

## Summary of 1 Corinthians 5-7

In chapter 5, Paul addresses a serious case of sexual immorality within the church—an incestuous relationship that even pagans found shocking. Paul rebukes the church not for being too harsh, but for being proud and passive. He makes a crucial distinction between judging those inside the church and those outside it. Believers are called to hold one another accountable, especially when someone claims to follow Christ while willfully living in unrepentant sin. Paul instructs the church to remove the unrepentant individual from fellowship, not out of cruelty, but for the sake of the person's restoration and the spiritual health of the community. Judgment of those outside the church belongs to God alone.

Chapter 6 continues Paul's call for internal accountability by confronting lawsuits between believers. Paul argues that if the church is called to judge matters within the body, it is inappropriate for Christians to take disputes before secular courts. He challenges them to consider whether it would be better to suffer wrong than to damage the witness of Christ by publicly fighting one another. Paul then turns to the issue of sexual immorality, reminding believers that Christian freedom does not justify sinful behavior. Because their bodies belong to the Lord and are temples of the Holy Spirit, sexual sin is especially serious. Followers of Christ are called to honor God not only with their souls, but with their bodies.

In chapter 7, Paul addresses questions about marriage, singleness, and sexual desire with pastoral balance and realism. He affirms marriage as a good and God-given context for sexual intimacy, particularly for those who struggle with strong passions. At the same time, Paul recognizes singleness as a valuable calling that allows for undivided devotion to the Lord. He encourages believers to remain in the life situation God has placed them in—married or unmarried—unless there is a clear reason to change. Paul makes it clear that marriage is not sinful, nor is singleness more spiritual; each comes with its own responsibilities and challenges. The guiding principle is faithfulness to Christ and obedience to God's calling, not comparison or pressure to conform to someone else's path.

## Reflection Questions

1. Why does Paul believe it is necessary for the church to hold believers accountable for ongoing, unrepentant sin, and how does this differ from judging those outside the church?
2. How can church discipline, when practiced biblically, serve both the restoration of the individual and the health of the whole church?
3. Paul challenges believers to consider being wronged rather than taking disputes to court. What does this reveal about Christian humility, sacrifice, and the witness of the gospel?
4. In what ways might insisting on your personal rights cause harm to the unity and reputation of Christ's church?
5. Why does Paul treat sexual immorality as especially serious, and how does the truth that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit shape your view of purity?
6. How do Paul's words challenge the idea that Christian freedom means doing whatever feels right in the moment?
7. What wisdom do you see in Paul's encouragement to marry if someone is "burning with passion," and how does this reflect God's concern for holiness and protection?
8. How does Paul's teaching on singleness help correct the assumption that marriage is required for a meaningful or faithful Christian life?