

In our first session on this topic we established some clear Biblical teaching on this topic. Instead of me trying to re-explain, let's just go straight to the Scripture and read it once more:

Matthew 18:15-17 – The objective is to separate a person from the sin in their life. We do so through a process of interaction and influence. We want to show them the Truth. We want to restore them back to God's way – but if they fail to separate from sin – they become socially different to us.

II Thessalonians 3:6-15 – He is not an enemy, he is a brother. But he is a brother is not living the will of God in his life. So, do not associate with him." "Keep away from him" Will there be shame? If it is done properly, yes. But also with love, with hope, with open arms in his penitence.

I Corinthians 5:1-5,9-13 – This was a tense situation but the person made his choice. God's people had to do their part: "removed" "not to associate" "not even to eat"- In hope of saving him.

We went on to discuss that this is GOD's WILL – and any level of excuses or exceptions we list, or concerns, are only relevant if we have Biblical pattern to back it up. I thought about rehashing the excuses people make and measuring our sometime lack of willingness to dis-fellowship someone with how adamant we are that other people leave unlawful marriages... etc. I won't pursue. The Word stands on its own merits. Souls are at stake – the sinner – and ours – to do what the Bible says.

This is a very hard process. This challenges us to the core. Why would we do this? Well, last time we looked at I Corinthians 5:5 – in hopes of saving them from their sin, God's way. You may not think it will work. It may not have worked in your family yet, but we must trust God's ways.

Tonight I want to introduce a second answer the question of WHY – **I Corinthians 5:6-8: LEAVEN**

- Your boasting is not good – it was almost as if they were proud of how much they stuck with this guy.
- A little leaven leavens the whole lump – Leaven interacts with sugar in dough and releases carbon dioxide that permeates the entire lump and changes it on a chemical and then physical level.
- Clean out the old leaven – if people are living in sin, you want separation from people of faith! Not that we exit the world (**v10**) but our fellowship, our family, our brotherhood, our families.
- Just as you are in fact unleavened - oooh, I like this! It speaks to who we are, what we are, our purpose! We have been made alive together in Jesus. We have been purified of the sin in our lives. Sin still occurs but we repel it, we beg Christ to take it away, and he does. How is there room among us for people who bring leaven in and want to keep it in?
- For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed – Jesus died folks. He died. His blood spread across every house and every church who would obey and honor God. He became our sacrifice. What does that make sin to us? Detestable. The reason our savior bled – to rid us of it.
- Therefore let us celebrate the feast – Don't we celebrate that? As a church? A family?
 - How? With sin? With the influence of malice and wickedness among us, by those who once left sin for Jesus? NO WAY!
 - We celebrate with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth – **I John 1:5-7** – fellowship in Truth, in Christ, in Sinless living.

-- Some may say – there is another way! I think our situation is different – (**5:1-2,6**). Don't be arrogant – thinking your way is better – and don't forget **5:6-8** – What He did. Who we are. And how leaven is not good, not safe, not right in our inner circle of fellowship and life and purpose.

The Bible gets very specific as to the clear ways that leaven attacks and impacts the lump of dough into which it is allowed to exist and grow.... (3 Specific Ways)

I. ASSOCIATION

- a. **I Cor. 15:33** – Corrupts, spoils, good morals. Even the world knows that. We should beware.
- b. **I Cor. 8:10** – One can “strengthen” the conscience of another to do something they would never do. Strengthen is sarcasm here. Really, one destroys the conscience of another with their choices.
- c. Attendance habits, dirty jokes, immoral acts, materialism, lack of spiritual interest. These things can strengthen others to do the same. Make it acceptable...
- d. Didn’t really get it until Hannah... She trusts those I fellowship. These families. In our homes, lives, restaurants. She trusts that what they say and do, allow their kids to say and do is good. I associate with them, so she can absorb and associate whatever they do.
- e. I will not allow any so-called brother, family or otherwise, who is not repenting and obeying to be closely associated with my family... she will absorb it as acceptable and emulate.

II. DOCTRINE

- a. **Matt. 16:6, 12** --- Just as much as choices, teaching of people can serve as leaven as well. The Pharisees teaching had to be monitored, refuted, and blocked out... for once it took hold it could influence all!
- b. And that is why Bible study at home and in worship is so needed. Satan has taken many groups out of the fold of God’s protection by leading men to teach what is not Scripture and having others accept it.
- c. **Gal. 5:4, 7-9** –Stopped studying and praying in Truth/started listening to error. Too weak to refute.
- d. So we openly discuss doctrinal issues, we explore and sit down open Bible when differences arise. Easier to say it is of little consequences and let it grow... *but naivety equals conformity... maybe to error.*
- e. **II Tim. 2:16-17** – It is not just lifestyles that influence, but words. Spread like an infectious disease.
- f. Words, beliefs, speech influences, Challenge error when you hear it, study it, protect this!

III. HYPOCRISY

- a. **Luke 12:1** -- Maybe the most dangerous element of leaven of all: (since so well hidden)
- b. Many impenitent sinners are joined to memberships like this one and from casual outside observance seem very devoted (worship regularly, sing aloud, warm handshakes and hugs)... The Pharisees looked spiritually stellar. But behind it may be immorality, profanity, greed, bad attitudes, etc.
- c. **I John 2:4-6** --- But we know the Truth. What we say aloud, how we look, where we sit, is not righteousness. But how we live His commandments in worship, homes, jobs, lives.
- d. What I’m getting at is that leaven can remain hidden until after it has already spread to the conduct of others. We get so caught up in numbers ... 200 tonight, this family was here. Things are great.
- e. *In fact, we owe it to one another to dig deeper, build closer relationships, find out how their life is going, not just how often they use Sunday night to worship... Because hypocrisy, when observed by others as accepted among the church, will cause others to fall into the same.*
- f. **I John 3:7-8** – Those who look righteous? No. but those who practice righteousness!
- g. God would not call faithless hearts “no big deal” as long as they come to worship or look the part. And, we do a disservice to our friends, and increase danger to our number if we applaud for looks over substance. Let us challenge one another, not to look like a Christian, (easy to do), but be a Christian!

Conclusion: **I Corinthians 5:5-8** – There it is. That is what this is about. Getting the lost sheep back and protecting the sheep that are still in the fold.