

PREFACE

Before we press on into this passage, I think it would be a good idea to revisit the Leviticus passage we looked at in our previous session. [\[Just for a moment, return to Leviticus 18:8\]](#) **Read verse.**

First, let’s give further evidence that the euphemism “uncover the nakedness,” that is used throughout this passage, refers to sexual intercourse. Two chapters on we see the same injunction as in v8, but this time a more explicit euphemism is used.

Read Leviticus 20:11.

Second, as we see here in v11, as well as in Leviticus 18:8, some might rightly ask, Why would lying with your father’s *wife* uncover the nakedness of your *father*? This can be explained a couple of ways; to paraphrase that libidinous rapsallion, Bill Clinton, it depends on how you interpret the “s.” But both explanations rely on the Lord’s definition of the ideal marriage.

Read Genesis 2:24-25.

There is no shame in nakedness between a husband and wife, because they are of “one flesh.” So, first, dishonoring one is dishonoring the other. If they are of one flesh, uncovering the nakedness of one is uncovering the nakedness of the other. Second, the “s” could mean possession.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:4.

Sidebar: This is one verse the editors have changed in the updated NIV.

Original: The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

Updated: The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.

Still not the best literal translation, but improved from the original.

Be sure to note that this is mutual: In this situation, one partner in a marriage has no more or less control over the other partner. They have become one, and are mutually responsible for the other, and mutually “own” each other.

In our last session we looked at the first portion of this verse:
 You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead,
 Now we add to this the continuation of his thought in the second portion.

so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.

Here is an instance where the ESV and NIV do a slightly better job of flowing this text—though, of course, not as literal a translation.

NIV: And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?

ESV: And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

The word translated “mourned,” or “filled with grief,” is an active verb. That is, Paul is not saying that they were to just feel bad about the sin; their mourning should include *doing something about it*.

Albert Barnes: [They should have been] so troubled with the existence of this wickedness, as to take the proper measures to remove the offender. Acts of discipline in the church should always commence with mourning that there is occasion for it. It should not be anger, or pride, or revenge, or party feeling, which prompt to it. It should be deep grief that there is occasion for it; and tender compassion for the offender.

Note that the NASB and KJVs (as well as the original Greek) say this in such a way that removing the man from their midst would be the logical and inevitable *result* of their mourning.

What a contrast to the Thessalonians! It struck me this week how different this Corinthian letter is from the one we recently studied, First Thessalonians—and, thus, how different the two churches. These were two congregations with entirely different personalities and level of spiritual maturity.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

At roughly the same point in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul was already berating them for their factions, and misguided quarreling.

By the way, most everyone concludes that the woman in this tawdry drama was not a Christian, because, as David Garland points out, “Paul makes no mention of what the church should do with her.” In accord with what he will write later in this chapter, the church deals with those in the flock; God will take care of the rest.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:12-13.

The next paragraph, that begins with v3, is, to say the least, challenging.

Gordon Fee: Paul begins a sentence whose overall point is clear enough, but whose syntax is particularly complex, and whose concluding action (5a) and ultimate purpose (5b) are shrouded in mystery.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:3-5.

For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit,

Our first quandary is what Paul means by being “present in spirit.” Some take this to mean he is just saying, as we might use the phrase, “you are in my thoughts.” But the extraordinary, dynamic, judicial language he uses in the paragraph would seem to contradict this position. There is something far deeper going on here than that. The problem is, we can’t say for sure. But we have a clue in the last phrase of this verse (in the NASB)—and, more pointedly, in v4.

Fee takes issue with the softened language used by most modern translations:

NASB: as though I were present
 NIV (orig.): as if I were present
 KJVs: as though I were present
 ESV: as if present

Listen to v3 in *Young’s Literal Translation*:

for I indeed, as being absent as to the body, and present as to the spirit, have already judged, **as being present**, him who so wrought this thing:

Now from the updated NIV, which really nails it:

For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. **As one who is present with you in this way**, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this.

Now let’s add the evidence from v4; the KJVs capture it well:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, **along with my spirit**, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul is not just saying, “you are in my thoughts,” or “think of me as if I were really there,” but somehow through the power of the Holy Spirit and the corporate church’s relationship through Christ Jesus, he is saying, not bodily but spiritually, “I will be there.” *The “power of the Lord Jesus Christ” will be present, and in a similarly mystical but utterly real way, I will be present.*

While we may not know precisely the full extent of what Paul meant by this, the evidence is clear that the apostle was quite serious that his spirit would be there as the church administered his judicial decree.

have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.

Paul has already let on what his judgment is regarding this man who is at least sleeping with, if not living with his step-mother. In v2 he said that if the church were properly mourning over this situation it would have already passed judgment: the miscreant would have been “removed from your midst.”

removed = *airo* = a primary verb; **to lift; by implication to take up or away**; figurative to raise (the voice), keep in suspense (the mind); **specially to sail away (i.e. weigh anchor)**; by Hebrew [compare <H5375> (nasa’)] to expiate sin :- away with, bear (up), carry, lift up, loose, make to doubt, put away, remove, take (away, up).

That is, send the man packing. I’m amused by what A. T. Robertson wrote: [The word means] “to lift up, to carry off. Decent self-respect should have compelled the instant expulsion of the man instead of pride in his rascality.”

So as this letter was being read to the members of the Corinthian church, they had no reason to wonder what Paul’s verdict—who had “already judged him”—would be.