believers and strong believers, the weak believers couldn’t eat that meat because in their mind to eat the meat was to worship the idol, but the strong believer didn’t have a problem because meat is meat, it’s God’s meat, God made the animal, God gave us the animal to eat. Verse 26, “FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD’S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS.” So don’t even ask, just go eat the meat. Verse 27, “If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go,” so here you have been invited to an unbeliever’s house to have dinner,” what do you do, if “you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience’ sake.” Just eat, don’t ask questions, this is the approach of the strong believer. Verse 28, “But if anyone says to you, “This is meat sacrificed to idols” then you can’t eat it. Paul says, “do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience’ sake,” that is,

the other man's conscience," so then you have the strong and the weak believer at the same unbeliever's house eating dinner, and the point is that if the weak believer can't eat the meat sacrificed to idols then you shouldn't either because now you're offending his conscience and you don't want to cause him to stumble. So then the stronger brother foregoes this liberty of eating. But our point is this; is it okay to go spend time with unbelievers, to associate with them? Of course it is, if you want to go, go. Not a problem at all. What is a problem is doing as the world does, becoming like the world and condoning believers who do as the world does. That we cannot do and that we should separate from.

So then the proper approach is to be counter-cultural, to be *in* the world but not *of* the world. That statement that so many Christians have struggled with really sums up the Christian's relationship to culture because the first part of the expression, be *in* the world shows that physical separation from the world is not the biblical approach. Going out and living in a monastery is not biblical and just because you get way out there in the desert doesn't mean you are now away from all sin because guess what you took with you, your flesh. So you haven't separated from the flesh. And besides, who are you going to evangelize if you're ostracized from the world? The second part of the expression be not *of* the world shows that while you live in it you are not to live like it. The principles you live by are contrary to the principles of the world. Therefore, obviously, and this is the conclusion to the matter, if you have someone in the church who professes to be a believer, but they are living like the world and they have no intent on changing their course, then you are to separate from them because it will corrupt the church and Christ wants purity in the Church.

So let's go back to 1 Cor 5:10 and 11 and start dealing with some of these words that shed light on the Corinthian culture and what was really going on. Here's another thing you want to pick up, all the words used of unbelievers in verse 10 are used of believers in verse 11. Now what are you going to do with that observation? Unbelievers we know are fornicators, covetous, swindlers and idolaters. But can a believer be a fornicator, covetous, swindler and idolater? Apparently so. So let's say you have a believer, someone who at least professes to be a believer, they've been coming to church for years, and then it comes out that this person had an extra-marital affair and it's been going on for five years. Uh, oh, what's the first

thing most Christians say, O well, they're not really a believer. Don't you find it funny Paul didn't handle it that way? Don't you find it odd Paul didn't write them off as an unbeliever? If they were an unbeliever then you could associate with them because the Bible is not opposed to that. The only thing the Bible is opposed to is associating with believers like that. So another observation here is that you can't judge whether someone is a believer or not by what they do. You can't do that. Why not? Because becoming a believer is not based on what you do. Nobody was ever saved by what they do. They are all saved by trusting in what Christ did. So if we're saved by trusting in what He did then how could what we do indicate whether we're saved or not? It has nothing to do with it. Works are not an evidence of salvation. Never were, never have been. And if you go through all the saints of Scripture you'll find they all had warts. So why all of a sudden when you see so and so in your congregation with a wart do you write them off? Do you write King David off because he was a fornicator and a murderer? Oh, David wasn't really a believer. Do you write off Moses because he was lawless and murdered an Egyptian? Do you? Then why are you writing off people in your congregation? Those are no more evidences of lacking salvation than the fornication of this man with his stepmother was. And Paul did not write him off. Paul wanted him booted out of the church because he was a believer. As for the stepmother, Paul didn't say a thing because she apparently was not a believer, nor was the man's father.

And by the way, you ought to learn from someone like David, who was the most outstanding believer of his day, that you are not immune to falling like this. I don't care how mature you think you are, you can be brought down, way down, it's happened to lots of believers who thought it would never happen to them. And guess what, it did happen to them. That's why you have got to stay on top of your spiritual life, you have got to stay in the word of God, otherwise you're going to lose your footing and before you know it, bam, you're flat on your face.

So how is it you might ask, that a believer can do the same things as an unbeliever? What's the theological explanation? Well, what do believers and unbelievers share in common? First of all, we share the same world, believers and unbelievers all live in the same universe, that creates the problem for believers of how to live in it but not become of it. Second, we are all made in the image of God, that image is marred by the fall, yes, but even unbelievers

are said to be made in the image of God. So we all share that. And third we all share the flesh or sin nature. Believers don't have the sin nature eradicated when they believe, they acquire a new nature so they have two natures and they can live according to either nature. If we set our minds on the things of the flesh then we'll fulfill the lusts of the flesh and if we set our minds on the things of the Spirit then we'll fulfill the desires of the Spirit. So because believers and unbelievers have a sin nature and these sins come out of the sin nature then obviously if a believer decides to live by the sin nature then his lifestyle is going to be identical to an unbeliever's lifestyle. And that's why you can't judge salvation on that basis. The only test of salvation I know of in Scripture is if you can sin and sin and sin and never get disciplined by God, that's the test of Heb 12 because God disciplines all of His children.

