CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

1 Corinthians Chapter 5 — Discipline in the Church

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

1 Corinthians Chapter 5 marks a turning point in Paul's letter.

For four chapters, Paul has dealt with pride and division in the church.

Now he turns to a specific sin.

And it is shocking.

A man in the church was living in a sexual relationship with his father's wife.

This was a sin so serious that even the pagan world around Corinth condemned it.

But the church was not grieving.

It was boasting.

Perhaps they were proud of how tolerant and open-minded they were.

Perhaps they thought their freedom in Christ meant that what a person did with his body did not matter.

Either way, they did nothing.

Paul does not hesitate.

He calls the church to act.

The man must be removed from the fellowship.

Not to destroy him.

But so that he might be saved.

Then Paul explains why this matters so much.

Sin in the church is like **leaven**, the yeast that spreads through a whole batch of dough.

If it is left alone, it affects everyone.

And Paul reminds them of the Passover.

Israel removed all leaven from their homes before the feast.

Christians must do the same, because **Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.**

Finally, Paul clears up a misunderstanding.

He is not telling believers to separate from sinners in the world.

Jesus Himself ate with sinners.

He is telling them not to keep close fellowship with someone who claims to be a believer while openly and persistently living in sin.

God will judge those outside.

The church is responsible for those inside.

The chapter moves through three movements:

- A Grave Sin in the Church (verses 1–5).
- Purging Out the Old Leaven (verses 6–8).
- Separation from the Unrepentant (verses 9–13).

The central truth of 1 Corinthians 5 is:

Because Christ our Passover Lamb was sacrificed to make us a holy people, the church must not tolerate open, unrepentant sin among its members, but must lovingly discipline for the sake of the sinner's salvation and the purity of the whole church.

I. A SIN NOT EVEN TOLERATED AMONG THE GENTILES

1 Corinthians 5:1 — “A Man Has His Father's Wife”

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind not even tolerated among the Gentiles: a man has his father's wife!”

Paul begins with the news that reached him.

“It is actually reported.”

This was not a private rumor.

It was widely known.

The sin was **sexual immorality.**

The Greek word is broad and covers every kind of sexual sin outside of marriage.

And this case was especially serious.

“A man has his father's wife.”

Paul does not say **“his mother.”**

So this was most likely his stepmother.

The word **“has”** shows that this was not a single act.

It was an ongoing relationship.

God's law had clearly forbidden it.

Even Roman law and Gentile culture condemned it.

Corinth was famous for immorality, yet even Corinth found this shameful.

And it was happening in the church.

Notice also that Paul addresses only the man.

He says nothing to the woman.

This suggests that she was not a member of the church, and the church had no responsibility to judge her.

Cross References

Leviticus 18:8

> Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife. That would dishonor your father.

Deuteronomy 22:30

> A man must not marry his father's wife. He must not dishonor his father's marriage bed.

Deuteronomy 27:20

> “Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his father's wife, because he dishonors his father's marriage bed.” Then all the people will say, “Amen!”

Spiritual Principle

God's standards for sexual purity do not change with the culture.

Spiritual Warning

When the church's behavior falls below the standards of the world, its witness is badly damaged.

II. ARROGANT INSTEAD OF MOURNING

1 Corinthians 5:2 — “Should You Not Rather Have Mourned?”

“And you are arrogant! Should you not rather have mourned, so that the one who has done this deed might be removed from among you?”

Paul is even more troubled by the church's response than by the sin itself.

“You are arrogant!”

It is the same word Paul used in Chapter 4: **puffed up.**

The church was proud.

Maybe they were proud of their tolerance.

Maybe they were proud of their spiritual gifts and ignored the sin altogether.

Either way, pride had blinded them.

What should they have done?

“Mourned.”

The word is used for grieving over the dead.

Sin in the church should break the hearts of God's people.

And true mourning would have led to action.

The man should have been **“removed from among you.”**

Pride ignores sin.

Godly sorrow deals with it.

