

It Is Written

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Put Away That Wicked Man

By Jim McDonald

First Corinthians 5 deals with a shameful situation which existed in the Corinthian church. It was a circumstance in which the Corinthians apparently did not think warranted a query to Paul, although they had written a letter to him with questions about other matters. The circumstance was that a man had taken his father's wife and the brethren were "puffed up, and did not rather mourn that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you" (1 Corinthians 5:2). The incident was a shameful matter "which was not even named among the Gentiles." It left the church open to both the ridicule of the world and condemnation of the Lord.

Paul did not waste time in commanding the brethren on what to do to correct the matter. He had already judged the man who had committed the deed. His instructions were clear: "In the name of the Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

The action the Corinthian Christians were commanded to take is a painful, difficult one. This explains why it is seldom practiced by churches today. However, the action was not optional; it was commanded by the Lord Jesus Himself, and demanded immediate action. Therefore, when a similar situation arises in churches today, action (or inaction) determines whether those in that church are disciples of Jesus (or not).

Why was such a drastic action commanded by the apostle? He wrote, "For the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." These statements applied to the man who was sinning. "For the destruction of the flesh" meant that this man had allowed the lusts of the flesh to control his actions, and this had to be destroyed because he lusted for the wife of another man. But if the action commanded by Paul was done, and its desired results attained, the "spirit" — the man's soul — would be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Painful as the action was when it was implemented, it could produce the intended results: the man would repent of his sin. If this repentance were genuine, the man would return the woman to her husband (his father). And, if that true repentance followed, the spirit (soul) would be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. In the case of the sinful brother in Corinth, apparently that action did bring produce the desired end. In 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 the narrative commands the church to receive the man back into their fellowship following his repentance.

What Paul commanded the Corinthian church was not optional. Brethren were ordered to publicly withdraw from him and the individual members were to withdraw from the wicked brother. Some churches read a letter of withdrawal, yet many members of the congregation continue treating the brother (or sister) as though nothing happened. Paul addressed such action by writing, "I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with a fornicator, not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world: but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat" (1 Corinthians 5:9-11).

Allowing this sin to continue in the church without withdrawing from the guilty party placed the entire church in jeopardy: "...know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6). If tolerated, others could be tempted to follow that example and bring destruction to all.

Being a New Testament church means that we practice what that church taught and did. Let us not cease to follow such a purpose for such is God's will.

A Harlot's Attire

By Chuck Bartlett

"And there a woman met him, with the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart" (Proverbs 7:10).

Nothing hurts a child of God more than being accused of dressing like a harlot when they don't realize they are doing so. People often make vain attempts to justify sin by claiming ignorance. If someone doesn't realize that they are dressing in a provocative manner, does it mean it is not sin? Of course not. It may not be the intention of a saint to dress immodestly, but if they are, it is still sin if they are clothed in a lascivious way (Gal. 5:19).

So what can Christians do to make sure they are not dressing like a harlot? They need to understand what dressing like a harlot means and avoid it. To begin with, a harlot has seducing on her mind. Therefore, she must dress in such a way that advertises her body. The clothing is to be revealing. Here is a short list of how one reveals their body for show:

1. Clothes that are very tight. This means the contour of the body is clearly revealed. Remember, dressing like a harlot is not being nude. The seductress first lures people with her body to entice them to want more. Tight clothes are a signal that says, "look at my body."

2. Clothes that reveal flesh. We are not talking about someone not wearing socks or a long sleeve shirt. The flesh we are talking about are parts of the flesh that are not meant for the eyes of everyone. This would include shirts too short. When someone cannot comb their hair without revealing a midriff, then it is too short. Of course, some have it showing without even lifting their arms. Then there are tops with the neck line cut way too low. Also, we have the shorts and short skirts and skirts with slits that go to the thigh. Finally, we have the see through material that people like to wear.

The question is, if everyone dresses like a harlot, does that mean it no longer exists? No. Our society is bombarded with advertising that uses sex-appeal. They use people that dress like a harlot to sell everything from cars to gum, and from clothing to music. The reason for this is, sex sells. I am told that a movie that doesn't require a provocative scene for the story line, will often have one added just to get a higher rating. Why? It draws people in.

Society has made a distinction between a harlot and one who dresses like one. In God's eyes, both are sin. It doesn't matter if an innocent, naïve child just wants to dress like a music star - it is inappropriate dress. Somewhere along the way, people have grown accustomed to dressing like a harlot and think it is perfectly fine. As stated earlier, when the majority is doing it, it's difficult to see the harm.

The lust of the flesh (1 John 2:16) is one of Satan's strongest tools. Men that lust after women because of the way they dress, are often considered to be dirty minded. That may be the case, however, in the Proverb passage that speaks of the harlot, we are told that she tries to seduce young men who come by (Prov. 7:6-8). Let not the innocent, who dress immodestly, be unaware of how they can tempt the onlooker who is also naïve.

There are two misconceptions about harlot attire that need to be addressed:

1. It is wrong to think that as long as no one touches you, that your attire is okay. Jesus spoke about the sin that occurs just by looking and thinking about a woman (Matt. 5:28).

2. It is wrong to think that as long as you cover the basic parts of your anatomy, it is okay. Remember when Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves, it wasn't enough. God gave them skins to cover them up (Gen. 3:21).

It is important that we understand what this article is not saying. It is not saying: 1. That you should be ashamed of your body; 2. That you should always wear four layers of clothing, even in the summer; 3. That you shouldn't dress nice.

What is being said is, to dress the way God wants is going to take an enormous effort. People who don't care if they dress like a harlot can go to almost any store and buy whatever they see. Christians can't do that. It is almost like shopping in a harlot's closet. Just what do we expect to find in the world? The world is offering worldliness and we cannot conform (Romans 12:1-2).

Keep in mind that when Jesus was teaching of the kind of example we ought to set, He didn't say, "Let your bodies shine before men, so they can see your good form." He did say, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Let us open our eyes and make sure that we dress modestly.