DISCUSSION GUIDE

BUILT DIFFERENT : *"A Disciple Takes Sin Seriously"*

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 5:1–13

MEMORY VERSE

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

Built different: disciples repent and confess sin, pursuing holiness.

DISCIPLESHIP RHYTHM

Repentance

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people to discuss the Observation and Interpretation questions.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 1: RESPONSE TO SIN

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1–5. What sin did Paul say had been reported? How did he describe the church's response?

Suggested Response: Paul said it has been reported that a man was having sexual relations with his father's wife. He said this kind of sexual immorality was not even tolerated among the pagans. He also said the church was proud when they should have gone into mourning and removed the man from their fellowship. He said the church should act when assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 2: YEAST AND PASSOVER

Read 1 Corinthians 5:6–8. What images did Paul use to describe the power of unrepentant sin? What sins had the Corinthians fallen into? What would repentance replace those sins with?

Suggested Response: Paul used the image of yeast working through a whole batch of dough. He told them to get rid of the old yeast so they might be a new, unleavened batch. The Corinthians had fallen into malice and wickedness. Paul said Christ, our Passover Lamb, had been sacrificed. So, sincerity and truth should replace the sins of the people. In Paul's language, he called the Corinthians to keep the festival without the old bread of malice and wickedness but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

OBSERVATION EXERCISE 3: DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS FOR BELIEVERS

Read 1 Corinthians 5:9–13. Paul talked about people inside the church and outside the church. Describe the different expectations Paul had for each group.

Suggested Response: Paul said he did not mean believers should avoid all immoral people in the world, because then they would have to leave the world. He said God judges those outside the church. The church is responsible to judge those inside who claim to be brothers or sisters while continuing in open sin. Paul told them not to associate or even eat with such a person and concluded by saying, "Expel the wicked person from among you."

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 1: RESPONSE TO SIN

Why should the Corinthian church have mourned instead of being proud?

Suggested Response: The church should have mourned because serious sin was being tolerated among God's people. Their pride showed they were not seeing the situation clearly. They may have thought their tolerance was a sign of freedom or maturity, but Paul showed that sin should grieve the church because it dishonors Christ, harms the sinner, and damages the community.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 2: CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER LAMB

What did Paul mean when he said, "Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed"?

Suggested Response: Paul was saying Jesus's death was the fulfillment of what Passover pointed to. Just as the Passover lamb marked Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt, Jesus's sacrifice delivered His people from the guilt and power of sin. Because Christ has been sacrificed, believers are called to live as a new people marked by sincerity and truth rather than malice and wickedness.

INTERPRETATION EXERCISE 3: THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY

How should we act toward unrepentant church members?

Suggested Response: Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that the church is not called to separate from unbelievers or act shocked when unbelievers live like unbelievers. God judges those outside. But when someone claims to belong to Christ while continuing in open, unrepentant sin, the church has a responsibility to respond with confrontation out of love. This kind of judgment is not self-righteous condemnation. It is loving accountability within the family of God so sin is not treated as normal and the person is called back to repentance.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

QUESTION 1: In 1 Corinthians 5:1–2, Paul said the church was proud when they should have mourned. What areas do we treat sin lightly or passively, rather than grieving it?

Suggested Response: People may treat sin lightly when it feels common, when it is uncomfortable to address, when they want to avoid conflict, or when they want to seem accepting. Paul reminded us that sin should grieve us because it dishonors Christ, harms people, and damages the community.

As your group responds, use follow-up questions to guide below surface-level responses. Encourage transparent responses.

QUESTION 2: Why do we substitute tolerance for love?

Suggested Response: The world has discipled us to think acceptance is a form of love and tolerance is a virtue. A person may think love means never naming what is wrong or never calling someone to change. But love does not pretend sin is harmless. True love wants what is good for the person, which means telling the truth with humility and pointing them to repentance, healing, and restoration.

QUESTION 3: In 1 Corinthians 5:6–8, Paul compared tolerated sin to yeast working through dough. How have you seen unconfronted sin affect more than the individual?

Suggested Response: Ignored sin can shape what a group accepts as normal. It can weaken trust, confuse people about holiness, damage relationships, and make others less serious about repentance. Paul's image reminds us that sin does not stay harmless simply because people choose not to address it.

QUESTION 4: What makes confession and repentance difficult for you?

Suggested Response: Confession and repentance can be difficult because of pride, shame, fear of consequences, fear of disappointing others, or the desire to stay in control. Sometimes I would rather explain, minimize, or hide my sin than agree with God about it and turn back to Him.

QUESTION 5: What is an area of your life where you are tolerating sin and need to confess and repent?

Suggested Response: This is a challenging question because we are often private about our sins. But Paul taught that sin affects more than just ourselves, and it needs to be confronted and dealt with. Handle this question sensitively, but do not shy away from challenging your group to grow as disciples. Some helpful passages to speak and pray over your group:
Psalm 139:23–24 – Invite God to search you and reveal areas in need of repentance.
1 John 1:9 – God is faithful to forgive our sins as we confess them.
James 5:16 – We confess our sins to one another for healing.

QUESTION 6: What is one practical step you can take this week to grow in a posture of brokenness in response to sin?

Suggested Response: I can pray Psalm 139:23–24 daily, asking God to reveal sin I have been ignoring or tolerating. I can confess it honestly in prayer and share it with a trusted brother or sister in Christ. This is essential to living in freedom! I can also apologize to anyone my sin impacts. Repentance means turning from sin and returning to God with honesty and humility.