

## Gamma 2017

Book	1-Corinthians
Topic	Church Discipline
Reference	1-Corinthians 5
Date	26 March 2017
Speaker	Dr Peter Ng

1 Corinthians 5:1-2 (ESV) **1** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. **2** And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you

The word **sexual immorality** is Porneia which is basically prostitution or any kind of sexual sins that can also refer to homosexuality as well.

### **A man has his father's wife**

Leviticus 18:7-8 (ESV) **You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. 8 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.**

That means if you have sex with your mother or stepmother it is actually an insult upon your own father itself, you are uncovering his nakedness which is basically a sin. The issue here is in the Corinthian culture. The Corinthian culture is bad. They have got, for example *"Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of the body, but wives to bear us legitimate children,*

It is a very-very sexually licentious kind of culture in those days. That is why when we talk about food offered to idols and culture later on you will then come across this issue. So sex is part of their lives. In their culture when they go to the temple they have sex with the temple prostitute and having sex with the temple prostitute means your communion with god.

We have got numerous references to sexual immorality

1 Cor 5:9, 6:12–20, 7:2, and 10:8

The have kind of immorality that is not even tolerated among pagan, means what they did was so bad that even Corinthians were not doing that.

**And you are arrogant:** They are arrogant because they condone it, they are proud of it. They are super spiritual, they can do miracles, they can heal people, they can speak in tongues and if they can do all those few things what is sex in their eyes, so that is the issue. You can have a lot of gifts; you can work a lot of miracles but if your sexual life is there you are arrogant.

**Rather they should be mourning:** If you see this happen in your church you should be mourning. So many times you see in the church there is sexual immorality may involve a pastor or a church leader, instead of pointing fingers we should be mourning, because it is something that we are all part of a community. We have failed together. So therefore this is a deep anguish of the soul.

**Removed from among you:** In chapter 1:1 church of Corinth that is sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saint. So this is ex-communication. Because the whole body has to be a sanctified body. If it is some person inside who is not sanctified, then that person should be removed.

1 Corinthians 5:3-4 (ESV) *For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. 4 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus*

So therefore when you assemble, when discipline is basically corporate, it is not done by one fellow. Church discipline is done as an entire church together, very important.

1 Corinthians 5:5 (ESV) *you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.*

What does it mean to deliver this man to Satan?

There is a parallel passage

1 Timothy 1:20 (ESV) *among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

Let's look at the passage

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 (ESV) *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.....5 you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.*

It means that remove from amongst you, because this is a community of God, this is the body of Christ. So when you ask him to leave the gates, as the inside of gate belongs to God and the outside belong to Satan.

1 Corinthians 5:5 (ESV) *you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.*

**Destruction of Flesh:** What does it mean that they are handed over for the destruction of flesh. In the context of 1-Corinthians flesh is human instinct, human desires. So when you kick him outside to the real world they will learn not to follow their human instincts. The other alternative is physical suffering like Ananias and Saphira and they die. The alternative is to basically destroy their human instincts by suffering outside.

I don't know whether this applies today. Most people when they leave church don't really suffer, in fact they are happier, but this idea of suffering is suffering spiritually because he lacks the community, he lacks the fellowship, he lacks the kind of spiritual reality. He may feel that he is happy outside.

Option 2 is that it is redemptive in nature.

1 Corinthians 5:11 (ESV) 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 is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

Why do they need to do this?

Christ's death makes them new they need to act accordingly.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 (ESV) Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Here he explains why he does it in terms of a metaphor which is a cooking metaphor. When they are baking they will take one bit of bread of last week which has got the yeast inside and mix it with this week's dough and then they will make bread and then following week they will take this week's dough and mix with next week's flour and make some more bread and this goes on and on and on and on but if you continue to use this too long, it says the yeast will become mutant and go bad, it makes the taste of bread bad. So once in a while you should get rid of all the old yeast and start with the fresh batch of unleavened bread. This is the thinking behind it because this old yeast is dirty, it is bad, so therefore you need to clean house as it were because if you don't clean house and use the old yeast it will infect your new bread. So therefore it is taken from this feast of unleavened bread.

Exodus 12:14-15 (ESV) This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. 15 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

So therefore why you have to kick this person out because this person is like the leavened, the yeast. If you leave him inside the body he will contaminate the body and he will destroy the body, the pernicious influence of this person has to be removed.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 (ESV) Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

So you need to live a life consistent with the new identity which is in Christ. This is the whole metaphor that is given to us.

