

# First Corinthians

VERSE-BY-VERSE



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From Session 15 | The church is dealing with an issue of fornication. Fornication, from the Greek word, *porneia*, encompasses all sexual sin, including everything in the LGBTQ crowd, as well as adultery, pornography, or any sexual activity outside of the marriage between one man and one woman. Any sin is an affront to God. Yet, sin does not determine one's salvation. Everlasting salvation is based on belief in Jesus Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus' shed blood on the cross is what has forgiven the sins of all mankind (2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 2:11-13; Ephesians 2:8-9).

## Verse 6–

- ▶ This word **glorying** could be *boasting or rejoicing*. Earlier, Paul accused them of being *puffed up* (4:6, 18, 19). He means they were *inflated*. Being puffed up is being prideful. Pride comes from boasting, which he says **is not good**.
- ▶ **A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump** (Leaven is yeast and it is always used symbolically of evil and illustrates sin). Paul is using a Jewish figure of speech when he talks about unleavened bread and the Passover.
  - Remember that it had been only 20 years or so since Paul's conversion (A.D. 34) and his commission by the Lord that he would "bear my name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15).
  - Paul went away to Arabia for three years (Galatians 1:17-18). It was fourteen years later when the apostles figured out what to do with the new Gentile believers (Acts 15). By the time Paul got to Corinth for the first time, established the church, and began teaching them daily for 18 months, it was A.D. 54 (Acts 18). First Corinthians was written five years later in A.D. 59. The point being, there would have been more Jews in the church since Paul's ministry to the Gentiles was still in its infancy. Which is why Paul uses a lot of Jewish terminology.
  - The Jewish contingency of believers would have spread much more rapidly since they were the ones (Jews of the dispersion) who heard the word in Jerusalem during Pentecost in A.D. 33. At Pentecost, most were Jews and proselytes (Acts: 9,10).
  - Therefore, Paul uses a Jewish figure of speech to illustrate the problem. **Know ye not** is literally, *you can see for yourself when baking bread, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Just a pinch of leaven (or yeast) causes the whole loaf to rise, or get *puffed up*. This is the same effect pride will have in the church.*
- ▶ What should they do about it?

## Verses 7,8–

- ▶ The **old leaven** is figurative and probably concerns the *boasting over sin* by the church members. That is what they need to **purge**. Paul may not be referring here to the man involved in fornication. He already gave the command of what should be done with him (5:5).
  - His attention is focused on the pressing problem of the carnality among the members.
    - Earlier in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 Paul pointed out their carnality. The Greek word for carnal is, **σαρκικός** | *sarkikos* /sar-kee-**kos**/ and it is from the root word, *sarx* which means the *flesh* or the *body*. *Sarkikos* is someone under the control of their bodily or fleshly appetites.
  - They need to **purge** themselves of pride caused by their boasting.
  - They need to be a **new lump** of dough or a fresh batch of dough--start fresh! The church is not to be puffed up; instead, it is to be **unleavened**.
- ▶ **Christ our Passover**. Paul's use of this phrase makes it pretty clear he is writing to a primarily Jewish congregation. Gentiles would not have participated in the Passover. Passover was the Jewish feast that celebrated their salvation from bondage in Egypt. What is Paul's point in referring to the Passover? As the literal **yeast** was removed from the house during **the Passover** (Ex. 12:1-15,19-20; 13:1-10), so that which it illustrated, sin, was to be removed from the house of God, the local church,
- ▶ **Let us keep the feast** makes it more evident about the nature of this congregation. Likewise, Gentiles would not have kept the feast of Passover, nor been required to do so. This is not referring to the Lord's Supper as some have tried to make it into.

- **Let us keep the feast** is one word in Greek, ἐορτάζω | **heortazo** and it is not an “imperative” (command). It is “subjunctive” (more of a desire than a command).
  - His whole point is that the church needs to end its boasting, pride, and divisiveness. Christ was sacrificed for a pure church. Clean out the things that have made their way into the church, like **malice** (hostility) **and wickedness** (perversion), then the church can keep the feast together as they gather in **sincerity and truth**.

### Verse 9–

Although it is called First Corinthians, this is not Paul's first **epistle** to the Corinthians.

Paul's known letters to the Corinthian Church:

1st Letter | Referred to in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. Paul's first letter is lost (for divine reasons) and when it was written is unknown.

2nd Letter | Is the current letter of 1st Corinthians we are reading now. It was written in response to a report from *the house* of Chloe in 1 Corinthians 1:11.

3rd Letter | Referred to in 2 Corinthians 2:2-3. This letter is lost.

4th Letter | Is 2 Corinthians.

He wrote to them earlier about not keeping **company** with **fornicators**. This word **company** means to *get mixed up with them*. It might even mean to be intimate with them. A **fornicator** (as we have seen) is a sexually immoral person. This church had lots of problems; boasting, pride, and overlooking sexual sins.

In Paul's lost epistle\*, written before this one, he told them not to mingle with **fornicators**. There was evidently some confusion about what he meant, so he clarifies his meaning for them in verse 10 of this letter.

### Verse 10,11–

What he did not mean; not **the fornicators of this world**. The church was not to pull away from unbelievers outside the church. How else could the lost be reached if they did? He continues by telling them neither did he mean **the covetous** (This is from the Greek word which means to fill up; a person who is never satisfied), **or extortioners** (one who takes something by force), **or idolators** (to worship something). It would be impossible to not keep company in some regard with those who are unbelievers and practice such things. Since these people were not in the church, to separate completely, **you would need to go out of the world**.

What did he mean then?

### Verse 12,13–

In his last (lost) letter Paul wrote to the Corinthian church *not to company or mingle with fornicators*. He explained what he didn't mean in verse 10. Now he clarifies what he did mean.

That is **any man that is called a brother** who is involved in particular sins. By **called** he means anyone who bears the name **brother**. Paul lists the sins from verse 10 but adds two more: **fornicator, covetous, idolater, railer, or drunkard**. A railer is a verbally abusive person. It is the same word used in [1 Corinthians 6:10](#) but translated *reviler*.

Paul means the ones in the church who call themselves brothers. They were, **no not to eat** with such a person. What does **eat** mean? It means to **eat** with them. Not to sit around the table in fellowship. Not to mingle with them as they continue living in their sin. Why, because they call themselves brothers, but are not living like brothers. With all of that said, the church today should probably limit their removal or judgment of a brother or sister to the things Paul specifically mentions. It should be as public as common sense would dictate.