

# Light Reading/Deep Reading of the Bible

## 1 Corinthians chapter 5

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### 1 Corinthians 5

#### How to Tell "When to Judge and When Not to Judge"

When we are confronted with the actions or teachings of others, we often ask: When should we judge and when should we refrain from judgment? The Bible does not prohibit judgment altogether, but it distinguishes between two different kinds of judgment. When Jesus said in Matthew 7, "Do not judge," he was referring to those who judge others with pride, self-righteousness, and condemnation, without examining themselves. But the Bible also teaches us to have spiritual discernment, such as John 7:24, which says, "Judge men with judgment." True discernment is based on God's truth, out of love and build-up, not to humiliate or exalt oneself. We should justifiably manifest sins in love, especially within the church, in order to restore people and preserve truth and holiness. But when it comes to unclear situations, personal preferences, or non-believers, one should avoid arbitrary judgments. Overall, the starting point and motivation of judgment are crucial, and may we learn when to be silent and when to speak, using humility, love, and biblical principles as the yardsticks, to live a life that values both truth and grace.

First Corinthians chapter 5 is mainly the apostle Paul's rebuke and teaching of the serious sexual immorality within the Corinthian church, emphasizing that the church must maintain holiness, not tolerate obvious sin, and deal with unrepentant brothers with church authority to protect the purity and testimony of the church. Paul pointed out that there were people in the Corinthian church who had adulterous relations with their stepmothers, a sin that was rare even among

Gentiles but tolerated by the church. Far from grieving over this, the Corinthians were arrogant and did not drive those who did this out of the church, reflecting the church's numbness and self-righteousness toward sin. Although Paul was physically absent from Corinth, his heart was with them, and he had judged the sinner and commanded the church to give him to Satan with authority in the name of Jesus, so that he could suffer physically so that his soul could be saved. Paul used leaven as a metaphor for the effects of sin, reminding the church that it must be rid of old leaven (sin) and remain pure. Paul clarified that his previous words did not refer to associating with the world, but to those in the church who profess to be brothers but continue to sin and do not repent, and not to have close association with them, not even to eat, as a sign of the holiness and discipline of the church. The chapter emphasizes the church's responsibility to discipline and not tolerate obvious sins, not only for the sake of sinners' repentance and salvation, but also to protect the church's overall holiness and witness. With a strong tone and authority, Paul called on the Corinthian church to take immediate action to cast out the fornicating brethren and exercise its discipline in the name of Jesus Christ. In addition, the chapter reflects the fact that the Corinthian church at that time was influenced by the dualism of Greek culture, which misbelieved that the depravity of the body did not affect spirituality, and therefore tolerated sexual immorality, while Paul opposed this misconception by emphasizing the integrity and holiness of the body and soul.

We pray

Dear Heavenly Father,

You are the righteous and loving Lord, who sees the human heart and knows all the motives and hidden things. Lord, I confess that sometimes I look at others by my own standards, even judging their actions and thoughts without knowing it. Forgive me for the judgmental eyes and pride in me.

Lord, You teach us, "Do not judge men, lest we be judged." Help me to always remember that I am not the judge, but the only one who is qualified to judge. When I see the weakness or mistakes of others, give me a heart of compassion and understanding, not judgment. Let me learn to pray more, to love more, to be more tolerant, not to criticize and condemn.

Lord, if I need to be reminded or admonished about something, please also make me humble and loving, to use the truth as the yardstick, to restore people with gentleness, and not to hurt others out of self-righteousness. May your Holy Spirit illuminate me every day, cleanse me and make me live like Jesus, and may my eyes and words please you.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I pray, amen.

1 Corinthians chapter 5

Amplified Bible

**Immorality Rebuked**

<sup>5</sup> It is actually reported [everywhere] that there is sexual immorality among you, a kind of immorality that is condemned even among the [unbelieving] Gentiles: that someone <sup>[a]</sup>has [an intimate relationship with] his father's wife. <sup>2</sup> And you are proud *and* arrogant! You should have mourned in shame so that the man who has done this [disgraceful] thing would be removed from your fellowship!