## Our True Nature

(ESV) *To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints*

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (ESV) *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.*

So basically you can destroy the temple not only with disunity but also with unholiness and sin. So you need to be sanctified, the spirit dwells in you.

## Holiness of God

Isaiah 6:3-4 (ESV) *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.*

Church discipline is instituted based on the idea of the holiness of God. God is very holy. In Hebrew we don't have God very-very Holy. In the Hebrew when they want to emphasize something they repeat it one, two, three, so it is holy, holy, holy. Here we will say really fantastically holy, different adjectives but then they will say it three times, holy, holy, holy. So God is absolutely holy. Now what does holy mean. Three nuances of holiness for us to understand.

### 1. In a class of his own

As far as God is concerned he is in a class of His own. Holy ..... 'separate.' It comes from an ancient word that meant, 'to cut,' or 'to separate. Means uniquely holy, no rivals, no competition, no comparison. So when we say God is holy it means he is incomparable. You cannot compare him, He is God

Exodus 15:11 (ESV) *Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?*

So basically he is cut above everybody else. He is above everybody else.

1 Samuel 2:2 (ESV) *There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.*

So it is a comparative adjective, that means you are far above in the class of your own.

### 2. Morally Pure

Isaiah 6:3-5 (ESV) And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Here is Isaiah immediately having allergic reaction recoiling because God is so holy compared to the holiness of God, he is going to die. So here basically God is not only a cut above everyone else but he is also morally pure.

### 3. Holy in every aspect of His nature and character

Which means not only God is love, justice, hope, mercy, power, knowledge and we think holiness is one of his attributes, actually it is not. Holiness is basically here. He is in a class of his own as far as love is concerned, as far as justice is concerned, as far as mercy is concerned, as far as power is concerned, as far as knowledge is concerned. All these sort of things holiness is like an adjective. It describes in superlative terms all the attributes of God. For example, we have a two-star hotel, then we have got intercontinental five-star hotel then you have got the seven-star hotel. The stars show us what class and how much money you got. As far as God is concerned, it is like God's Hotel that has plenty of stars that is what is trying to give you that kind of idea. So the thing is that a lot of people nowadays they tend to take focus on one aspect of God and we can see this in the worship songs. We can see this in the younger people, the younger culture. The older people has a better sense of God's holiness. This is somewhat lost in the younger generation. They think that Jesus is our pal and they focus on the fact that God is love. This is one attribute. So if you focus on love, love becomes very big. If love becomes very-very big holiness becomes very-very small, but the problem is that when holiness becomes very-very small love also becomes very-very small, it destroys itself. Let me give you an example.

Drew Dyck wrote How We Forgot the Holiness of God in Christianity Today

*"The cruel irony of choosing God's love over his holiness is that we end up losing both. The affection of a familiar, buddy deity isn't worth much. Only the love of the Lord of heaven and earth, who dwells in unapproachable light, is truly awe-inspiring. When we lose sight of God's greatness, his love loses meaning. "*

### The Holiness of God

The depth of the love is directly proportional to the stature of the person loving you. So therefore if you lose the holiness of God then you lose the love of God even, because God is such a buddy to you, you lost the actual awe of his great love and then when you talk about He getting on the cross, God becomes like an ordinary friend who is willing to sacrifice His life. When you see how great God

is and how Holy He is and yet He will come on the cross then that blows your mind. So that is why holiness needs to come, so the more holy we perceive God to be the more love and this love is intensified. So therefore we see the holiness of God through the pages of scripture. You can see breakthrough off and on, you can see burning bush, God is like hiding himself. Off and on there will be explosion here and explosion there just to remind you that God is there. So that you are not going to take him for granted, you are not going to think that he is just your buddy. So you got a burning bush then you have got Isaiah 6 who sees God in his great splendor. Then you have got Nadab and Abihu who simply offer sacrifice and then the fire of God came and burned them up. So after that everybody was careful when they offer their sacrifice. Then we have Ananias and Sapphira, they lied to apostles and immediately they died. Church discipline very fast in those days, on the spot died. So we see a breaking out of God. Uzzah when the oxen slipped that were carrying the ark of God, he touched and on the spot he died. Moses hiding in the cleft was hiding, he cannot face the glory of God. He is so powerful that he cannot see. So off and on we see God's holiness erupting out to give us a sense of awe of who we are actually worshipping. Then we see the Passover where the holiness of God and the love of God are drawn. Holiness of God was demanding the sacrifice of the firstborn son and yet the love of God the sacrifice of firstborn son is the blood over the doorway.