Now let's come to this list of atrocious sins in 1 Cor 5:10 and 11. There are four words in verse 10 and six words in verse 11 and if you glance down to 1 Cor 6:9-10 you will see ten words. These are what scholars call a "vice list" and there are other "vice lists" in the NT: Gal 5:19-21; Rom 1:29-31; Eph 5:5 and Rev 21:8. The vice lists here in Corinthians are painting a picture of their culture and why it was so, so seductive. Let's take the first word, there's overlap in vv 10 and 11 so we won't repeat them all. Let's just work with verse 11 because they're all there. The first one is **immoral**, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother, and by the way, that doesn't mean he's just a professing believer, that translation would lead you to think that, but the Greek word *onamazomenos* means "one named" so he is known as a believer, don't associate with him **if he is an immoral person**. We've already seen the word, it's *pornos*, a fornicator, and we know that was rampant at Corinth, it was the sex capital of the ancient world, but even they had limits, they didn't sleep with their step mothers, but that was going on in this Church. The second word is **covetous**, *pleonektes*, it means "to have more," these are people who are always grasping to have more than they have and it's not just more wealth, more material wealth, it is also more social status and more power. We're going to find that the Corinthian culture was saturated with the desire for social status, wealth and power, they were all climbing the ladder of worldly success at your expense, and they were obsessed with gaining greater status. The third word is **idolater**, *eidololatres*, and apparently some of them were still attending the ritual sacrifices at the temple of Aphrodite. This was not acceptable; this was not

just worshipping dead idols but the demons behind the idols. An idol is just a piece of wood or art, a projection of an idea in the mind, but behind it all are demonic powers who desire worship by humans. The fourth word is a **reviler**, *loidoros*, these are people that verbally abuse others; they can't open their big fat mouths without putting people down in a way that hurts. And they had a lot of this in Corinth because it was all about status and what people of status do is put down people that are below their level. The fifth description is a **drunkard**, *methusos*, and you know what a drunk is, but I do want to make a point here. I've come across this word several times now in NT studies and next time you get in a discussion with someone about whether Jesus drank wine at the Last Supper or not, remember that the word in the 1st century emphasized the behavior brought out by drunkenness more than the mere drinking of wine. Drinking of wine was not a problem; it was a wine drinking culture, what is being frowned upon by this word is the behavior that comes out when you get drunk. And finally, the sixth word is **swindlers**, *arpax*, it's the idea of cheating people out of money. They were a get rich quick culture and knocking other people off the ladder was the name of the game. This could be done through cheating at gambling but more commonly by charging excessive rent or additional charges so they didn't look like they were robbing people.

So what can we say about the culture of Corinth. The people were sexually corrupt, driven toward social status, wealth and power at the expense of others, building their lives around a false religious system, the status driven people were big loudmouths and you had drunks with all the accompanying behavior of those type of blubbering idiots and finally people had the get rich quick mentality, it didn't matter how you became rich, what kind of scheme you pulled, only that you pulled it and got the money.

And there were believers like this at Corinth, Paul says in v 11, that's why I wrote the prior letter, **not to associate with any named brother if he is** like that, and notice the end of the verse—**not even to eat with such a one**. Now this shows you the degree of separation Paul intended us to understand. In other words, some people argue about what Paul meant by do not associate with any so-called brother, some say it means, well, don't let them eat the Lord's Supper with you. You know, they can come to church because they need to hear the word of God, but just don't let them eat the Lord's Supper. Then others say, well, it means they can come to church and

eat the Lord's Supper, that's all fine, they need to come to church and eat the Lord's Supper, but what you can't do is talk with them in public, you can't extend common courtesies, your supposed to shun them at HEB or something. And then some say, well, it means they can't come to church and eat the Lord's Supper or even eat in your homes privately with such a one, but you can extend to them the common courtesies out at the HEB. This last phrase, **not even to eat with such a one** helps you resolve the problem because obviously it is pointing to a further exclusion, implying lesser exclusions are included. So what he means here by **not even to eat with such a one** is private dining. Private dining in the 1st century was much more important than the 21st century. In their society it was the place for social bonding, it was how you got into a group. So to be ostracized from private dining was to be ostracized from the group. And since there was only one church at Corinth, though it met in various house churches and occasionally all at Gaius' large home, then exclusion from private dining would be very serious. So they were barred from the normal meeting, they were barred from eating the Lord's Supper and they were even barred from private dining. And this shows you the church is the church wherever the church is, whether at home or at the market, you are the church and you are to be pure wherever you are. This building isn't the church, you are the church and Paul is saying, go be the church, at home, at work, at play, when you gather, when you scatter, go be the church and don't just be the church, be a pure church, exclude erring brethren.

Now someone will say, but if we do this the erring brother will just run down the block and go to the next church. So what. Do you have a problem with that? You may not like it but Paul's point is Jesus Christ won't like your church if you don't do that. He's the inspector. He is the One who says what goes, not you, the Church is His body, not yours. He is the one who decided what is best for His body, not you. And He says, do not associate with them. Now I'm going to tell you the most important point of this chapter. The most important thing in the chapter is not the man who did this. Paul says - I've already passed judgment on that the minute I heard it, turned him over to Satan without hesitation. That's not the issue. The real issue in the chapter is the purity of the church. This church was extremely permissive. They might as well hang a sign on the door that says, come on in fornicators. That's how sorry their testimony was. They were not a light to the world of Christ. Because they were not doing anything about this sin in the church. So

the real concern is whether the church itself is a light to the world. What would Christ think if He came to that church? And if you've read His inspection reports of the seven churches in Rev 2-3 you'd conclude that He would have been extremely critical of the Church at Corinth. They had a sorry testimony with the world. And the only way to regain their testimony was to get rid of this guy. End of verse 13, REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES. It's even stronger than that in the Greek, he says BANISH THE WICKED MAN, get it out of there, its corruption. And if a church gets to corrupt and He wants to destroy it, He'll destroy it.

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