<sup>3</sup> For I, though absent [from you] in body but present in spirit, have already passed judgment on him who has committed this [act], as if I were present. <sup>4</sup> In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I am with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, <sup>5</sup> you are to <sup>[b]</sup>hand over this man to Satan for the destruction of his body, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>6</sup> Your boasting [over the supposed spirituality of your church] is not good [indeed, it is vulgar and inappropriate]. <sup>[c]</sup>Do you not know that [just] a little leaven ferments the whole batch [of dough, just as a little sin corrupts a person or an entire church]? <sup>7</sup> <sup>[d]</sup>Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new batch, just as you are, still unleavened. For Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of vice *and* malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and [untainted] truth.

<sup>9</sup> I wrote you in my [previous] letter not to associate with [sexually] immoral people— <sup>10</sup> not meaning the immoral people of this world, or the greedy ones and swindlers, or idolaters, for then you would have to get out of the world *and* human society altogether! <sup>11</sup> But actually, I have written to you not to associate with any so-called [Christian] brother if he is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater [devoted to anything that takes the place of God], or is a reviler [who insults or slanders or otherwise verbally abuses others], or is a drunkard or a swindler—you must not so much as <sup>[e]</sup>eat with such a person. <sup>12</sup> For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders (non-believers)? Do you not judge those who are within *the church* [to protect the church as the situation requires]? <sup>13</sup> God *alone* sits in judgment on those who are outside [the faith]. Remove the wicked one from among you [expel him from your church].

## Detailed Description of 1 Corinthians Chapter 5

### Context:

In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul addresses a serious moral issue in the church at Corinth. A case of **sexual immorality** has been tolerated in the congregation—so severe that even the surrounding pagan culture would condemn it. Paul confronts both the sin and the church's failure to deal with it.

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### ◆ Verses 1–2 – The Scandal and the Church's Pride

Paul begins by expressing shock:

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you... a man has his father's wife.”

This likely refers to a man cohabiting with his stepmother (his father's wife). Paul is astonished not only at the sin itself but also that the church is **proud or indifferent**, rather than mourning and removing the sinner from fellowship.

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### ◆ Verses 3–5 – Paul’s Judgment and Command

Paul tells them that even though he is not physically present, he has already passed judgment on the matter.

"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."

This is a reference to excommunication—removing the person from the church’s spiritual protection—so that the person may come to repentance and ultimately be saved.

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### ◆ Verses 6–8 – The Danger of Tolerating Sin

Paul warns:

“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

Just as a small amount of yeast affects the entire dough, unchecked sin spreads and corrupts the entire community. Paul calls them to **cleanse out the old leaven** and live as **unleavened bread**—a metaphor for moral purity, echoing the **Passover imagery**.

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### ◆ Verses 9–11 – Clarifying the Scope of Separation

Paul reminds them of a previous letter (now lost) where he warned not to associate with immoral people. Here, he clarifies:

“Not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral... but now I am writing that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral...”

Paul emphasizes **church discipline applies to those who claim to be believers** but live in unrepentant sin, not to unbelievers outside the church.

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### ◆ Verse 12–13 – The Boundary of Judgment

Paul concludes:

“What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. ‘Expel the wicked person from among you.’”

The quote is from Deuteronomy and shows that **church discipline is a biblical and necessary act** of maintaining holiness within the believing community.

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## Theological Influence of 1 Corinthians 5

### 1. Church Discipline Is Biblical and Necessary

- This chapter forms a **foundation for the practice of church discipline**. It teaches that open, unrepentant sin within the church must be confronted for the sake of both the sinner and the church body.
2. **Holiness of the Church Matters**
- The metaphor of **leaven and Passover** emphasizes the need for moral and spiritual purity. The church is called to be holy, distinct from the world.
3. **Restorative Judgment**
- Paul’s goal in judgment is not punishment but **restoration**: “so that his spirit may be saved.” The aim is **redemptive**, not merely corrective.
4. **Judging Inside, Not Outside**
- Paul introduces a vital theological distinction: Christians are not to judge non-believers’ behavior, but must hold fellow believers accountable. This guards against hypocrisy and misplaced legalism.
5. **The Identity of the Church**
- The church is not just a social gathering but a **holy community**. This chapter shows that identity has ethical implications—members must reflect God’s character.