

Judging the Sin

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 Yesterday we talked about judging nothing before the time. However, we see in this passage that Paul definitely makes a judgment. Remember we said we could judge people's actions, but we do not have the ability to judge their motivations. Only God knows the hearts of men. The judgment Paul makes in this passage is against the sin of fornication. This is the only sin that is a sin against one's own body. Listen to what Paul says about this. "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (vv. 9-13, KJV).

This seems to be a contradiction to what Paul just said about not judging others. Paul, however, gives us permission to break fellowship with those who are fornicators, covetous, idolaters, railers, drunkards and extortioners. What would happen in your church if the pastor said, "Will all those who are having sex outside of marriage, those who are wanting to possess what others have, those who are putting other things and people ahead of God, those who get drunk and rail, and those who cheat on their taxes please stand up?" How many do you think would stand up? The truth is we have no way of knowing who has entered such sinful activity unless we actually have talked to such a person and they have admitted their sin, yet are unrepentant. Such was the case in Corinth. The body of Christ knew for a fact that this man had entered

into a sexual relationship with his father's wife. Fellowship with this person, therefore, had to be broken until this man became repentant. Paul advised that the body break fellowship with him and deliver him into the hands of Satan until he did repent. Paul's judgment seems harsh, yet Paul's ultimate motive in such a judgment was restoration of this man to the fellowship when the man repented, which we read later did happen.

Lord, first purify my own heart and purify all those who are my brothers and sisters in the Lord.

**READ: Ezra 8:21-9:15; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Psalm 31:1-8;
Proverbs 21:1-2**