

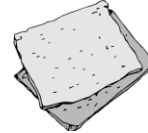
What Lives in You?

1 Corinthians 5-6

Dealing with "Yeast"

- ❑ Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. Paul has heard that someone in the church is guilty of incest,¹ yet church members are proud.² Paul says they should "rather have been filled with grief" (5:2).
- ❑ Though Paul is not physically present in Corinth, he is "with [them] in spirit"³ and has already passed judgment on the man. "In the name of the Lord Jesus,"⁴ Paul instructs them to carry out *their* responsibilities.

1. What are those instructions?⁵ What is the intended result?⁶



- ❑ In verses 6-8, Paul uses a mix of metaphors related to the Passover.⁷
 - Yeast⁸ represents sin (in this case, the immoral relationship). Since a little yeast infects the whole batch of dough, the yeast must be removed, that they may be a "new batch."
 - Christians are already a new batch (by God's grace), so they should behave like it!
 - Christians are a new batch because of *the* Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ. As God delivered Israel from slavery to Egypt through the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, God now delivers us from slavery to sin and death through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
 - Christians should "keep the Festival" by honoring God's deliverance in their daily lives.
- ❑ In verses 9-13, Paul talks about associating with immoral people. He distinguishes between people "outside the church" and those "inside" the church.

2. Why are Christians instructed to make this distinction?⁹

3. Expelling the wicked man from the Christian community is called "church discipline." Why is church discipline needed? What are its goals? Do you think it works today?

¹ "Incest" is sexual intercourse between persons too closely related to legally marry. In this case, "a man has his father's wife (step-mother)." The phrase "has his father's wife" refers to an ongoing relationship. While sexual immorality (πορνεία, *porneia*) was common in Corinth, this type (i.e., incest) was practically unheard of.

² "proud" (πεφυσωμένοι) – lit. "puffed up." Some commentators say that they were puffed up *because* of their sin.

³ "with you in spirit" (5:3) – could be like the idiom "you're in my thoughts" but it is probably something more. The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit (3:16), and Paul (in the Spirit) is in some sense present with them. A tangible expression of his presence is the apostolic instruction in his letter.

⁴ "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (5:4) may refer to (1) the Lord's presence in their assembly (NIV) or (2) Paul's authority in pronouncing his judgment (NASB).

⁵ "hand [him] over to Satan" – expel him from the Christian community; back into the world (Satan's sphere)

⁶ "that the sinful nature may be destroyed" is more literally, "for the destruction of the flesh (*sarx*)" Interpretations of verse 5 include (1) physical death (or at least suffering) but maintaining spiritual salvation (11:30-32; Acts 5:1-10); and (2) eradication of his sinful orientation (Galatians 5:24). The NIV adopts the second view.

⁷ "Passover" celebrated Israel's deliverance from slavery to Egypt in 1446 BC. Because of Egypt's idolatry and refusal to let God's people go, God sent a curse to kill their first-born (*Exodus 11*). God told the Israelites to kill a lamb and smear the blood on the doorposts of their houses (*12:1-13*). When judgment came, God "passed over" the houses where the blood was applied. This provoked Egypt to let Israel go (*12:29-32*). Passover was combined with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when the Israelites were required to remove all leaven from their houses (*12:17-20*).

⁸ "yeast" (ζύμη, *zumē*) – "leaven" – a fermenting agent used to make bread dough rise; used metaphorically here

⁹ Consider Luke 5:27-31 and Matthew 5:13-16.

Handling Disputes



☐ Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-11.

- ☐ Apparently, one church member has taken another member to court over some matter.¹⁰ Paul is greatly disturbed that they are not handling this dispute within the church.¹¹ In view of the age to come, when “the saints will judge the world,”¹² Paul rebukes their unwillingness to judge their “trivial” (relatively insignificant) disputes. And they call themselves wise! (6:5)
- ☐ Paul basically says, “Whether you win or lose your lawsuit, you have already lost!” (6:7)
4. In what ways might Christians “lose” when they take other church members to court? What attitudes should Christians have, and *not* have?¹³

- ☐ Paul provides a list of vices,¹⁴ and says that people who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God.¹⁵ To the Christians, however, Paul basically says, “This is what some of you *were*. But *now*, in Christ Jesus, you are something different. So live like it!”¹⁶

Using the Body

☐ Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

- ☐ Apparently, some of the Corinthians felt that they were free to use their body in a sexually immoral way.¹⁷ However, Paul says, “Never!” Rather, “the body is ... for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (6:13). So “flee from sexual immorality!”
- ☐ In 1 Corinthians 3:16, Paul says the church is “God’s temple.” Here, he applies this to the individual Christian.



📖 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (6:19-20, *NIV*).

Reflection & Application

- What (or Who) lives in you? If you desire the indwelling Holy Spirit, you must receive Jesus.
- How do you use your body? Think of some sensual pleasure that attracts you, and evaluate it by the tests in 6:12-13 & 6:19-20. Is it beneficial? Do you find yourself being controlled by it? Brothers and sisters, does it honor God, who bought you at a price and made you His temple?

¹⁰ “has a dispute” (πράγμα εχών) – technical term for a lawsuit or legal action

¹¹ “ungodly” (αδίκτοι – opposite of δίκαιος, righteous) – unrighteous, unjust (synonymous with “unbelievers” in 6:6). Also, “unjust” may have characterized the corrupt judicial system in Corinth, which favored the rich and influential.

¹² In what way will “the saints (believers) judge the world?” The Bible does not explicitly say, but it is related to the believers’ reigning with Christ in the age to come (Matthew 19:28; 2 Timothy 2:12).

¹³ Consider Jesus’ teaching in Luke 6:27-36. Also consider Paul’s instruction in 1 Thessalonians 5:15 and Romans 12:17, and Peter’s instruction in 1 Peter 2:20.

¹⁴ Regarding sexual sin, Paul mentions “adulterers;” “male prostitutes” (μαλακοί, *malakoi*) – “effeminate” men, probably referring to the passive partner in a homosexual relationship; and “homosexual offenders” (αρσενικοιται, *arsenokoitai*) – compound of “male” and “intercourse” (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; also see Romans 1:26-27).

¹⁵ That is, they (and any other sinners) will not inherit the kingdom unless they repent and receive Christ as Savior.

¹⁶ This is an example of the “indicative-imperative complex” common in Paul’s writings. As Christians, *you are* new creations, so *live like it!* Of course, Christians can only “live like it” by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷ In particular, sex with prostitutes (6:16), which was prevalent in Corinth. The Corinthians might have felt free to use their bodies in this way because they wrongly believed that the physical could be separated from the spiritual. As the physical acts of eating and digesting food (6:13) have no bearing on the spiritual life, neither does sexual activity affect one’s spiritual life. However, this is false! Christianity is concerned with the whole person, and salvation (including our ultimate salvation) includes the body (6:14).