

***Your Life in Christ Should
Not Be a Soap Opera
Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians***



1 Corinthians

- *A Little Bit of Background*
- *Dear Corinth*
- *Divisions*
- *Sexual Immorality (part 1)*



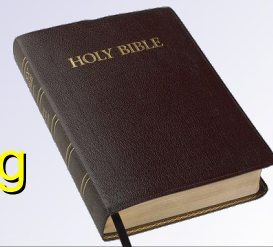
Division in the Church

- Let's get back into the text...
 - *Very concisely*, what have we discussed about how Paul opened his letter to the church in Corinth—just the “Dear Corinth” part?
 - *Very concisely*, what have we discussed about how Paul specifically and pointedly addressed issues of divisions within the church in Corinth?
 - What did Paul say in the sections you read in your groups about the distinctives that the Corinthians were using to judge themselves better than others?
 - What did he say about perceived wisdom?
 - What did he say about perceived power?
 - What did he say about authorities and leaders?



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 - *Very concisely*, what have we discussed about how Paul specifically and pointedly addressed issues of divisions within the church in Corinth?
 - What did Paul say in the sections you read in your groups?
 - How did the sections progress in tone?
 - GROUP ONE: 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5
 - GROUP TWO: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16
 - GROUP THREE: 1 Corinthians 3:1-23
 - GROUP FOUR: 1 Corinthians 4:1-17
 - Please read how Paul *ended* his diatribe against their divisions in 4:14-16
 - What would *your* take on that have been, if you had been sitting in Corinth, listening to this letter being read?
 - Read vs. 4:17
 - How might this have been a comfort to the church in Corinth?
 - What if Timothy was the one reading this letter to them?

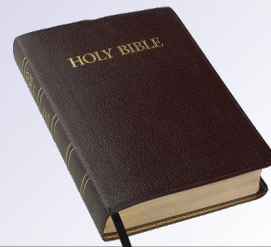


Division in the Church



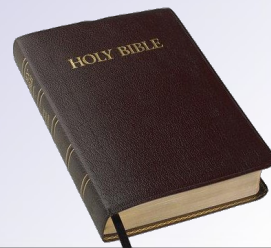
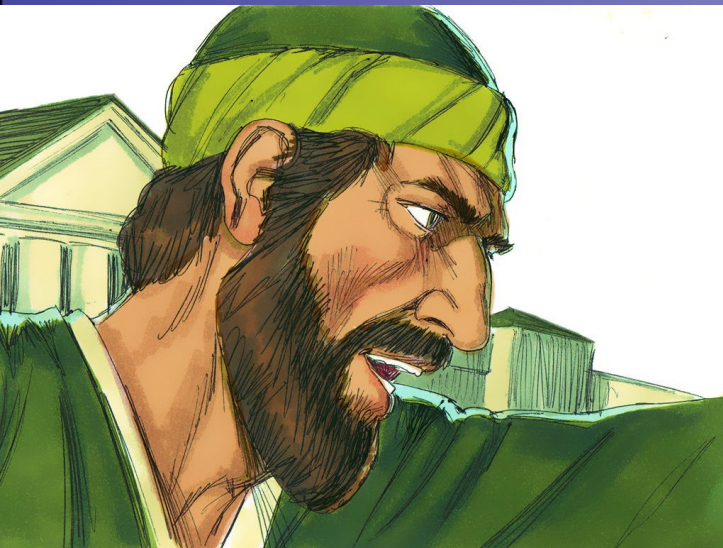
Funky little teaching moment...

- How would you summarize Paul's take on dealing with these divisions so far?
 - What details stick with you from these first four chapters of 1 Corinthians?
 - How can we apply them to where we're at as a church (in Peoria, in America, etc.) today?



