

Purpose:

- Guide conversation
- Encourage discovery
- Keep focus on Christ
- Help participants speak more than the leader

Day 1 Afternoon

Day Theme: Dissonance Between Faith and Practice

One memorable sentence: What happens when the church actually tolerates scandalous sin instead of dealing with it?

Poll: What is the main reason we sometimes fail to do the right thing even when we know what it is? A. Fear of what others will think. B. Lack of willpower or discipline. C. Selfish desires outweighing logic. D. It is easier to simply ignore the problem.

Opening Engagement: When riding the subway in the United Kingdom, travelers are continually reminded by an audio message to “Mind the Gap”—the dangerous space between the train and the platform. In our spiritual lives, there is often a dangerous “Knowing-Doing Gap” between what we know we should do and what we actually do.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, NKJV) “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.”

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- The sin is public: “reported commonly.”
- The severity of the sin: “not so much as named among the Gentiles.”
- The church's reaction: “ye are puffed up” (arrogant/proud).
- The missing reaction: “have not rather mourned.”
- Paul's expected solution: the offender should be “taken away from among you.”

Guided Discussion:

- Why do you think a church community might actually be “puffed up” or proud when tolerating a scandalous sin? (Allow discussion)
- What does it mean for a church family to “mourn” over the sin of a member rather than just gossip about it? (Invite multiple responses)
- How does tolerating obvious, unrepentant sin affect the outside world's view of the church?
- When is “tolerance” actually a lack of love? (Ask follow-up: How can we balance showing grace to struggling people while not excusing destructive behavior?)

Discovery Insight: The church in Corinth was tolerating behavior that even pagan society rejected, perhaps confusing extreme leniency with grace. True compassion, however, does not ignore sin; it addresses it in order to bring healing, protect the community, and restore the individual.

Christ Connection: Jesus calls His church to reflect His holy character to the world, offering transformative grace that rescues us from sin rather than just excusing us to stay in it.

Life Response: Identify one area where there is a "knowing-doing gap" in your own life today, and ask God for the courage to close it.

Encouragement Bridge: A scandalous sin is happening in the church, and nobody seems to care! Let's explore how Paul handles this elephant in the sanctuary.

Day 2

Day Theme: Redemptive Discipline

One memorable sentence: Is tolerating sin really a sign of compassion?

Poll: How should a community ideally handle a member who refuses to stop a highly destructive behavior? A. Quietly ask them to leave to avoid a scene. B. Publicly expose them so others learn a lesson. C. Lovingly confront and remove them until they repent. D. Ignore the behavior and just keep praying for them.

Opening Engagement: Confrontation is incredibly uncomfortable. Most of us would much rather look the other way than address a serious moral failure in someone we care about. But sometimes, looking the other way is the most unloving thing we can do.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, NKJV) "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- The authority invoked: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- The setting: "when ye are gathered together."
- The severe action: "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh."
- The ultimate goal: "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Guided Discussion:

- Why does Paul insist this disciplinary action be taken when the church is "gathered together" rather than having a leader do it secretly? (Allow discussion)
- What do you think it means to "deliver such an one unto Satan"? (Invite multiple responses)
- How does the phrase "that the spirit may be saved" completely change our understanding of church discipline?
- How is biblical discipline fundamentally different from punishment or revenge? (Ask follow-up: How can a church ensure its discipline feels redemptive rather than just judgmental?)

Discovery Insight: True discipline is remedial, not punitive. By removing the unrepentant person from the spiritual protection of the church, the community takes a firm, loving action designed to wake the sinner up to their danger and bring them back to the path of salvation.

Christ Connection: Jesus, the Great Shepherd, uses firm, loving discipline to rescue His wandering sheep from eternal loss, proving that true love is willing to confront what is deadly.

Life Response: Pray for someone you know who is currently walking on a destructive path, asking God to use whatever means necessary to bring them to repentance and safety.

Encouragement Bridge: True love sometimes requires tough discipline. Let's see why ignoring the problem threatens the whole family.

Day 3

Day Theme: The Contagion of Sin

One memorable sentence: A little yeast ruins the whole batch of dough.