Cross References

James 4:9

> Be sorrowful, mourn, and weep. Turn your laughter into mourning and your joy into sadness.

Ezra 9:3

> When I heard this, I tore my clothes and my robe, pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat down in shock.

2 Corinthians 12:21

> I am afraid that when I come again, my God will humble me in front of you. I may have to grieve over many who sinned earlier and have not turned away from the impurity, sexual sin, and shameless living they took part in.

Spiritual Principle

The right response to sin in the church is grief, not pride.

Key Truth

A church that boasts while sin goes unchecked has lost its sense of God's holiness.

III. PRESENT IN SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 5:3 — Judgment Already Pronounced

“For I, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already pronounced judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present.”

Paul was far away in Ephesus.

But distance did not stop him from acting.

He says he is **“present in spirit.”**

He stood with the church in his heart and in his apostolic authority.

And he had **“already pronounced judgment.”**

The facts were clear.

The sin was public.

The man was not repenting.

Paul did not need more time to decide.

The Corinthians had done nothing.

Paul had already made the judgment they should have made.

Cross References

Colossians 2:5

> Even though I am far away from you in body, I am with you in spirit. I am glad to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

1 Corinthians 4:19

> But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord wants me to. Then I will find out not only what these proud people are saying, but what power they really have.

1 Corinthians 4:21

> Which do you want? Should I come to you with a rod of discipline, or with love and a gentle spirit?

Spiritual Principle

When sin is open and unrepentant, faithful leaders must not delay in addressing it.

Key Truth

Paul's judgment was not personal anger.

It was a faithful application of God's word.

IV. ASSEMBLED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS

1 Corinthians 5:4 — The Church Gathered with Christ's Power

"When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Paul now tells the church how to act.

This was not to be done privately by one leader.

It was to be done **"when you are assembled."**

The whole church was to gather.

And they were to gather **"in the name of our Lord Jesus."**

This means they were acting under His authority and according to His will.

Paul would be with them **“in spirit.”**

And most importantly, they would act **“with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Church discipline is not a human club removing a member.

It is Christ's church acting with Christ's authority.

Cross References

Matthew 18:20

> For where two or three gather together in My name, I am there with them.

Matthew 18:18

> I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth will be allowed in heaven.

John 20:23

> If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.

Spiritual Principle

Church discipline must be done by the church, in the name of Jesus, and under His authority.

Key Truth

Jesus promised to be present when His people gather in His name.

That includes the hard moments of discipline.

V. HANDED OVER TO SATAN

1 Corinthians 5:5 — So That His Spirit May Be Saved

“hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord Jesus.”

This is one of the most serious statements in the New Testament.

“Hand this man over to Satan.”

The church is the place where God's people live under His protection and care.

Outside the church is the world, where Satan holds sway.

To hand someone over to Satan means to put him out of the fellowship of the church and back into the world.

“For the destruction of the flesh.”

Bible students understand this in different ways.

Some believe it means the destruction of his sinful nature and desires.

Others believe it may include physical suffering that God would use to bring him to his senses.

Either way, the purpose is clear.

“So that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord Jesus.”

The goal of discipline is not punishment for its own sake.

It is not revenge.

It is not to get rid of a troublemaker.

The goal is **salvation.**

Paul hoped that losing the fellowship of the church would wake this man up and bring him to repentance.

Cross References

1 Timothy 1:20

> Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander. I have handed them over to Satan so that they will learn not to speak against God.

2 Corinthians 2:6

> The punishment most of you gave this man is enough for him.

1 Peter 4:6

> That is why the good news was preached even to those who are now dead. Though they were judged in the body by human standards, they might live in the spirit by God's standards.

Spiritual Principle

The aim of church discipline is always restoration, never destruction of the person.

Key Truth

Church discipline is a severe mercy.

It is the church saying, **“We love you too much to let you continue in this sin.”**

VI. A LITTLE LEAVEN

1 Corinthians 5:6 — Your Boasting Is Not Good

“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?”

Paul returns to the church's pride.

