

## What Does Sin Bring in a Believer's Life? – Part 3

### 1 Corinthians 11:28-34

#### **Introduction:**

1. The apostle Paul was the instrument that God used to start the local church of Corinth. Paul spent a year and a half teaching new believers truth to build their lives upon.
2. But after Paul left, the church at Corinth had become a church of abuse. They were abusing their liberty in Christ, abusing one another, abusing spiritual gifts, and even abusing the observance of the Lord's Supper.
3. They had turned the Lord's Supper into an excuse for self-indulgence. The rich were shaming the poor by bringing elaborate feasts to church, and refusing to share with those who were poor and hungry.
  - Some were even getting drunk in the local assembly while supposedly observing the Lord's Supper.
4. Their conduct was disgraceful and sinful. Paul reiterates to them the true meaning of the Lord's Supper, and then brings some much needed rebuke to this local assembly.
  - Sin had carried grave consequences for many of these believers.
5. Those of us who understand Paul's teaching of grace, and our oneness with Christ, and our eternal security in Christ, get accused of teaching that a believer can sin and get away with it. But nothing could be further from the truth.
6. Paul never taught that a believer can sin and get away with it, nor do we. There are always ramifications to sin, and Paul explains this in verses 28-34.
7. What does sin bring in the life of a believer? Let's seek to answer that question from this text in 1 Corinthians.

#### **First, sin should bring self-judgment. vs. 28, 31**

1. As we read, study, and learn God's Word, the Holy Spirit brings reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**
2. God's Word is a light that reveals the dirt of sin in our lives. **Hebrews 4:12**
3. When this happens we should respond in obedience, and zealously root out that sin, and bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. **2 Corinthians 7:9-11, 15**
4. Notice that Paul exhorts each believer to "*examine himself.*" vs. 28
5. You are responsible for **yourself** because you cannot control the actions of others.
  - In context, this "examination" has to do with your relationship to other members of the body of Christ.
  - Are you living in a manner that is consistent with the doctrine that the Lord's Supper represents? His sacrifice which brings our oneness (10:16-17) should result in our loving and sacrificing for one another (**Ephesians 5:2-3**).
  - Or, are you exhibiting pride, selfishness, bitterness, divisiveness, etc.?
  - These kinds of attitudes grieve the Holy Spirit, and it is your job to correct yourself.
6. Real change only comes when you make a choice to bring your life into line with God's Word. The Word of God convicts and motivates us to change and correct ourselves.

7. If we are able to judge (discern) our own sinful attitudes and actions, then there is no need for any outside judgment. The Lord (speaking to me from His Word) can settle the issue. vs. 31

**Second, sin brings corruption to our physical bodies. vs. 29-30**

1. What if a believer **won't** judge himself, and continues forward in sin with an unrepentant heart?
2. Verse 29 is an example of this. These believers had received Paul's teaching concerning this (vs. 23); yet continued to approach the Lord's Supper in a careless, flippant, and sinful way.
  - "*Unworthily*" is an adverb describing the manner in which they were observing the Lord's Supper. It is referring to their actions in the public assembly, not their position in Christ.
  - They were having wrong attitudes (toward their brethren), wrong actions (drunkenness, gluttony), and a lack of spiritual discernment (approaching it as an opportunity for self-indulgence instead of worship).
3. What was the result of these sinful actions? It was bringing physical destruction to their bodies. vs. 30
  - If we fail to deal with sin and keep it in check, sin eventually brings physical destruction to our fleshly bodies. It is God's law of sowing and reaping.  
**Galatians 6:7-8**
  - You only harvest what you plant - this is the law of sowing and reaping.
  - **Romans 7:18** says that in our flesh dwells "*no good thing.*" So when you choose to sow to the flesh, what is the only possible harvest? No good thing (corruption).
4. Some believe that this text is teaching that God was zapping certain people in this church with sickness, disease, and even physical death.
  - If a habitual chain smoker gets lung cancer after 30 years, is this God finally deciding to zap him? Of course not. We understand that this is a natural consequence of that action.
  - If people are continually eating rich foods, acting as gluttons, and getting drunk, what is the result of this over-indulgence? Weakness, sickness, and possible death.
5. There are natural, built-in consequences to sin, and eventually those consequences catch up with you.
6. It is important to understand that Christ dwells in our inner man, but our outward man (physical body) is not redeemed yet, and is very vulnerable.  
**2 Corinthians 4:16**
7. Sin brings condemnation (damnation - same word) to our outward physical bodies. Our inner man is safe because it has been made one with Christ, but sin can absolutely destroy your body. vs. 34; **Romans 8:1, 5-6, 12-13**
8. These outward consequences should lead us to turn from sin and obey God's Word.