Poll: How does hidden sin in a group usually affect the rest of the members? A. It gradually lowers the moral standard for everyone. B. It causes secret divisions and mistrust. C. It makes people cynical or hypocritical. D. It doesn't affect anyone else; it's a private matter.

Opening Engagement: If you put a single drop of dark ink into a glass of pure water, the whole glass changes color. Paul uses a similar kitchen metaphor to explain how sin works in a community.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, NKJV) "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- A rebuke: "Your glorying is not good."
- A principle of nature: "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."
- A command: "Purge out therefore the old leaven."
- A theological reality: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."
- A call to action: "keep the feast... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Guided Discussion:

- Why is "leaven" (yeast) such a perfect illustration for how sin operates? (Allow discussion)
- What does "purging out the old leaven" look like in a practical, daily sense for a local church? (Invite multiple responses)
- How does knowing that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" motivate us to live differently?
- Are there any areas of "malice and wickedness" that we tolerate in our own lives because we think they are too small to matter? (Ask follow-up: How can we actively choose the bread of "sincerity and truth" this week?)

Discovery Insight: Sin is highly contagious; if left unaddressed, a little compromise silently infects the spiritual health of the entire community. Believers are called to a new life of sincerity because Christ has already paid the ultimate price for their freedom.

Christ Connection: Just as the blood of the Passover lamb provided rescue for Israel, Christ's sacrifice removes the condemnation of our past and empowers us to live a pure, unleavened life.

Life Response: Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart today and reveal any "hidden leaven" of malice, gossip, or compromise that needs to be purged.

Encouragement Bridge: Sin is contagious, but so is grace! Let's see how Paul protects the church's witness to the outside world.

Day 4

Day Theme: Protecting the Church's Witness

One memorable sentence: Stop suing your church family!

Poll: When Christians have a serious dispute, why do they sometimes end up in secular court?

A. They want to guarantee a financial win. B. They don't trust church leaders to be fair or competent. C. They want to publicly humiliate the other person. D. They forget they belong to the same spiritual family.

Opening Engagement: Imagine two brothers in a tight-knit family taking each other to court and airing all their dirty laundry in front of the whole town. What would the neighbors think of that family's love for one another?

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 6:1, 6-7, NKJV) "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? ... But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- Paul uses strong, shocked language: "Dare any of you..."
- The core issue: "brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers."
- Paul's verdict: "there is utterly a fault among you."
- Two radical questions: "Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"

Guided Discussion:

- Why is Paul so horrified that believers are taking their disputes to secular, pagan courts? (Allow discussion)
- How does suing a fellow believer damage the message of the gospel to the surrounding community? (Invite multiple responses)
- What does it take for a person to choose to "rather take wrong" or "be defrauded" instead of winning a lawsuit?
- How can a church build a healthy system for resolving conflicts and disputes internally? (Ask follow-up: How do you personally handle it when you feel a fellow believer owes you something?)

Discovery Insight: Taking disputes to corrupt secular courts destroys the church's witness to the world and betrays the family bond of believers. Paul argues it is a total spiritual defeat to sue a brother; it is better to suffer a personal loss than to publicly disgrace the name of Jesus.

Christ Connection: Jesus willingly allowed Himself to be wronged, defrauded, and unjustly condemned by secular courts so that we could be reconciled to God and to one another.

Life Response: Choose to let go of a minor offense or grievance you hold against someone today instead of demanding your rights or payback.

Encouragement Bridge: You may have conflicts or a messy past, but Jesus has given you a brand-new identity. Let's look at that transformation.

Day 5

Day Theme: A New Identity

One memorable sentence: You may have a messy past, but you have a brand-new identity!

Poll: What is the best way to break a deeply ingrained bad habit? A. Strict rules and massive willpower. B. Removing yourself completely from the environment. C. Embracing a totally new identity. D. Having a strict accountability partner.