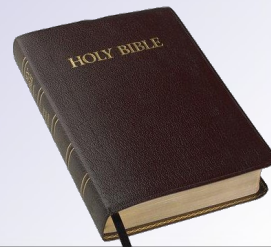
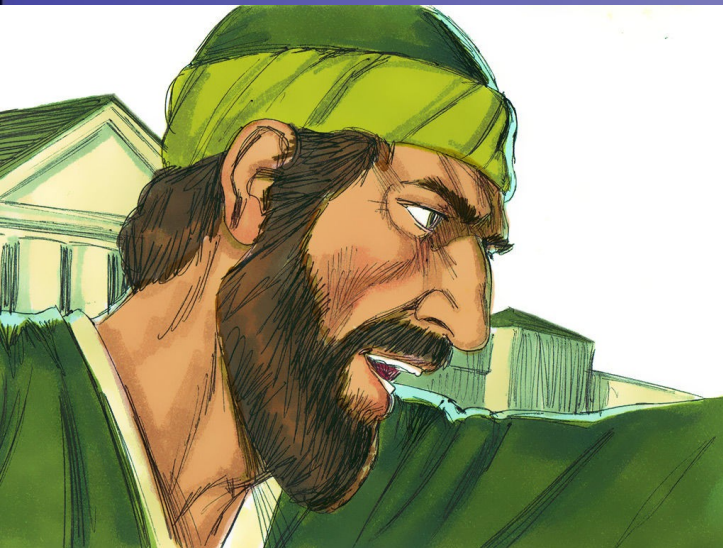
Division in the Church

- Let's get back into the text...
 - But Paul's not done with this yet
 - Read vs. 18
 - How would this have been a point-counterpoint to what he'd just written to them in vs. 17?
 - How does he follow that up in vs. 19-20?
 - How does he follow *that* up with a rhetorical question in vs. 21?
 - Why is he apparently abandoning his pastoral heart for them at this point in the letter?



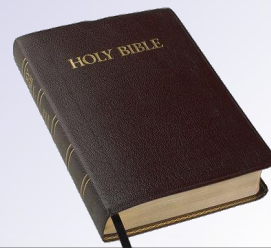
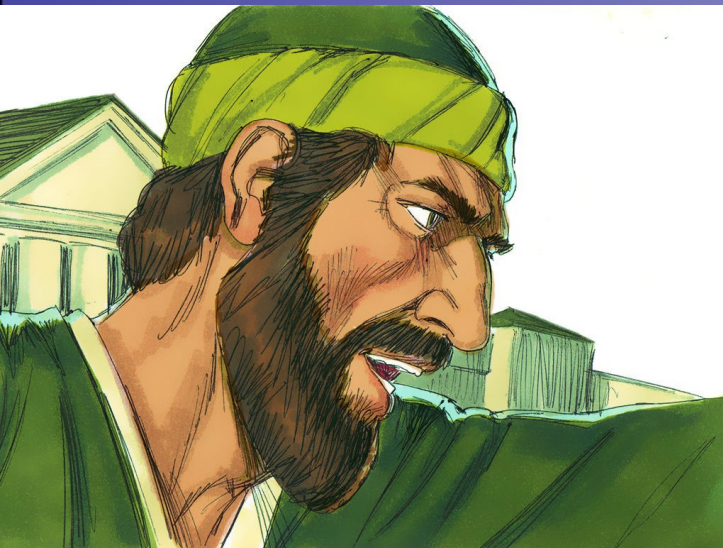
Division in the Church

- Let's get back into the text...
 - But Paul's not done with this yet
 - Paul's apparently distracted by his frustration and moves on to address sexual immorality in chapter 5 (or, at least, that's how *most* casual readers take the thematic shift from “division” to “sexual immorality” here —but what *else* might be going on?)



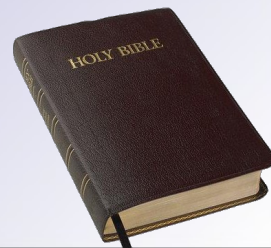
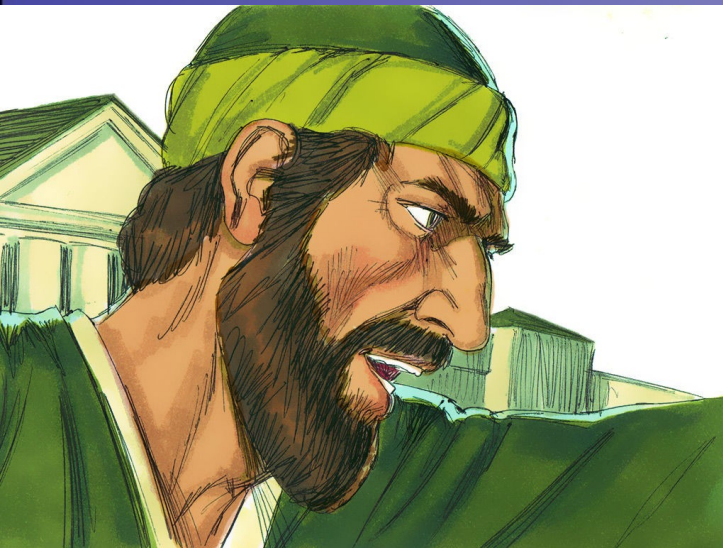
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 - Read vs. 5:1
 - What "sexual immorality"
(literally, "πορνεία" or "porneia," from a Greek root originally meaning "to sell yourself" the same way that a prostitute does)
(why would this term have evolved to be a snapshot of pretty much *any* sexually illicit activity?)