“Your boasting is not good.”

Then he uses a picture from the kitchen.

Leaven is yeast, or a bit of old fermented dough saved from a previous batch.

A small piece of it is mixed into a new lump of dough.

Over time, it spreads through the whole lump.

Paul's point is simple.

Sin spreads.

If the church tolerates open sin in one member, it will not stay with one member.

It will affect the attitudes, standards, and behavior of the whole church.

Others will think, **“If he can do that, why can't I?”**

Cross References

Galatians 5:9

> A little yeast works its way through the whole batch of dough.

Matthew 16:6

> Jesus said to them, “Watch out! Be on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Luke 12:1

> Jesus began speaking first to His disciples: “Be on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

Spiritual Principle

Tolerated sin never stays small.

Application

This is true in a church.

It is also true in a heart.

Deal with sin while it is small.

VII. CHRIST OUR PASSOVER LAMB

1 Corinthians 5:7 — Get Rid of the Old Leaven

“Get rid of the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.”

Paul now connects his picture to the Passover.

Before Passover, every Jewish family searched their home and removed every trace of leaven.

Then they ate unleavened bread for seven days.

This reminded them of how God brought them out of Egypt in haste.

Paul says:

“Get rid of the old leaven.”

Remove the sin from your midst.

“That you may be a new lump.”

Become in practice what you are in Christ.

“Since you truly are unleavened.”

In Christ, they had already been made clean.

Now they needed to live like it.

And here is the reason:

“For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.”

At the first Passover, a lamb was killed and its blood was placed on the doorposts.

When God saw the blood, judgment passed over that house.

Jesus is the true Passover Lamb.

His blood was shed so that judgment would pass over us.

The order matters.

Israel killed the lamb, and then removed the leaven.

Christ has already been sacrificed.

So now we remove the sin.

Cross References

Exodus 12:15

> For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day, remove all yeast from your houses. Anyone who eats bread made with yeast from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel.

Exodus 13:7

> Eat bread made without yeast during those seven days. No bread with yeast and no yeast at all should be seen anywhere within your borders.

John 1:29

> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Spiritual Principle

We do not remove sin in order to be saved; we remove sin because we have been saved.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The blood of the Lamb calls for a life without the leaven.

VIII. KEEP THE FEAST

1 Corinthians 5:8 — Sincerity and Truth

“Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Paul continues the Passover picture.

“Let us keep the feast.”

The Christian life is a continual celebration of what Christ has done.

But it must be celebrated in the right way.

Not with the old leaven.

Paul names two kinds of leaven:

Malice—a heart that wants to harm.

Wickedness—evil in action.

But with unleavened bread.

Paul names two kinds of unleavened bread:

Sincerity—a pure heart without hidden motives.

Truth—a life that matches God's word.

The Christian life is not a gloomy fast.

It is a feast.

But it is a holy feast.

Cross References

Exodus 12:8

> That same night they must eat the meat roasted over the fire, with bread made without yeast and with bitter herbs.

Deuteronomy 16:3

> Do not eat bread made with yeast with it. For seven days eat bread without yeast, the bread of hardship, because you left Egypt in a hurry. Do this so that all your life you will remember the day you left Egypt.

2 Corinthians 1:12

> This is what we are proud of: our conscience tells us that we have lived in the world, and especially with you, with the holiness and sincerity that come from God. We did not depend on worldly wisdom but on God's grace.

Spiritual Principle

The whole Christian life is a feast of celebration in Christ, kept in sincerity and truth.

Application

Is there any old leaven of malice or wickedness in your heart?

Ask God to remove it, and keep the feast with joy.

IX. A PREVIOUS LETTER

1 Corinthians 5:9 — Not to Associate with the Sexually Immoral

“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—”

Paul mentions a letter he wrote to the Corinthians before this one.

That letter has not been preserved.

In it, Paul had told them **“not to associate with sexually immoral people.”**

The word **associate** means to mix closely together.

It describes close fellowship and friendship.