Opening Engagement: Society often defines people by their worst mistakes or their darkest past. But God looks at a person with a terrible history and speaks a completely new, flawless reality over them.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, NKJV) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers... nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- A severe warning: "unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom."
- A comprehensive list of societal vices.
- A critical past-tense statement: "And such were some of you."
- Three transformative actions: "washed," "sanctified," "justified."
- The source of the change: "in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Guided Discussion:

- Why is the word "were" the most important word in verse 11? (Allow discussion)
- What is the difference between being "washed," "sanctified," and "justified"? (Invite multiple responses)
- How does remembering that we were rescued from our own mess keep us from looking down on people who are still struggling with sin?
- When you feel condemned by your past mistakes, how does this verse change your perspective of yourself? (Ask follow-up: How can you help a fellow believer see their new identity today?)

Discovery Insight: The gospel doesn't just forgive our past; it completely rewrites our identity. The believers in Corinth came from dark, messy backgrounds, but the Spirit of God gave them a brand-new, holy status.

Christ Connection: Jesus takes our filthy, unrighteous record upon Himself and freely clothes us in His perfect, sanctified righteousness, changing forever who we are.

Life Response: When you feel tempted or condemned by your past today, say out loud, "I am washed, I am sanctified, I am justified in Jesus."

Encouragement Bridge: Because your identity has changed, the way you treat your own body changes too.

Day 6

Day Theme: The Temple of the Holy Spirit

One memorable sentence: Your body is not your own; it was bought with a high price.

Poll: What does modern society tell us is the primary purpose of our physical bodies? A. Personal pleasure and comfort. B. Achieving peak health and fitness. C. Expressing our individual identity. D. Attracting others and gaining status.

Opening Engagement: The ancient Greco-Roman world believed that the spiritual and the physical were completely separate—that what you did with your physical body didn't affect your spiritual life at all. Paul completely shattered that illusion.

Read the Text: (Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, NKJV) "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- A direct command: "Flee fornication."
- A profound metaphor: "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost."
- A statement of ownership: "ye are not your own."
- The reason for the ownership: "bought with a price."
- The final instruction: "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit."

Guided Discussion:

- Why does Paul command believers to "flee" rather than try to fight or reason with sexual temptation? (Allow discussion)
- What does the metaphor of a "temple" imply about how we should treat our physical bodies? (Invite multiple responses)
- How does knowing you were "bought with a price" change the way you view your physical choices, from what you eat to what you watch?
- How can we transform the command to "flee immorality" from a legalistic rule into an act of grateful worship? (Ask follow-up: What does it practically mean to "glorify God in your body" this week?)

Discovery Insight: The ultimate antidote to immorality is the realization that God's Spirit literally dwells within us. Because Christ paid the ultimate price for us, our bodies belong to Him, and honoring God with our physical choices is a sacred act of worship.

Christ Connection: Jesus gave up His own physical body on the cross to purchase ours, reclaiming us from the slave market of sin to be His sacred, beloved dwelling place.

Life Response: Make one physical choice today—whether regarding health, purity, or even getting enough rest—that actively honors your body as God's temple.

Encouragement Bridge: Holiness isn't an option; it's our high calling. Let's honor God with our whole lives today!

Day 7 Summary

5 Weekly Takeaways:

- The Knowing-Doing Gap: True compassion does not ignore scandalous sin; it addresses it to protect the church and restore the individual.
- Redemptive Discipline: Church discipline is never about revenge or punishment; it is a loving rescue mission to wake the sinner up.
- The Contagion of Sin: Unaddressed sin acts like leaven, quietly infecting and destroying the spiritual health of the entire community.

- A New Identity: No matter how dark our past, the name of Jesus and the Spirit of God washes, sanctifies, and justifies us completely.
- The Temple of God: Our physical bodies are sacred temples purchased by the blood of Christ; honoring God with our bodies is an act of loving worship.

Final Reflection Question: Looking back over the challenges in Corinth, in what specific area of your life do you need the Holy Spirit to help you close the gap between knowing what is right and actually doing it? (Pause for responses)

Closing Appeal: God calls His church to a beautiful standard of purity—not to burden us, but to heal us and make us a shining light to a broken world. Let us invite the Holy Spirit to purge out the old leaven from our hearts and our community, honoring the incredible price Jesus paid to make us His own.