

# First Corinthians

VERSE-BY-VERSE



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## Verse 1–

- **Fornication.** Paul moves from the unspiritual puffed up carnal state of the church to another glaring sin, fornication, or in the NKJV, sexual immorality.
  - Greek word is **πορνεία** [*porneia*] we get our word pornographic. But the English word **fornication** comes from the latin, *fornix*, which was an arch, or a vaulted chamber in a brothel. Seen clearly in the ancient city of Pompeii.
  - Fornication includes everything that is practiced in the LGBTQ crowd as well as any sexual practice by heterosexuals outside of the marriage between a man and a woman.
  - The root word is **πορνεύω** *porneuo* which means to prostitute one's body to the lust of another. It is a word that is all too familiar in our culture, and even in the church.
  - Later, in 1 Corinthians 6:18, Paul says to “flee fornication.” And in 1 Corinthians 7:2 he tells them how.
- **Reported commonly.** Everyone in the church (and probably the city) knew sexual immorality was going on in the church. They were no different from those outside of the church.
  - Not only did they know it was going on, everyone was talking about **fornication**. The talk of it is moving through the whole church, but the whole church was not doing anything about it.
- **Not so much as named among the Gentiles.**
  - The Greek word for nations here is **ἔθνος** *ethnos*, from which we get ethnic groups (Not *racess*). The word ethos means a people group generally a multitude.
  - It could refer to the unsaved, or non-Jewish people, or it could even mean Jewish people. The context always determines its usage.
  - What Paul appears to be saying is this is going on in your little church and even in the masses of ethnos (and in this case non-Jews) it is not acceptable. They won't even talk about it!
- **Father's wife.** What was the issue? A certain unnamed man is having a sexual relationship with his **father's wife**.
  - Presumably his step-mother. It was not *incest* as we would commonly know it.

## Verse 2–

There is an illicit sexual encounter going on in the church of Corinth. A certain man is committing fornication with his father's wife and the church doesn't care.

- **And ye are puffed up.** The church is actually proud of it. Paul does not say how they are puffed up or why. This word puffed up carries the idea of *air*. They are full of air.
- **And have not rather mourned.**
  - Notice the contrast between **puffed up** and **mourned**. When a person mourns, it is as though all the air goes out from him. The word mourn carries the idea of wailing. When one wails, the air goes out from his lungs. He is deflated. It is the opposite of being puffed up.
    - Today there is little mourning over sin: We have become jaded, *everyone is doing it. What is the big deal?* Gossip.
  - This seems to be the attitude this church.
  - Sin is destructive and tears men, women, families, and churches apart.
- **Hath done the deed might be taken away from among you** . The church should have taken this action.
  - Paul often teaches in his letters that when a man is living in unconfessed, blatantly immoral sin, we are to withdraw our Christian fellowship from him (1 Corinthians 5:11 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14).

- The difficulty is in knowing what that means in real life? Could it mean we are not to serve with that person in the church, or take communion with that person, or not continue fellowshiping with him as if nothing is wrong? It is hard to say, and as we will see, some of Paul's comments in the succeeding verses are even more difficult to grasp.
  - We should probably be careful in how we interpret this.
- Paul also says in other passages to restore that kind of individual. The message of the gospel can restore a person. Restoration of a person in sin should be our goal. And yet, we do not want to sacrifice the message of the gospel for one person. At some point, the relationship between the local church and the erring brother may need to be separated.

### Verse 3–

- **Absent in body** from the Corinthians, but because he was **present in the spirit**, which could mean he was in tune with the spirit, he knew precisely what needed to be done with this sinning man.
  - He knew what was right and wrong. The evidence was so clear, it was time to get rid of this man.
    - No amount of rationalizing would change the fact that there was grave sin with a man in the church.
      - All too often we try to rationalize sin away.
  - The word **judged** is a tough one here. It may mean "concluded" or "determined."
  - The word **Already** seems to give the idea that *his mind was made up*. He does not need to be there in person to tell them what they should do **concerning him that hath so done this deed**.
    - Is Paul able to make this determination because he is an apostle? Pastoral authority today is not to be compared to Apostolic authority.

### Verse 4,5–

- **To deliver such a one unto Satan** is mysterious and puzzling. Let's take a look at each aspect of this passage and try and make sense of it.
  - It appears to be an instruction for the church in Corinth to practice church discipline.
  - This discipline was to happen in the name of the **Lord Jesus Christ** when the church was **gathered together**.
    - It was not to be a private matter.
    - It also was done with the authority of an apostle, as Paul stated in verse 3 that he was *present in spirit*. Paul possessed the **power of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Again, a pastor cannot claim apostolic authority. Yet, there is a church obligation to take care of sin in its midst, and a pastor is to feed or tend to the flock.
    - That gathering of the church in the name of Jesus, with apostolic authority, in the power of Christ, allowed this man to be delivered to Satan.
    - This is probably something a church is not to do today since there are no apostles to grant the authority.
      - In the case of the Corinth church, Paul was giving this church his authority because he was not there personally.
    - Sin is destructive. Satan is the author of sin. To deliver someone unto Satan perhaps means to let the man go his own way and allow sin to take its natural course in his life. Or, it could mean more than that, we don't really know. But, I don't think we have the authority to do it—it appears to be only an apostolic discipline measure.
  - **The spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus**. Even though his earthly life may be destroyed, if he is a believer in Jesus he cannot lose his salvation.
  - **The day of the Lord Jesus** may refer to the rapture. This man, though miserable, carnal, and destroyed in the flesh, was apparently a believer and would be raptured.
- Was this man, living in sin, to continue fellowshiping with this church? Paul will address that later.