

5. How emotional was Paul about this issue (**vs. 3**)? Why was he so emotionally involved? Are churches still sweeping sin under the carpet today? Why should this never be done? According to Paul, what is the proper way for churches to reprimand elders who are caught living in sinful lifestyles? (**See 1 Tim. 5:19-20**) Why should their rebuke be public?

6. Assuming this church member had already been approached by church leaders following the principles of **Matt. 18:15-18** and still refused to repent, what should the church do (**vv. 4 & 5**)? The Oxford Dictionary of English defines “*excommunication*” as: “*Officially exclude (someone) from participation in the sacraments and services of the Christian Church.*” Does this treatment seem harsh to you? Why or why not? Why do you think the step-mother was not mentioned by Paul? Wasn’t she involved too?

7. What did Paul mean when he commanded, “*deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh*” (**vs. 5**)? What was the purpose behind Paul’s command that this person be removed from the blessings of the covenant community and turned over to Satan? What are some ways that even unbelievers can be blessed by attending church? What should the motivating factor always be behind church discipline?

8. Today people are quick to church hop when church discipline is implemented and far too often the offenders are received by other churches with open arms without ever repenting of their sin? Does this demonstrate a healthy understanding of God’s grace? Why didn’t church hopping occur in New Testament days? Would churches be wise to check former churches before granting a new attender church membership?

Part II: Purging out the old leaven of sin from the church (1 Cor. 5:6-8)

1. Do you see the sin of pride slipping in in **verse 6**? If so where? What does it mean for a person “*to glory*?” What was the church telling others by not only allowing the sin, but accepting it? Why was their reaction dangerous to the spiritual wellbeing of the church? How might this reaction affect their testimony in the community?

2. What does leaven represent in almost every instance in Scripture (**vs. 6**)? (**See Matt. 16:6; Mark 8:15; Gal. 5:9**) Why is leaven such a good representation for sin? What is the one “possible” exception in the Bible to leaven representing sin? (**See Matt. 13:33**) In what way is cancer similar to leaven? If left unchecked, what will both do to the body?

3. How do “*the Passover Feast*” and “*the Feast of Unleavened Bread*” relate to Christians living a holy life today (**vs. 7**)? A Biblical “*type*” is an Old Testament foreshadow of something to be fulfilled in the New Testament. In order for a type to be truly a type, it must be identified as such in the New Testament. What Old Testament type is identified in **verse 7**? (**See Exod. 12:5-7; Isa. 53:7; John 1:29; Heb. 10:10, 14**) What is the significance of a Christian being covered by the blood of the Lamb?

4. If “*the feast*” represents our Christian life, what did Paul mean by, “*Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old bread?*” (**See Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:5**) What was your life like before coming to Christ? What are some areas in your life that you still need to sweep the leaven out of?

Part III: Judge the sin inside the church, God will judge the sin outside (1 Cor. 5:9-13)

1. In **verse 9** Paul referred to an earlier letter he wrote to the Corinthians that has since been lost. Does the loss of this letter indicate that we don’t have all of the Scriptures today? Why or why not? What issue did Paul indicate he had addressed in the earlier letter only to have the church misunderstand him?

2. According to **verse 10**, what did the Corinthians think Paul meant in his earlier letter? What would happen if Christians stayed away from all the immoral people (unbelievers) in the world? How should we act as “*ambassadors for Christ*”? (**See 2 Cor. 5:20-21; John 17:15-19; 18:36; 1 John 2:15**) What would happen if Christians lived in a bubble and stayed away from anyone who didn’t agree with them? What would Jesus say about this? (**See Matt. 28:18-20**)

3. Who had Paul instructed the Corinthians to stay away from in his earlier letter (**vs. 11**)? Why? Is Paul instructing the Corinthians to stay away from any Christian who sins or from those who are living in a defiant *"lifestyle of sin?"* (**See Rom. 3:23; 5:8,9; 6:23**) Should this concept apply to the local church today? Why or why not? Why did Paul tell the Corinthians not to even eat with such a person (**vs. 11b**)?

4. According to Paul, are we to judge the character of a person who has never received Christ as Savior (**vs. 12**)? Why? Who should we be judging if they live a lifestyle of defiant sin? Why? How important is it for the Christian to live a holy lifestyle? (**See Heb. 12:14**)

5. Whose job is it to judge the unbeliever's heart (**vs. 13**)? What command did Paul use from God's law in ordering the excommunication of this evil person from the church? (**See Deuteronomy 17:6-7**) Excommunication may seem rather harsh on the surface, but based on **Deut. 17:6-7**, was this a harsh act or an act of mercy? What is the purpose behind turning an unrepentant sinner over to Satan? Many Bible students believe the repentant man mentioned in **2 Cor. 2:6-9** is the same man as mentioned here. If so, what was the outcome of this act of church discipline? Have you ever seen a straying Christian brought back into fellowship through church discipline?

6. Does church discipline leave a bad taste in your mouth? Should it? Why is church discipline important to the overall health of the church body? Are you willing to submit yourself to church discipline if necessary? Why or why not?

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna to live by!*

- Church discipline is necessary at times to maintain the spiritual health of the church body!
- Excommunication is to be used only after the principles of **Matt. 18:15-18** have been followed and failed to bring repentance!
- Church discipline is to be implemented in a spirit of love with the goal of restoring the straying brother or sister back into a right relationship with Christ and His Church!
- As Christians we are to judge open sin within the church; but not the heart of the sinner!
- We are not to judge the heart of unbelievers, that is for God to do!
- Open sin left unchecked becomes a cancer that can destroy the whole church body!
- The Reformers believed church discipline was one of the three marks of the true church along with the preaching of God's Word and the administration of sacraments!

