



## LETTERS TO THE CHURCH [1 CORINTHIANS 5]

This passage tackles the difficult but necessary topics of repentance and church discipline. Paul addresses a scandal within the Corinthian church: a man is engaged in sexual immorality with his stepmother, and rather than mourning, the community is proud. The issue, as Paul sees it, is not only the man's sin but the church's complacency. The apostle urgently calls the church to action—not out of cruelty, but out of love for both the individual and the health of the entire body. Repentance, Paul suggests, is not simply a personal experience but a communal necessity.

Paul's command to "deliver this man to Satan" is strong language meant to illustrate a sober reality: when someone persists in sin without remorse, the community must release them to the consequences of their choices in hopes they will eventually return to God. This is not punishment for punishment's sake, but discipline with the aim of redemption. Just as yeast affects the whole dough, unchecked sin in the church will inevitably spread and infect the spiritual health of the entire body. The call is clear: cleanse the old leaven, and live in sincerity and truth because Christ, our Passover Lamb, has already made us new.

Paul further clarifies that Christians are not to disassociate from the immoral people of the world—that would require leaving the world altogether. Rather, his concern is with those *inside* the church who claim to follow Christ yet live in unrepentant sin. Such hypocrisy damages the witness of the church and endangers the community. Discipline, then, becomes a necessary boundary to preserve the integrity of the gospel and invite true transformation. This call to holiness isn't motivated by judgmentalism but by the desire for spiritual restoration and communal flourishing.

### Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Paul was so deeply concerned about the community's *arrogance* rather than just the individual's sin in 1 Corinthians 5:1–2? How might pride in the church today prevent true repentance and transformation?
2. Paul's instruction to "deliver this man to Satan" (v.5) sounds extreme. How does this concept reflect both judgment and hope? Have you ever had to lovingly release someone to their choices while still praying for their restoration?
3. What does Paul's metaphor of yeast in verses 6–8 teach us about the influence of unrepentant sin in community? Can you think of examples—personal, cultural, or church-related—where this has proven true?
4. In verses 9–13, Paul distinguishes between judging outsiders and holding insiders accountable. Why is this distinction important? What challenges arise in practicing accountability without becoming legalistic or unloving?
5. What would it look like for our small group (or church) to become a community that encourages ongoing repentance in a way that is safe, sincere, and transformative? How can we better reflect Jesus as our Passover Lamb in our relationships with one another?