If we look at the tabernacle. The holiness of God is inside the holy of holies. The love of God is where there were sacrifices. So you can see in the tabernacle, the love of God sacrificed every day for your sin and you got the holiness of God. Two in one picture together. So here is the cross. The cross is a perfect blend of God's holiness and God's love. You cannot talk about the cross in sentimental terms only. You got to have the holiness of God, otherwise if you don't have the holiness of God you won't appreciate the love of God.

### **CROSSOVER PROJECT:**

When they actually presented the case of Pastor Kong Hee and his wife, Sun Ho, in the court. They said this is a Crossover Project where we use to evangelize the gospel, we love the lost. How can you love the lost so much so that you compromise the integrity of God? Where the world looks at you and Sun Ho is now the senior pastor of City Harvest Church, Singapore. How does that magnify the glory of God? This is absolutely wrong. The bible says

1 Timothy 2:9 (ESV) *likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire,*

The idea here is respectability and not sexually provocative like every other Hollywood starlet. So therefore we are now starting to lose the holiness of God because He is Holy we are to be holy too and then other churches will be like "See no evil, hear no evil and say no evil." The problem with other church is that it affects all of you, it may not involve your church but you are involved in the community of faith. They will look at you with the same eyes and so therefore we as a church should learn to have some sort of cooperation to control such things.

The Idea of accountability in church is very important. The idea of accountability in church is I point to you, you point to me, everybody pointing at each other that is not accountability is. Church discipline is a kind of accountability that ensures that the body is holy. Sometimes you will get fights, they are because we have disagreements and because somebody has sinned but the idea is not to point the finger at the sin but to help each other grow in holiness, because all of us are guilty of sin. So therefore it should be before we point we should look in the mirror and look at ourselves. The whole idea is

Galatians 6:1 (ESV) **Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.**

The mirror is to show that when you start pointing you better point to yourself first. The point is to help each other maintain holiness. Alcoholics Anonymous is based on Christian principles and the whole idea is that they all have the problem with addiction to alcohol. It is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve the common problem to recover from alcoholism. So therefore we are like that. Our common problem is sin. We have to help each other to overcome this common problem of sin. We are in a fellowship of sinners. If you understand that then when we come to our groups when we start sharing what we do is we are helping each other. Accountability is that I am sharing with you I have got this sexual sin and you may have it too, you help me and keep me accountable, I am struggling I cannot do this well, I fell the other day. Then you come and say brother let me help you, I will bring you up and make sure you are not tempted. So in this idea of church accountability, so we guide, we teach, we coach, we help each other overcome our sin.

### **Who do we apply discipline to?**

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 (ESV) **I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 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 is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.**

Basically it does not apply to non-Christians, it applies to Christians.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 (ESV) **For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”**

These are the verses which tell us who we actually discipline in church and this is something that we must do. First of all, it must be a Christian or it must be someone who says he is a Christian.

The second point is that it must be an outward sin, everybody knows about it. Paul never tells you to go and look for everybody who has done sin. He is asking for outward sins where we can see;

immorality, greed, idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler. We can tell all these things out. If you are coming to church and you are swindling, church discipline should be imposed on you.

### Steps Taken:

Matthew 18:15-17 (ESV) **15** If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **16** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **17** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a gentile and a tax collector.

There are four steps here.

1. **Take it to him personally:** When you got something wrong with somebody you owe it to the person to bring to him directly and then settle among yourselves. Sharing it with others escalate the disaster all over the place.
2. **Take others along:** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. This is taken from Old Testament, Deuteronomy.
3. **Take it to the church:** It is telling to your church leaders.
4. **Excommunication:** It means you basically separate him.

### Nature of Church Discipline:

Redemptive: Why do we do this? When we do this to someone who has done something wrong. It is not like that we have caught that person with the sin, it is redemptive, which means the whole idea is that you talk to the person in order to change behavior to readjust so that they grow in godliness. All discipline is redemptive; it is never retributive. Punishment is left to God. We all have this problem of sin, so therefore we are doing church discipline in order to help each other change our behavior to grow in godliness.

Corporate: You cannot do it by yourself. There is no human person authorized. Even in this church there are two elders and we also sometime include the board. So when you want to kick somebody out, everyone plays their part in it together so that there are no mistakes done there. It is done corporately not because you hate the person but because you want the person to grow.

Prophetic: It is prophetic because it takes God's truth and shines the truth into error so that the error will be pointed out and the church will be sanctified. You must shine truth to the error. So whenever you do church discipline it is a prophetic function.



Proleptic function: The judgment that you have nowadays is basically a foretaste of judgment that is to come one day. The fact that you actually face judgment in the church reminds you that one day there is bigger judgment coming from God.

Who did the greater crime amongst Kong Hee or Ananias and Saphira?

Ananias and Saphira sold their one house and told a lie to the apostles about the price. Kong Hee took the 50 million Singaporean dollar and financed his wife's singing career through all hidden accounts. Kong Hee is worse but he is still alive. So actually God is very-very merciful. Ananias and Saphira did something far less problematic, there is just hypocrisy. For their simple lie God struck them died. God was intent in preserving his dignity and holiness. Yet today we have people who steal huge amounts and they go to jail and say I am at peace. The worst thing is that God is not saying that you cannot make mistakes but you have to go to prison and say I am sorry and then the integrity of the church, the holiness of the church is preserved.

1 Cor 5 :2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?

Instead of mourning we have his mentor Phil Pringle of C3 Church. This is what he wrote,

*"Jesus was accused of breaking the law and breaching the Sabbath and the law of blasphemy. Paul was accused of treason. Peter was imprisoned for preaching, which was deemed against the law.*

*We sometimes have sanitized Christian history. **But when Jesus was treated like a criminal and executed, his disciples fled.** We must learn from these moments that though people make mistakes, it's not a reason to leave them. **When people are unjustly accused or unfairly treated, it's not a time to depart.** "*

He is saying that Kong Hee is like Jesus, unfairly treated. This is absolutely horrible, he is already convicted, so you need to come and mourn. He is doing like what Corinthians were doing. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?

There are some legal issues for people who are doing to institute church discipline. There was a very famous case of Marian Guinn vs the Church of Christ Collinsville Oklahoma (1984-1989). She was in the church for a while and she had an affair with somebody in town. The affair was found out by the elders. The elders of the church approached her and said, look please repent. She refused to repent and continue to have the sexual affair. So they told her if you continue with this sexual affair we have no choice, we have to tell the church, we have to institute church discipline against you. So what she did she was afraid of that and then she withdrew her membership and they said resigning is not good enough we want you to be redeemed, even though you resign your membership you are still a member of our flock and so they announced to everybody that she is doing this. She took them to court based on invasion of privacy. The court found for the plaintiff which is found for her. This is what her lawyer said

*"It doesn't matter if she was fornicating up and down the street," Mr. Frasier said, arguing that the church had no business getting involved.*

So people think they have their rights, I live in the world, I can screw anybody I want and the church has got no right to kick me out. So this is the court judgment and elders were fined 390,000 dollars divided among three of them.

Oklahoma supreme court overturned that, arguing that if you are a member of the church you are bound to ecclesiastical law which means when we have church discipline you agree to be a member, you signed the contract to be a member and you are bound by that. They had another retrial, when she withdrew her membership they still went on and discipline on her. Once you withdraw from your membership you are no longer under ecclesiastical law, you are non-Christian. The elders didn't do a good job then by pursuing her after her withdrawal. So the bottom line is that you should discipline your members not the ones who are not your church member.

Faith Community Baptist Church runs into another way. They have two members of the church who works in the church office. They both had an affair and she got pregnant. They only found out she got pregnant when the thing started to show and when Lawrence Kong found out she was fired. She complained to the Ministry of Manpower and the court found the church guilty, because they unfairly sacked someone without benefits and they awarded the person 7000 dollars in back pay for her maternity leave. The church was not wrong, because when you work in church office you represent the church, you should be a Christian and you should live at a higher standards and you go and have sex with the other person and you are unrepentant. So the church has the right to terminate your thing but then they used the law against the church as it were.

We are saying the law creep in to actually infringe upon the rights of the church, but at least in America based on the Oklahoma case they recognized ecclesiastical law.