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 - Read vs. 5:1
 - What “sexual immorality” does Paul describe here as an example of the Corinthian church's arrogance—and why he might have to come to them with a whip?



Division in the Church



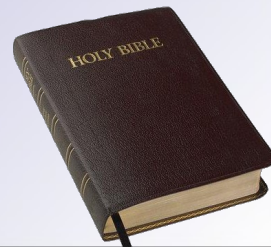
Funky little teaching moment...

- In 1997, the USA Network aired a made-for-TV movie, “*My Stepson, My Lover*,” with this as its basic theme
 - Multiple reviews of the era (and since) have called it shallow and pointless, but worth watching because of the steamy sex scenes between its sexy co-stars
 - How have we as a culture actually gotten even *more* morally corrupt than *Corinth* today?

(NOTE: This movie came out 23 years ago...
...and a 2007 study showed that sexual content on free network TV during “prime time” hours had increased by 53% since then...
...and a 2018 study showed that sexual content on free network TV during “prime time” hours had increased by 421% since then...
...and *none* of that factors in cable channels or premium or streaming channels that don't have the same strictures for programming...)



MY STEPSON, MY LOVER

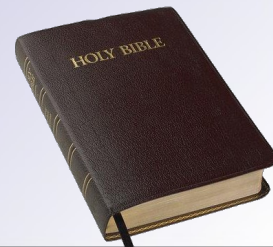


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 - Multiple reviews of the era (and since) have called it shallow and pointless, but worth watching because of the steamy sex scenes between its sexy co-stars
 - Increasingly, programming is not just including more sex, but is making the expression of the unabashed “sexual freedom” of its characters a main theme
 - Even the opening scene of the most recent iteration of “*Nancy Drew*” on TV featured a teenaged Nancy having casual, toss-away sex with a guy, showing her independence by explaining how she didn’t feel the need to get involved in a *relationship* with him...

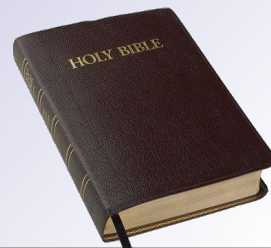


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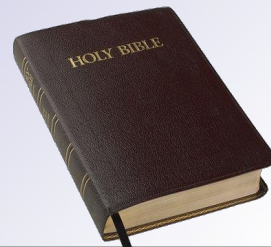
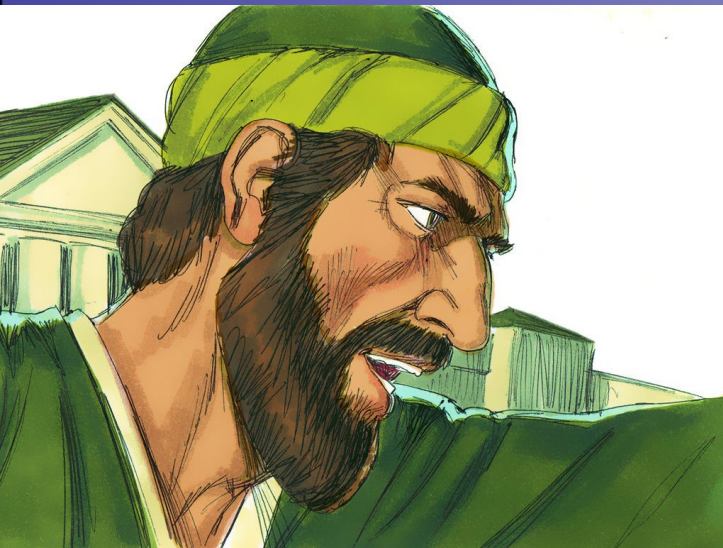
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 - Increasingly, programming is not just including more sex, but is making the expression of the unabashed “sexual freedom” of its characters a main theme
 - When a culture is *this* sold-out to embracing *any* kind of consensual sexuality as being empowering and affirming—and seeing *any* kind of disagreement with that as being inherently judging and unloving—then what way(s) would you expect to see the Church respond...?



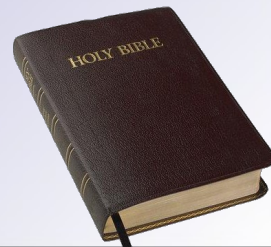
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 - Read vs. 5:1-2
 - Why do you think that this was the Corinthians' reaction to this person's sin?
 - Why would Christians be *proud* of this?
(you can cheat and look ahead to 6:12-13)



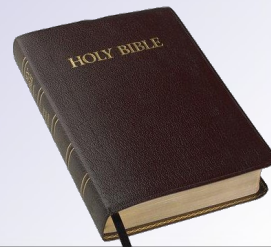
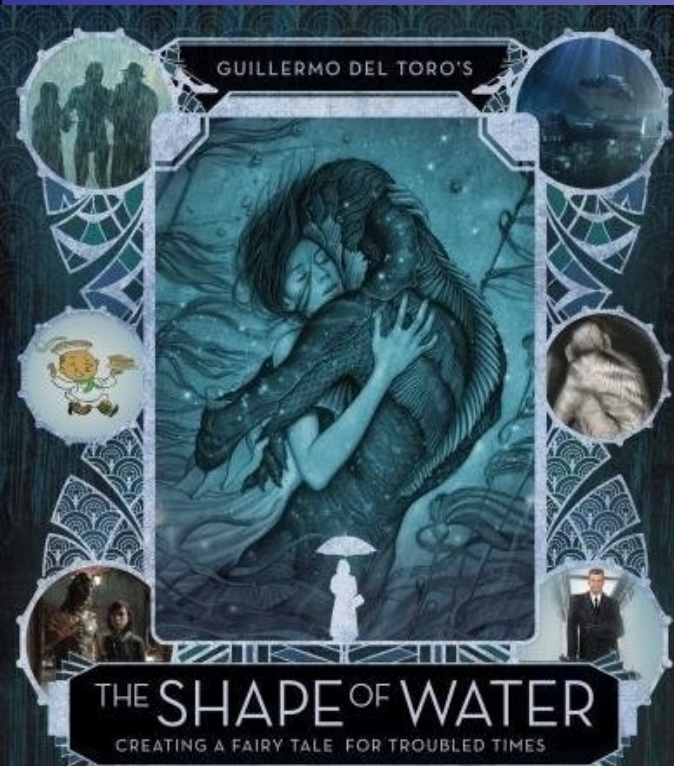
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 - Why do you think that this was the Corinthians' reaction to this person's sin?
 - Why would Christians be *proud* of this?
 - If they're not proud of the sin, *per se*, but rather of their grace *toward* that sin, isn't that a *good* thing?
 - How can we as Christians—in a society that absolutely believes that preaching anything short of “Do as thou wilt” is *hateful*—emulate the Corinthian church in this today? And why?



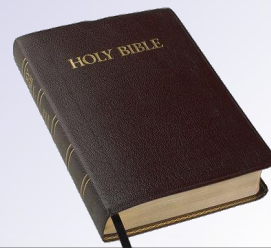
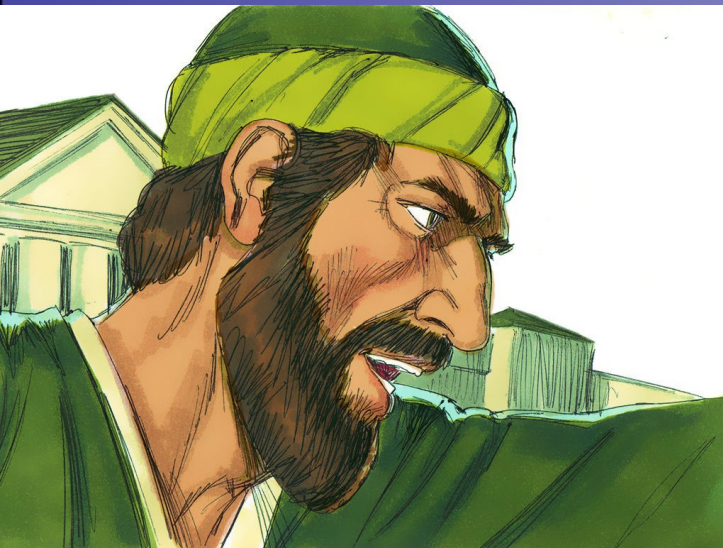
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 - Why do you think that this was the Corinthians' reaction to this person's sin?
 - What was Paul's reaction? (Read 5:3)
 - But wasn't it hateful judgmentalism in vs. 2 to break fellowship with someone merely they love someone that you don't think they should love? How does Paul conclude in vs. 3?
 - Isn't "passing judgment" on one another a *bad* thing? Why or why not?