Apparently, the Corinthians had misunderstood what Paul meant.

Some may have thought he was telling them to withdraw from society entirely.

Others may have used that confusion as an excuse to do nothing at all.

So Paul now explains himself clearly.

Cross References

2 Thessalonians 3:14

> If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person. Do not associate with him, so that he will feel ashamed.

Ephesians 5:11

> Have nothing to do with the worthless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them.

Proverbs 1:15

> My son, do not go along with them. Keep your feet away from their path.

Spiritual Principle

The company we keep shapes the life we live.

Key Truth

God's word must be read carefully.

Misunderstanding it can lead either to harshness or to excuses.

X. NOT THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD

1 Corinthians 5:10 — You Would Need to Leave the World

“not at all meaning the immoral people of this world, or the greedy, or swindlers, or idolaters; in that case you would need to leave the world.”

Paul makes something very clear.

He was **not** telling believers to separate from unbelievers.

He names four kinds of people in the world:

- The sexually immoral.
- The greedy.
- Swindlers, who cheat others to get money.
- Idolaters.

If Christians tried to avoid all such people, they **“would need to leave the world.”**

And that is not God's plan.

Jesus did not pray for His followers to be taken out of the world.

He sent them into it.

Christians are called to live among unbelievers, work beside them, love them, and share the gospel with them.

Jesus Himself was called a friend of sinners.

Cross References

John 17:15

> I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to protect them from the evil one.

1 John 5:19

> We know that we are God's children, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Romans 12:2

> Do not copy the ways of this world, but let God change you by giving you a new mind. Then you will be able to understand what God wants—what is good, pleasing, and perfect.

Spiritual Principle

Christians are called to be in the world but not of the world.

Application

Do not hide from unbelievers.

Love them, befriend them, and point them to Christ.

XI. ANYONE WHO BEARS THE NAME OF BROTHER

1 Corinthians 5:11 — With Such a Person Do Not Even Eat

“But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of “brother” if he is guilty of sexual immorality, or greed, or idolatry, or abuse, or drunkenness, or swindling. With such a person do not even eat.”

Now Paul says exactly what he meant.

The separation is not from unbelievers.

It is from **“anyone who bears the name of brother”**—someone who claims to be a Christian—while living in open sin.

Paul lists six sins:

- Sexual immorality.

- Greed.
- Idolatry.
- Abuse—attacking others with insulting, hurtful words.
- Drunkenness.
- Swindling.

These are not believers who are struggling, confessing, and fighting against sin.

These are people who continue in sin without repentance while still claiming the name of Christ.

Paul says, **“With such a person do not even eat.”**

In that culture, sharing a meal was a sign of acceptance and close fellowship.

The church was to make clear that this person's way of life could not be accepted as Christian.

The purpose was to wake the person up and lead him back to repentance.

Cross References

2 Thessalonians 3:6

> Brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we command you to stay away from any believer who lives a lazy life and does not follow the teaching you received from us.

Matthew 18:17

> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would an unbeliever or a tax collector.

Romans 16:17

> I urge you, brothers and sisters, watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that go against the teaching you have learned. Stay away from them.

Spiritual Principle

A profession of faith must be matched by a life of repentance.

Spiritual Warning

This verse must not be used to cut off every believer who sins.

All believers sin.

Discipline is for those who refuse to repent of open, ongoing sin.

XII. THOSE INSIDE THE CHURCH

1 Corinthians 5:12 — Judging Insiders, Not Outsiders

“For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?”

Paul explains the principle behind his instruction.

The church has no responsibility to discipline **outsiders.**

People who are not believers have not promised to live under Christ's rule.

They need the gospel, not church discipline.

But the church does have responsibility for **those inside.**

Members of the church have professed faith in Christ.

They are part of the family.

And the family is responsible to care for one another, including correcting one another.

Many Christians have this backward.

They are quick to condemn the world.

And slow to deal with sin in the church.

Cross References

Matthew 18:17

> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would an unbeliever or a tax collector.

