

A Sin in the church:

❖ **The consented sin**

- In the church of Corinth there was “a case of sexual immorality of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate” (1 Corinthians 5:1 NIV). The existence of an incestuous relationship within the church was extremely serious. But the situation was made even worse because, instead of generating revulsion among the members, they were proud of tolerating this sin (1 Corinthians 5:2 NIV).
- The church was made up primarily of Gentiles. Their own conscience told them that incest should not be tolerated. Moreover, their knowledge of the Scriptures reinforced this idea (Lev . 18:8).
- If they were clear that this relationship was sinful... why were they proud of it (1 Cor. 5:6)? Did the family involved have influence in the church? Did they boast of being a church tolerant of sinners? ...?

❖ **Eradication of sin**

- The incest case was already “public knowledge” (1 Corinthians 5:1 NIV), so urgent measures had to be taken to prevent damage to the church's reputation. What measures should be taken?
 - (1) To make a judgment that determines, or does not determine, the guilt of the person (1 Cor. 5:3)
 - (2) Do not associate with the sinner, nor even eat with him, as long as he insists on being considered a member of the church, unwilling to abandon his sin (1 Cor. 5:11)
 - (3) To expel the sinner and hand him over “to Satan,” since, by cherishing this sin, he has voluntarily chosen to put himself under Satan’s yoke (1 Cor. 5:2b, 5a, 13b)
- Church discipline (regardless of the gravity of the sin) must always have a redemptive purpose. The person's error must be made clear so that they may recognize it, repent, and "be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus". (1 Corinthians 5:5).

❖ **Dealing with internal problems**

- After explaining how to resolve sin within the church, Paul rebukes them for not following the correct guidelines and for leaving disputes between believers to secular courts (1 Corinthians 6:1-6). But Paul goes further and attacks the root of the problem.
 - (1) There should be no disagreements among church members (1 Cor. 6:7a) and, of course, members should not wrong or defraud another member (1 Cor. 6:8).
 - (2) Brothers should be willing to forgive offenses (1 Cor. 6:7b).
 - (3) If there is no agreement between the members, the church must judge or mediate between them. (1 Cor. 6:2).
- Unless it is a criminal matter (Rom. 13:1-5), internal church problems should be resolved internally.

B How to avoid sin in church

❖ **Temples of the Holy Spirit**

- After addressing the issue of litigation, Paul returns to the main topic: sexual immorality within the church. Why did it exist?
- Christians are called to holiness (1 Corinthians 6:11), and this should exclude all sin. But some argued that, since their sins had already been forgiven, they could do whatever they wanted with their bodies. That is why Paul clarifies that “the body is not meant for sexual immorality” (1 Corinthians 6:12-13).
- His argument: our bodies are members of Christ. We cannot take a member of Christ and unite it with a prostitute or an adulteress (1 Cor. 6:15-18).
- Finally, it leads us to reflect on a crucial matter: our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, are not our property, but belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:19). God bought us with the precious blood of his Son, so we must glorify God in both our body and our spirit (1 Corinthians 6:20).

❖ **Lawful sexuality**

- By answering some questions that had been raised by the church in Corinth, Paul helps us to understand how we can flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 7:1).
- Basically: married people should enjoy lawful sexuality with their spouse; single people should not have sexual relations with anyone.
- Spouses should not refuse to have sexual relations to avoid inciting the other to possible adultery. (1 Cor. 7:3-5).
- Single people with the gift of continence can take better advantage of opportunities to serve God without being limited by family responsibilities (1 Cor. 7:6-8, 32-34). Single people without the gift of continence should try to get married to avoid temptation (1 Cor. 7:9).