

1 Cor. 5:9-13 (LD 30) “Not Even to Eat”

For the Children: Even in families that are not Christian, there are usually certain rules at the dinner table. If a visitor would break those rules, he might be told, “That’s not how we do things in this house.” If he continues to break the rules after that, it might be made clear he’s no longer welcome in the house. The Lord has certain rules in His household, too. People who know and want to follow those rules are welcome to His Table. But if they refuse to listen to Him, they are not welcome – not at His Table and not in His household – until they repent and change their ways. **Questions:** What would people think of God if He allowed people to sit at His Table even though they refused to obey His Word? How can we still come to the Lord’s Table, since we also sin? Give some examples of when it would be OK to be friends with someone who didn’t know God, and when it would not be OK

Introduction:

First Point: No Judging Outsiders

- 1) Different Kinds of Judging: We must not judge unbelievers harshly, unjustly, finally (as if we knew their final destiny), or in church-disciplinary way. We may judge their sinful actions and warn of where failure to repent and turn to Christ ends. Church discipline, here called “judging,” is the context of 1 Cor. 5
- 2) In But Not Of: The reason for not applying church discipline to outsiders is that then we’d have to be taken out of the world. This implies that church discipline results in an element of shunning, or the text would not make sense. This also implies that we may have contact with unbelievers in business & trade, as neighbours and within families. See 1 Cor. 7. We must also build contact for bringing the Gospel. See Acts 10. But this must not be used as an excuse to pursue friendships with unbelievers as an end in itself, or to behave in a worldly manner. It does not mean unrestricted friendship
- 3) God Will Judge: Avoiding this kind of judging does not mean that unbelievers are let off lightly. God is merciful in allowing many a great deal of time to repent; but He also gives many over to the hardness of their heart by removing censure from their lives. Eventually He will judge them with perfect justice. We must learn to leave that judgement to Him rather than trying to do it ourselves now

Second Point: But Only Judging Insiders

- 1) The Wicked Brother: Judging in the sense of discipline is meant for those within the church who sin *without repentance* and are known to be such – secret hypocrisy is not in view here. The issue of repentance/hardness of heart is even more crucial than the “size” of the sin. Failure to repent of holding error is included in this, since doctrinal error is also contrary to God’s Word
- 2) Church Discipline: The discipline in view here is that carried out first by the church. See Q/A 82 on the church’s duty to use the keys of the kingdom. That may lead to exclusion from membership and its privileges, attendance at the Lord’s Supper and from being regarded as a member of God’s kingdom. “Don’t even eat with such a one” may include a reference to this fencing of the Table
- 3) Individual Upholding of Discipline: Individuals are to uphold the church’s discipline by restricting contact with anyone excommunicated. “Do not associate” means do not become mixed up with. See 2 Thess. 3:14. 2 Thess. 3:6 tells us to “Keep away” – to draw back. These words imply an end to close association, not the end of all contact. The avoiding of eating together fits in with this, and is also taught in the OT. See Pss. 101:7, 26:4-5. Jesus ate with sinners disciplined by the Pharisees, but that does not mean He continued to do so if they continued to reject Him
- 4) Mass Versus Lord’s Supper: We must uphold this connection between discipline and the Lord’s Supper, because it preserves the Biblical emphasis on faith and faithfulness for members of the church. The RC Mass involves gaining forgiveness by mere participation in the Mass. We stress attending the Supper in faith, with sorrow for our sins, assurance of salvation and the desire for a life of gratitude. If we lighten up on who may join the church, who may attend the Supper, and when we use discipline, these things will all be weakened

Conclusion: