

It Is Written

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THE TRUE CURE FOR HYPOCRISY

By Robert F. Turner

Three men rebel against hypocrisy, but they vary greatly in their reactions.

The first man turns to total moral abandonment. He throws off all restraint as he gives himself to the fulfillment of every fleshly desire. "Self" becomes his god. He hardens himself to the tears of his family as he goes out to do what he wants to do. His "justification" for his shameful conduct: "At least I'm not a hypocrite!"

The second man goes to the opposite extreme. He is fed up with the weakness and hypocrisy that he sees in all the churches, and he is not going to be like such people. He will become a Christian and from the beginning "he's going to live with it." He will be an example of what a Christian really ought to be. To him, the cure for hypocrisy is perfection.

The third man wants to avoid hypocrisy in his life, but at the same time, he has a deep sense of his own imperfection. So he takes on no air in infallibility, but sets out to be genuine. His genuineness soon becomes apparent to others. He does not claim perfection, but he strives for perfection. As he worships God, he does not claim to be perfect as a worshipper, but when the singing begins he gives his heart to what he's doing; when the prayer is led, he listens and makes the prayer his prayer; during the supper, he meditates on the suffering of the Lord; and throughout the sermon, he participates in a study of God's word; if his mind wanders, he brings it back; and when the worship period ends, he asks God to forgive him for his failure and to accept his worship in spite of his imperfection. When he goes to his job, he does not claim perfection among his fellow workers, but they know that he will try to give eight hours of work for eight hours of pay; that he is trustworthy; that he is pure in speech and life; and that if he is ever overcome by pressure around him to sin, he will humbly seek the forgiveness of those who have been wronged.

He is the same at home. His family respects him because he is genuine and does not claim strength and goodness beyond reality. His family sees his faults, but the one redeeming quality that enables him to maintain their respect is his ability to say, "I'm sorry." In every area of his life, he walks humbly before his God and his fellow man.

Our third man has found the true cure for hypocrisy. The first man, if he does not repent, will someday be a miserable wretch, his life completely torn and shattered. The second man is headed for disillusionment. His goals are unreal; his outlook is totally wrong. But the man who "walks humbly with his God," is wholly free from guile, and is a blessed man indeed. His life and his attitude with God is what God wants it to be and he lives in the hope of heaven.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

Sin in the Church: A Study of I Corinthians 6:9-10

By Jeffrey W. Hamilton

The church at Corinth had many problems in living the Christian life. Their problems did not come from a rebellious attitude toward God. Most of their problems came from a misunderstanding of God's law.

In I Corinthians 5:1-8, Paul takes the Corinthians to task for accepting an immoral person as a member of their congregation. In this particular instance, the man was having sex with his father's wife (I Corinthians 5:1). Because of the wording, we can conclude that the woman was not his biological mother. The church was tolerant

of the man's practice. In fact, Paul said that the church was proud to have him as a member (I Corinthians 5:2). Perhaps they mistakenly believed that a person was better off in the church than in the world even if he was not morally perfect. Paul shows the flaw in their reasoning and shows that their acceptance would lead to the downfall of the congregation.

In I Corinthians 5:9-13, Paul explains that Christians must live to a higher moral standard than that which is accepted by the world. While we must live in the world and associate with the corrupt people of the world, Christians are not to tolerate moral corruption among their own number.

In I Corinthians 6:1-8, Paul proves that Christians have the right and the obligation to judge the actions of other Christians. Their judgment will be superior to anyone in the world because they have a superior law with which to live.

The Passage

"Or do you not know" What Paul is about to say should be clear to every Christian, but the Corinthians have been acting as if they were ignorant of these basic truths.

"That the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" The kingdom of God is simply another way of referring to the church. (For example, compare Hebrews 12:23 to Hebrews 12:28.) The inheritance is referring to the time when the church receives the eternal reward prepared for its members (Matthew 25:31-34). Paul is simply stating the obvious: Sinners cannot go to heaven.

"Do not be deceived:" The reason the Corinthians were accepting the opposite was that they were deceiving themselves. This is the way Satan works. The truth is obvious, but to get us to accept a lie, Satan deceives us into believing the truth is not so clear. This is what Satan did with Eve in the Garden in Genesis 3 and it is what he continues to do in the world today.

"Neither fornicators" This is a person who has sex outside of the covenant of marriage.

"Nor idolators" This is a person who worships other gods. As you go through the rest of the sins listed in verse 9 you will notice that all of them have to do with some form of sexual sin, except for this one. Yet, even this word hints at sexual sins. Corinth was a major seaport and the center of worship for the goddess Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The temple in Corinth was said to have 1,000 prostitutes serving the goddess and the main form of "worship" was having sex. In Corinth, idol worship was an immoral sexual act.

"Nor adulterers" This is a person who is having sex with another person and one of them is married, but they are not married to each other. It is listed separately from fornication because not only is immoral sex taking place but the covenant of marriage is also being violated.

"Nor effeminate" This is a person who acts and dresses as a person of the opposite sex. Such behavior has been condemned in the Old as well as the New Law (Deuteronomy 22:5).

"Nor homosexuals" This is a person who engages in sexual acts with a person of the same gender. A man having sex with a man or a woman with a woman. (See also Romans 1:26-27.)

"Nor thieves" This is a person who takes things that belong to someone else.

"Nor the covetous" This is a person who wants what belongs to someone else. This is not simply a matter of seeing a person with a new chair and thinking "I would like a new chair too." This is a person who sees the chair and thinks he deserves the chair more than the owner and is willing to "correct" the situation by helping himself to the chair.

Covetousness is often connected with adultery because the person engaged in it desires the spouse of another and is willing to take what doesn't belong to him. (See Ephesians 5:5).

"Nor drunkard" This is a person under the influence of alcohol.

"Nor revilers" This is a person who constantly gets into mischief. He abuses others verbally.

"Nor swindler" This is the person who takes other people's money by deception or by force.

"Shall inherit the kingdom of God" A person cannot practice these sins and expect to enter heaven.

Verse 11 tells us that some of the Corinthians had once engaged in these sinful acts, but they left their sins behind when they became Christians.