

MESSAGE.

True love does not equate to cultural tolerance; real love intervenes and speaks the truth. When followers of Jesus confuse love with the affirmation of open sin, they risk letting compromise infect the entire church community. Whoever defines truth determines the path; therefore, the standard of righteousness must be established by God's unchanging Word rather than a shifting culture. God calls believers to submit to His authority through genuine repentance and restoration.

PRAYER.

Lord,

You are Sovereign. What You say is truth is ultimate, unchanging, unapologetic truth. May I always build my life on Your truth rather than my own ideas or what the world may think. Amen.

ENGAGE.

Observing and Understanding the Text

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-2.

- What specific situation is Paul addressing, and what is the Corinthian church's surprising reaction to it?
- According to verse 2, what should their reaction have been instead?

Read 1 Corinthians 5:3-5 and 2 Corinthians 2:3-11.

- What is the ultimate goal of handing this man over to Satan/removing him from the fellowship?

Read 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

- Why does Paul use the metaphor of yeast (leaven) and dough?
- What happens to a community when open, unrepentant sin is tolerated?

Connecting to the Sermon & Defining Truth

"Whoever defines truth determines the path."

- How do we see this tension play out in verse 6, where the church was letting the culture of Corinth influence them rather than influencing Corinth?
- Why is it dangerous to let culture define what is or isn't a sin?

The cultural definition of love is often "affirmation and total acceptance."

- How does the warning in 1 Corinthians 5 challenge that definition?
- In what ways is warning someone about sin actually an act of "loving holiness" rather than hatred?

Personal Application

Pastor Derik mentioned specific areas where modern culture demands celebration rather than just tolerance (e.g., sexuality, gender, cohabitation).

- How can we practically navigate the tension of genuinely loving our friends and family members caught in these sins without affirming or celebrating the sin itself?

Pastor Derik left us with this question:

- When we look at our own lives, are we normalizing, justifying, or celebrating any specific sins, or are we allowing the Holy Spirit to convict us?
- What is one area of your life where you need to submit to God's definition of truth over your own feelings?

For these cities. For all people.

Day 1: Who Makes the Rules? – God defines truth, not the world or our feelings.

- **Scripture Connection:** 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 (Focusing on the problem of making up our own rules about right and wrong).
- **Visual Aid:** Bring out a well-known board game (like Monopoly or Uno). Ask your child: *"What would happen if I decided midway through the game that I can just take all the money, or that a red card means I automatically win because I feel like it?"*
- **Discussion:** Explain that games only work when everyone follows the rulebook. In life, our world tries to say, "You can make up your own rules! Whatever makes you happy is right." But Paul reminds the church that we don't get to define what sin is—God does. If God's Word says something is wrong, it stays wrong, no matter how many people around us are doing it or celebrating it.
 1. Why is it dangerous if everyone just makes up their own rules for right and wrong?
 2. Whose "rulebook" should we trust more: our own feelings, the culture around us, or God's Word?
- **Prayer:** *"God, thank You that Your Word is a safe boundary for us. Help us to trust Your definitions of right and wrong instead of just following what everyone else is doing."*

Day 2: The Rotten Apple Effect (or Yeast) – Small compromises and hidden sins grow and affect everyone.

- **Scripture Connection:** 1 Corinthians 5:6-7 (Focusing on the yeast metaphor).
- **Visual Aid:** Show a piece of bread or have them picture a single rotten apple in a bag.
- **Discussion:** Paul told the church that ignoring sin is like putting a tiny bit of yeast into dough—eventually, it spreads through the whole loaf. Or, like a rotten piece of fruit left in a basket, it eventually ruins the good fruit around it. The church in the Bible thought they were being "kind" by ignoring a big sin, but they were actually letting danger spread. When we ignore sin in our own hearts or normalize it in our friendships, it starts to change us and the people around us.
 1. Have you ever noticed how a bad mood or a bad attitude from one person can ruin the mood for the whole room? How is sin like that?
 2. Why is it actually *unloving* to let someone keep doing something that hurts themselves or others?
- **Prayer:** *"Lord, keep our hearts soft to your Holy Spirit. Help us not to hide or justify 'small' sins, but to bring them to You so our hearts stay clean."*

Day 3: Loud Love vs. True Love – Real love intervenes and seeks restoration.

- **Scripture Connection:** 1 Cor. 5:3-5 & 2 Cor. 2:6-7 (Focusing on tough love and forgiveness).
- **Example:** Ask your child: *"If you saw your little sibling or a toddler running straight toward a busy street to chase a ball, what would you do? Would you smile and say 'I support your journey!' or would you yell 'Stop!' and grab them?"*
- **Discussion:** The culture tells us that loving someone means agreeing with everything they do, even if it's harmful. But true love intervenes. When Paul told the church to stop hanging out with the man who refused to stop sinning, it sounded harsh. But he did it so the man would realize his danger, change his mind (repent), and return to God. True love speaks the truth to protect people, and it is always ready to forgive and celebrate when someone turns back to Jesus.
 1. Why does it take courage to tell a friend the truth when they are doing something wrong?
 2. If a friend realizes they made a mistake and says they are sorry, how should we treat them?
- **Prayer:** *"Jesus, give us the courage to love people with your truth. Help us to love others enough to stand up for what is right and be quick to show them your mercy and forgiveness."*