### **Third, sin brings chastisement.**

1. Unless you carefully study all of God's Word, you could come to the conclusion that God was zapping some of these people based on the phrase, "*chastened of the Lord.*" vs. 32
2. The word "*chastened*" simply means "to train up a child, to educate, to discipline."
  - The goal of chastening is to encourage a person to walk in the path of obedience that they have been taught.
  - It is not to "get even." So many Christians have the false idea that God is somehow trying to get even with them. This is ludicrous. God is **for you**, not against you. **Romans 8:31-34**
3. God didn't get mad at the Corinthians and decide to make some of them sick and kill some of them.
4. God's method of chastening is not to zap His children with disease, sickness, or any other calamity. These things happen as a natural result of bad choices, a lack of discernment on our part, or satanic oppression (which we will see later).
5. But God **does** have a method of chastening, and it is called the local church.
  - The local church is to teach believers how to live in this present world. The word "teaching" in **Titus 2:12** is the same word as "chastened" in our text. Titus was to take the truths of grace and teach them to the local assemblies.  
**Titus 2:15**
    - When a believer strays and refuses to exercise self-judgment, the local church steps in and holds him accountable and instructs (same word as "chastened") that person in how to turn his life around (**2 Timothy 2:25; Galatians 6:1**). This is a form of the chastening of the Lord.
    - If a believer still refuses to turn from the destructive path of sin, the local church is then forced to remove that person from good standing within the local assembly.
    - This can then result in supernatural physical destruction, but not from the hand of God. It comes from the hand of Satan.
      - Remember the man who was living in open fornication in Corinth in chapter 5. God didn't zap this guy with disease or death. God has a mechanism for corrective discipline and it is the local church. Notice that Paul instructed the church to remove this man from the umbrella of the local assembly so that Satan could bring the destruction of the flesh, but his spirit was safe in Christ. vs. 2-5
      - We see this also in **1 Timothy 1:20**. There were two men who were stubbornly persisting in false doctrine. They would not turn and acknowledge the truth that Paul had taught. Paul said that he delivered them to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.
      - The word "learn" is the same word translated "chastened." Paul wasn't condemning them to hell. He was turning them over to the chastening process whereby Satan could inflict them. Why? So they would **learn** to quit blaspheming and propagating false doctrine.
      - God doesn't bring condemnation upon a believer, but a believer can allow himself to fall under Satan's condemnation. **1 Timothy 3:6, 7**

6. Let's review. What exactly is the chastening of the Lord? How does God correct sinful conduct within the local assembly? What is the mechanism that God uses to chasten, teach, and instruct under grace?
  - God uses His Word to correct us and hopefully lead us to self-judgment. **2 Timothy 3:16**
  - If that doesn't work, God will allow us to bear the physical corruption and consequences that come from our sinful attitudes and actions. **Galatians 6:7-8**
  - God then uses the local church to hold us accountable, admonish, and correct us. **2 Corinthians 2:6**
  - God instructs the local church to remove the stubborn and unrepentant person from their fellowship, which gives Satan complete access to bring the physical destruction of the flesh. 1 Corinthians 5
  - Hopefully, that person responds to these measures, and the local church then steps in and helps that person recover himself from the snare of the devil. **2 Timothy 2:25-26**
  - The local church should then forgive and demonstrate love to the repentant person. **2 Corinthians 2:6-10**
7. This is how God chastens a believer under grace today. He uses the instrumentality of His Word and His church.
8. A believer can suffer the physical effects of sin just as an unbeliever can, but God has put in place this chastening process so that the believer can escape the corruption of this world system. vs. 32
9. Paul concludes by saying, "*Wherefore, my brethren...*" Paul demonstrates his apostolic spiritual authority in verses 33 and 34 and admonishes the Corinthians to listen to his instruction and change their behavior, lest they come under the physical condemnation of their sinful behavior.