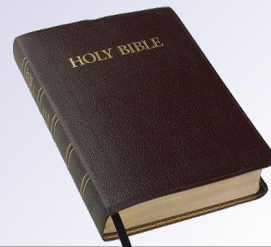
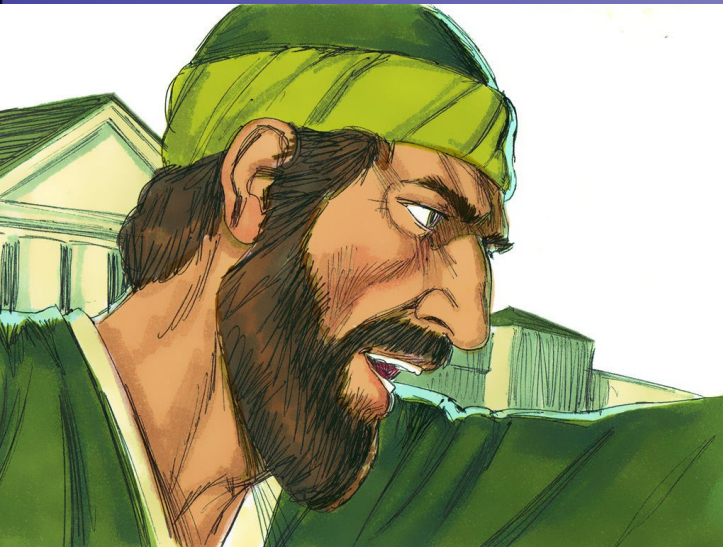
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 - But Paul's not done with this yet
 - Paul's apparently distracted by his frustration and moves on to address sexual immorality in chapter 5
 - Read vs. 5:1-3
 - Read vs. 5:4-5
 - What exactly were the Corinthians supposed to do?
(you can cheat and look ahead to 5:11)
(incidentally, before we get too caught up in thinking that this sort of drastic surgical action is *only* about *sexual* immorality, what *other* kinds of infectiously toxic, unrepentant sins are included in vs. 11?)



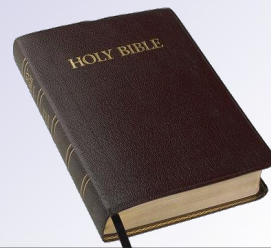
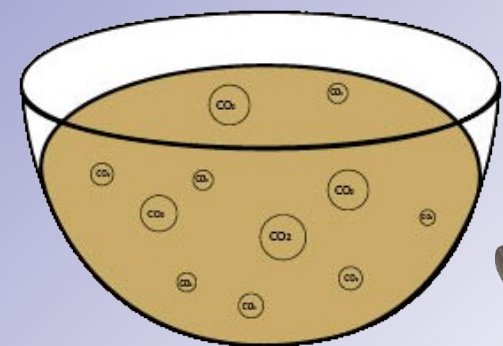
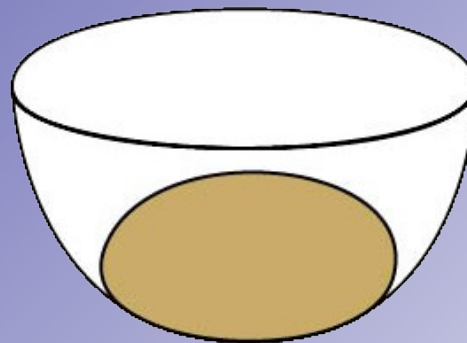
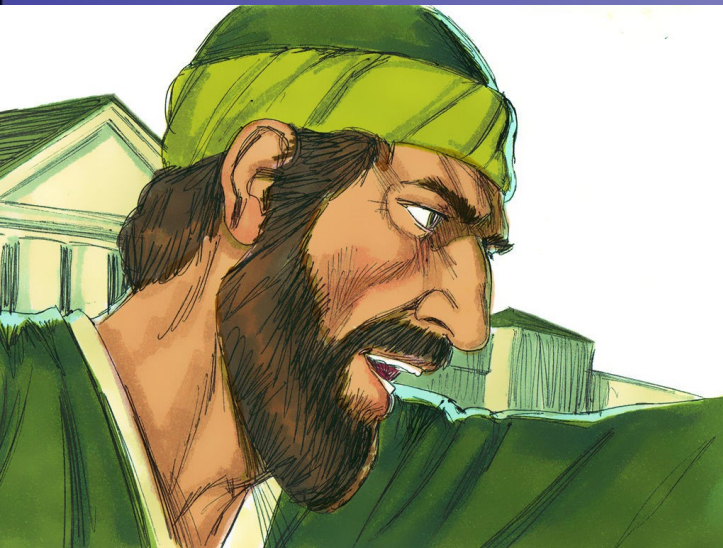
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 - Read vs. 5:4-5
 - What exactly were the Corinthians supposed to do?
 - What was the intended *point* of this discipline?
 - What's the danger of doing this surgical removal without remembering that it's supposed to be an appropriately loving act of grace?
 - What's the danger of *not* doing this surgical removal because you think that tolerating the sin is the appropriately loving act of grace?



