

**Postcards from Corinth - Part 3**  
**The Results of a Forgotten Identity.**  
**1 Cor. 5:1-6:20**  
**May 11, 2025**

**I. Sexuality: DEALING with a Corinthian "SITUATION". (5:1-13)**

- A. CONFRONTING a shocking REALITY. (5:1)**
- B. Taking ACTION to ADDRESS it. (5:2-5)**
- C. It's an ISSUE of our IDENTITY. (5:6-13)**

This passage is no easy text. It deals with a confrontational issue and Paul seeks to resolve it in a way that seems harsh by 21st century standards. But rather than react to the text (there will be time for that in a moment), let's just read it and see what is there first.

1. What stands out to you the most about 1 Cor. 5:1-13. How does this passage impact you?
2. How do you react to the quote by DA Carson at the bottom of the study guide? Is it accurate? If so what needs to be done?

**II. Disputes: How CHURCH differs from the WORLD. (6:1-11)**

- A. Paul QUESTIONS the NORMAL process. (6:1-6)**
- B. Gaining POWER? Or the WISDOM of the cross? (6:7-8; 1:21-24)**
- C. Once again, it's an ISSUE of our IDENTITY. (6:7-11)**

If you haven't already noticed, Paul draws a sharp line between the way the world lives as normal and the way the church functions within the world. We are to see all things differently, shaped by the vision of the Spirit of God who lives within us and calls us to follow the wisdom of the cross.

3. Kid's Question: When have you had an argument with a friend? What happened?
4. Is Paul's guidance in 6:1-11 practical? How would it change the world today if we followed that?

**III. Sexuality Again: The IMPLICATIONS of BELONGING to God. (6:12-20)**

- A. You HAVE the RIGHT to... (6:12-14)**
- B. The IDOL (and ILLUSION) of FREEDOM. (6:12)**
- C. Guess what - An ISSUE of our IDENTITY. (6:14-20)**

As Paul circles back to talk about sexuality, he provides a bit of a summary to what is being talked about in this section of his letter. What is permissible for me is one thing, what is beneficial is another.

5. What are some of your thoughts on how to navigate the issue of personal rights as a follower of Jesus? Do we just give up our rights? Are there times we should stand for our rights?
6. How can we know when freedom (or the illusion) of freedom has moved from idea to idol in our own lives?

#### **IV. Big Picture: How FOLLOWING Jesus challenges our NORMAL. (Jn. 7:43-46)**

- A. Our TENDENCY to shift the FOCUS. (5:4-5; 6:9-10; Jn 21:21)**
  1. Seeking KNOWLEDGE or TRANSFORMATION? (Jn 5:39-40)
- B. Our ATTEMPTS to separate the INSEPARABLE. (Mark 10:9)**
  1. You can't separate BODY, MIND, and HEART. (6:15-20)
  2. Or the INDIVIDUAL from the COMMUNITY. (6:17; 3:16)
- C. The NECESSITY of the "FELLOWSHIP" (5:2; 6:19b-20a)**
  1. REMINDING us of our IDENTITY. (5:7; 6:11,17, 19-20)
  2. HELPING us to LIVE that out. (2 Cor. 2:5-11; 2 Thes. 3:14-15; Heb 10:19-24)

There are a lot of application points within this text, but they all seem to highlight how our normal status quo is challenged by the call to follow Jesus. His leadership in our lives reshapes how we view the world, our role in it, and everything else.

7. In your own life do you find your tendency in regards to faith is to seek knowledge or surrender to transformation? How can you tell?
8. How important is the "fellowship" of church to you? How committed to the fellowship of believers are you? How can you measure or know that?

*The ease with which the present day church often passes judgment on the ethical or structural misconduct of the outside community is at times matched only by its reluctance to take action to remedy the ethical conduct of its own members. We have reversed Paul's order of things.*

- D.A. Carson, New Bible Commentary