1 Peter 4:17

> For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household. And if it begins with us, what will happen to those who do not obey the good news of God?

Romans 2:1

> So you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge someone else. When you judge another person, you condemn yourself, because you do the same things.

Spiritual Principle

The church's first responsibility for holiness is within its own walls.

Application

Before you criticize the sins of the world, examine your own heart and your own church.

XIII. REMOVE THE WICKED PERSON

1 Corinthians 5:13 — God Will Judge Those Outside

“God will judge those outside. “Remove the wicked person from among you.””

Paul closes the chapter with two statements.

“God will judge those outside.”

Unbelievers are not beyond God's justice.

But their judgment belongs to Him.

The church can leave that in God's hands.

“Remove the wicked person from among you.”

This is a quotation that appears again and again in Deuteronomy.

Whenever serious sin threatened Israel, God commanded His people to remove the evil from their midst.

Paul applies that command to the church.

Under the Old Covenant, this often meant the death penalty.

Under the New Covenant, it means removal from the fellowship of the church.

The goal is no longer death.

The goal is repentance and life.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 17:7

> The witnesses must be the first to act in putting that person to death, and then all the people. You must remove the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 22:21

> They must bring her to the door of her father's house, and the men of her town must stone her to death. She has done a shameful thing in Israel. You must remove the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 24:7

> If someone is caught kidnapping a fellow Israelite and treating him as a slave or selling him, the kidnapper must die. You must remove the evil from among you.

Spiritual Principle

God has always called His people to be holy, and He holds them responsible for the purity of their community.

Key Truth

Israel removed evil by death.

The church removes it by discipline, hoping for repentance.

That difference is the grace of the gospel.

XIV. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 5

1. Sin Must Not Be Tolerated in the Church

The Corinthians were arrogant instead of mourning over open sin.

Principle:

A church that boasts while sin goes unchecked has lost sight of God's holiness.

2. Church Discipline Is Necessary

Paul called for the man to be removed from the fellowship.

Principle:

Discipline is not for cruelty but for the salvation of the sinner's soul.

3. Sin Spreads Like Leaven

A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Principle:

One person's unchecked rebellion can corrupt the whole church if it is not dealt with.

4. Christ Is Our Passover

Israel removed leaven before Passover.

Principle:

Because Jesus was sacrificed for us, we are to live in sincerity and truth.

5. Separate from Professing Believers Who Persist in Sin

Paul distinguished between unbelievers in the world and unrepentant “brothers.”

Principle:

We must engage the world with the gospel, but we must discipline those in the church who refuse to repent.

6. Judgment Begins in the House of God

The church judges those inside; God judges those outside.

Principle:

The church is responsible for holiness among its own members.

XV. LEAVEN AND THE PASSOVER

Paul's readers would have understood the picture of leaven and Passover.

The First Passover

In Egypt, each Israelite family killed a lamb and put its blood on the doorposts.

When the LORD saw the blood, judgment passed over that house.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

For seven days after Passover, Israel ate bread made without leaven.

Every bit of leaven had to be removed from their homes.

What Leaven Pictures

Leaven spreads quietly until it fills the whole lump.

In Scripture, it often pictures the spreading power of sin and false teaching.

The Fulfillment in Christ

Jesus is the true Passover Lamb.

He was crucified at Passover time.

His blood turns away God's judgment from all who trust in Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Passover came first, then the removal of leaven; Christ died for us first, and then we put away sin.

XVI. THE PURPOSES OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline is often misunderstood.

1 Corinthians 5 shows that it has loving and holy purposes.

To Restore the Sinner

“So that his spirit may be saved.”

The goal is repentance and return.

To Protect the Church

“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

Sin left alone spreads to others.

To Honor Christ

The church gathers **“in the name of our Lord Jesus.”**

It must not allow His name to be attached to open, unrepentant sin.

To Guard the Church's Witness

The sin in Corinth was **“not even tolerated among the Gentiles.”**

The world was watching.