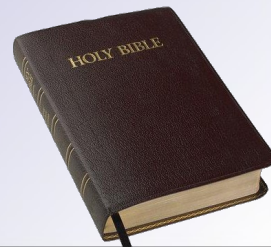
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 - Read vs. 5:1-3
 - Read vs. 5:4-5
 - Read vs. 5:6
 - Okay, somebody explain yeast to us
 - What is Paul arguing here with this analogy about the dangers of tolerating unrepentant sin as a means of showing God's grace?
 - Do we see any examples of that in our own contexts today?



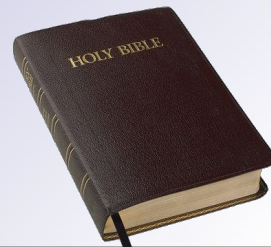
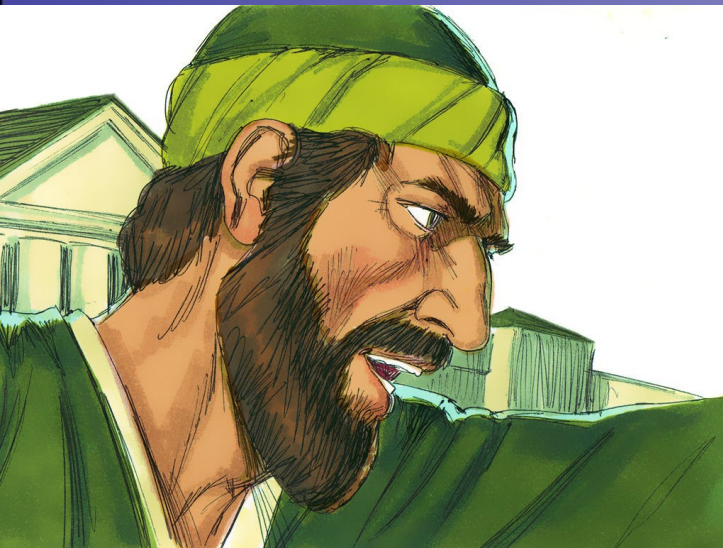
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 - Read vs. 5:1-3
 - Read vs. 5:4-5
 - Read vs. 5:6
 - Read vs. 5:7-8
 - Why is Paul using the analogy of Passover here?
 - What did Passover represent to the Jews?
 - How did good Jews *prepare* for the Passover?
 - How did *Jesus* use Passover as an analogy?
 - So if any of that *meant* anything to them, how should it apply here to tolerating sin?
 - But again, does Paul focus solely on *sexual* sin here? Why or why not?
 - What other sins does Paul seem to think we should similarly be uncomfortable with just tolerating?



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 - Read vs. 5:1-3
 - Read vs. 5:4-5
 - Read vs. 5:6
 - Read vs. 5:7-8
 - Read vs. 5:9
 - How would *you* tend to take this, if Paul had written it to *you*, or if *you* had been in Corinth?
 - How do churches today tend to juggle “tolerance vs. intolerance” of sins in the world around us?
 - Stereotypically fundamentalist churches
 - Stereotypically evangelical churches
 - Stereotypically liberal churches



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 - Read vs. 5:4-5
 - Read vs. 5:6
 - Read vs. 5:7-8
 - Read vs. 5:9-10
 - Is Paul arguing that we should be judgmental toward worldly non-Christians who sin? Why or why not?
 - If not, then why do so many churches spend so much time *doing* that?
 - What's the functional difference (if any) between being judgmental and caustic vs. being discerning and consistent where the non-Christian world is concerned?

