

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

After Paul finished describing the wickedness that would not enter your Kingdom, he said, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11). Hallelujah for the cleansing blood! You rescued me from the perversion and depravity of sin, and you raised me up to newness of life. Praise God for the saving power of the cross!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you shared with me more of Paul’s second letter to the church at Corinth (called 1 Corinthians). Having dealt with the divisions in the church associated with Cephas and Apollos, Paul now rebuked the Corinthians for several other sins. First, Paul addressed the case of incest. A member of the church was living in a sexual relationship with his father’s wife, and the congregation condoned his behavior. This shocking incident teaches me: (1) The boundaries for sex given in Leviticus are still relevant today (cf. Lev 18:8); (2) Jesus’ statement, “Judge not,” has been wrongly interpreted as a command to ignore sin in the lives of Christians. Nothing could be further from the truth! (1 Cor 5:12); (3) Sin is insidious and corrupting. If I don’t remove it quickly from my life and from the church, it will “leaven the whole lump” (1 Cor 5:6). (4) Church discipline is just as needed and important today as it was in Paul’s day, for it shows the seriousness of sin and the consequences of rejecting your standards (1 Cor 5:2). Next, Paul addressed the issue of civil disputes. Members of the church were taking each other to court, “and that before unbelievers” (1 Cor 6:6). Paul rebuked the Corinthians sharply for such behavior, and his comments teach me several important lessons: (1) This present life is preparing me for the future, for my destiny is to rule and reign with Christ. If I am to judge angels, I should certainly be wise enough to judge disputes between brothers! (1 Cor 6:2, 5); (2) It is better to be defrauded—to be actually cheated by a fellow-believer—than to damage the witness of the gospel (1 Cor 6:7). I should lay down my own rights in order to avoid bringing shame and disgrace to the name of Christ! (3) The freedom I have in Christ is not a license to commit sin. ‘Don’t deceive yourselves,’ Paul said, ‘Those who practice sin will not inherit the kingdom of God’ (1 Cor 6:9). Sin is deadly serious, and I am called to honor the One who washed me and sanctified me by the Spirit (1 Cor 6:11). Next, Paul addressed the issue of sexual immorality. Some of the Corinthians had adopted slogans or principles which expressed their view of Christian freedom: “All things are lawful for me,” and “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food” (1 Cor 6:12–13). They then used these slogans to justify various sinful and questionable activities. Paul’s correction of this abuse teaches me: (1) My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. I should never use it to do anything that is unholy or immoral; (2) My body belongs to you. I should care for it in such a way that it brings glory to you; (3) Something can be “lawful” and yet not be beneficial to me. I need to evaluate whether a given activity is helping me to be a better disciple of Jesus; (4) Something can be “lawful” and yet exert a controlling influence over me. If a given activity starts to dominate my life or interfere with my priorities, I shouldn’t do it.

### *Reflection*

Paul was clear that there is a spiritual, emotional and physical exclusivity in the marriage relationship. Am I being careful to keep my heart and mind within the boundaries you have set? If I’m not married, am I honoring marriage by abstaining from lust and immorality (Heb 13:4)?

### *Request*

Father, help me to live my life in holiness and godliness. Impress on my heart that I have been bought with a price—the precious blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. May I always honor his sacrifice for me!

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for setting me free from the chains of sin and showing me how to be pleasing to you. How grateful I am to be part of the body of Christ!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “The Sacrificial Lamb” – Silas S. Martin.*

*Meditation Verse: 1 Corinthians 7:4.*