Key Truth

Church discipline is love for the sinner, love for the church, and love for the name of Christ.

XVII. THE STEPS OF CORRECTION

Jesus gave His church a careful process for dealing with sin in Matthew 18.

Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 5 is the final step of that process.

Step 1: Go Privately

If a brother sins, go to him alone.

If he listens, you have won him back.

Step 2: Take One or Two Others

If he will not listen, take one or two others with you as witnesses.

Step 3: Tell the Church

If he still will not listen, tell the church.

Step 4: Remove from Fellowship

If he refuses to listen even to the church, he is to be treated as an outsider.

Then: Restore with Love

When the person repents, the church must forgive, comfort, and welcome him back.

Many Bible students believe Paul writes about this kind of restoration in 2 Corinthians 2.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Discipline begins privately, moves slowly, acts firmly, and always keeps the door open for repentance.

XVIII. INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

1 Corinthians 5 draws a clear line between two groups.

Those Outside the Church

- Have not professed faith in Christ.
- Are not under church discipline.
- Need the gospel.
- Should be loved, befriended, and reached.
- Will be judged by God.

Those Inside the Church

- Have professed faith in Christ.
- Are part of God's family.
- Are responsible to one another.
- Must be corrected when they persist in open sin.
- Are to be restored when they repent.

Key Truth

The church is to be a light to those outside and a holy family to those inside.

XIX. WHAT 1 CORINTHIANS 5 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Jesus Is Lord of the Church

The church gathers **“in the name of our Lord Jesus.”**

Jesus Gives the Church Authority

Discipline is carried out **“with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Jesus Is Coming Again

Paul looks toward **“the day of the Lord Jesus.”**

Jesus Is Our Passover Lamb

“Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Lamb who was sacrificed for the church is the Lord who rules the church.

XX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What was the sin in 1 Corinthians 5?

A man in the church was living in an ongoing sexual relationship with his father's wife, most likely his stepmother.

God's law forbade it, and even the pagan world condemned it.

Question 2

What upset Paul even more than the sin itself?

The church's response.

They were arrogant instead of grieving.

They had done nothing to deal with it.

Question 3

Why does Paul say nothing about the woman?

She was most likely not a member of the church.

Paul says the church is responsible to judge those inside, not those outside.

Question 4

Who was supposed to carry out the discipline?

The whole church, gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus and with His power.

It was not to be done secretly by one person.

Question 5

What does it mean to “hand this man over to Satan”?

It means to remove him from the fellowship and protection of the church and put him back into the world, where Satan holds sway.

The goal was to bring him to repentance.

Question 6

What is the purpose of church discipline?

To restore the sinner.

To protect the church.

To honor the name of Christ.

To guard the church's witness to the world.

Question 7

What does leaven represent in this chapter?

Leaven represents sin, which spreads through the whole church if it is not dealt with.

Question 8

Why does Paul mention the Passover?

Before Passover, Israel removed all leaven from their homes.

Christ is our Passover Lamb who has been sacrificed.

Because He died for us, we must remove sin from our lives and our church.

Question 9

Does Paul tell Christians to avoid unbelievers?

No.

He says that would mean leaving the world.

Christians are called to live among unbelievers and share the gospel with them.

Question 10

Who are Christians told not to associate with?

Anyone who claims to be a believer but continues in open sin without repentance.

Paul lists sexual immorality, greed, idolatry, abuse, drunkenness, and swindling.

Question 11

Does this mean we should cut off every Christian who sins?

No.

Every believer sins.

Discipline is for those who refuse to repent of open, ongoing sin after being lovingly confronted.

Question 12

What should 1 Corinthians 5 change about the way Christians live today?

1 Corinthians 5 should cause believers to live:

- Grieving over sin instead of excusing it.
- Taking holiness seriously.

- Dealing with sin while it is small.
- Remembering that Christ our Passover was sacrificed for them.
- Living in sincerity and truth.
- Loving and reaching unbelievers.
- Lovingly holding one another accountable.
- Ready to forgive and restore those who repent.

XXI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians 5 asks several important questions.

Do I Grieve Over Sin?

Or have I grown comfortable with it?

Is There Any Leaven in My Life?

Is there a sin I have tolerated that is slowly spreading?

Am I Living in Light of the Cross?

Christ our Passover was sacrificed for me.

Does my life show it?

Am I Keeping the Feast with Sincerity and Truth?

Or with malice and hidden motives?

Am I Reaching People Outside the Church?

Or have I separated myself from the people Jesus came to save?

Am I Willing to Speak the Truth in Love?

If a brother or sister is wandering, will I go to them?

Am I Ready to Receive Correction?

If someone comes to me about my sin, will I listen?

Am I Ready to Forgive?

When someone repents, will I welcome them back?

XXII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Holy Love Does Not Look Away”

Some people think love means never correcting anyone.

They say, **“Who am I to judge?”**

They look away when a brother or sister is destroying their life.

The Corinthians thought they were being loving and open-minded.

In reality, they were being proud and careless.

True love does not look away.

A loving parent does not ignore a child who is running into traffic.

A loving doctor does not ignore a growing infection.

A loving church does not ignore a member who is walking away from God.

But holy love also never becomes cruel.

It grieves.

It confronts gently.

It hopes for repentance.

It keeps the door open.

And it runs to welcome the sinner home.

This creates a powerful principle.

Love without holiness becomes permission.

Holiness without love becomes harshness.

God calls His church to both.

Principle:

The church must love the sinner too much to leave him in his sin.

XXIII. FINAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians Chapter 5 was written to a church that was proud of itself while sin grew in its midst.

They had gifts.

They had knowledge.

They had great teachers.

But they had lost their sense of God's holiness.

And they had lost their sense of grief over sin.

Paul called them back to the cross.

Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.

The Lamb has died.

The blood has been shed.

Judgment has passed over us.

So we must put away the leaven.

1 Corinthians 5 therefore reminds us:

Never boast while sin is unchecked.

Never treat sin as small.

Never forget the price of our redemption.

Never use grace as an excuse.

Never turn discipline into cruelty.

The church does not need to be harsh.

It does not need to be careless.

It needs:

Grief over sin.

Courage to act.

Love that seeks restoration.

And joy in the Lamb who was sacrificed.

The same truth still calls us:

Tell people that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away sin.

Tell people that His blood turns away God's judgment.

Tell people that those He saves He also makes holy.

Tell people that the door of repentance is always open.

And as you keep the feast:

Put away the old leaven.

Walk in sincerity and truth.

Love the world with the gospel.

Love the church with holiness.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, who was sacrificed for us.

Thank You that because of His blood, Your judgment has passed over us.

Thank You that You have made us a new lump, clean in Christ.

Thank You for loving us too much to leave us in our sin.

Forgive us for the times we have been proud instead of grieving over sin.

Forgive us for excusing what You call evil.

Forgive us for allowing small sins to grow in our hearts.

Forgive us for being quick to judge the world and slow to examine ourselves.

Search our hearts and remove the old leaven of malice and wickedness.

Help us keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Give Your church courage to deal with sin faithfully.

Give Your church gentleness to do it with love.

Give Your church wisdom to follow the way of Jesus.

For those who have wandered from You, bring them to repentance.

And when they return, help us welcome them with open arms.

Help us love the people of this world and share the gospel with them.

Keep us holy as we wait for the day of the Lord Jesus.

“For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Get rid of the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.” — 1 Corinthians 5:7

Central Truth

Because Christ our Passover Lamb was sacrificed to make us a holy people, the church must not tolerate open, unrepentant sin among its members, but must lovingly discipline for the sake of the sinner's salvation and the purity of the whole church.

1 Corinthians 5 in One Sentence

Paul rebukes a proud church for tolerating shocking sin, commands them to remove the unrepentant man so that he might be saved, warns that a little leaven spreads through the whole lump, and calls them to live in sincerity and truth because Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for us.